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Polish migration to the UK compared to migration elsewhere in Europe: a review of the literature

The migration of millions of Poles to other European countries since EU accession in 2004 has been researched intensively, but unevenly. The UK, which overtook Germany as the main receiving country after 2004, features in a high proportion of English and Polish language publications.[1] The last few years in particular have seen a spate of articles about Poles in Britain in international migration journals. These include an earlier special issue of *Social Identities* (2010: 16,3, ed. Rabikowska), with a literature review by Burrell. This attention is understandable, considering the sheer volume of new Polish migration to the UK, and the resulting transformations of both UK and Polish society: a mass Polish presence in the UK and mass absences of UK-based Poles from Poland. For researchers of contemporary migration trends, already interested in mobility and transnational social fields, this was a gift: a perfect case study.

The attention now seems disproportionate, given that Poles have migrated across Europe from Iceland to Greece. With volume comes diversity. In just a few years, numerous West European towns and cities have acquired a Polish population which increasingly looks like a microcosm of Polish society in Poland. In other cities, such as Brussels and Rome, which already had large populations of Poles, that Polish society is becoming ever more heterogeneous.

   The relative dearth of publications about post-2004 Polish migration to countries in continental Europe could be partly explained by the general dominance of English-language scholarship, in all disciplines, but this article also suggests other reasons. After considering the background of 1990s migration research, it discusses why UK-based research blossomed after 2004, and sketches some themes. In particular, it addresses the subject matter of this special issue: transnational identities, ties and practices among early 21st century mobile EU citizens living in the UK, and how these are influenced by their thoughts about how long to stay. In the years immediately after 2004, it had seemed that the intense mobility of Central Europeans might be rather different from earlier mass migrations; subsequently, as many Poles began to follow a more familiar migration pattern of family re-unification and gradual settlement abroad, scholars had to ask more careful questions about what (if anything) was really new about EU free movement. This old-new quality of contemporary Polish migration continues to puzzle researchers and contributes to the theoretical importance of the topic. Even if one accepts that there are no migration 'laws', one may still wonder whether migration does follow broadly similar patterns in all geographical and historical contexts. Only painstaking empirical research can determine how, how far and why this is (not) the case.

   As stated, an impressive body of empirical research has already been published about Polish migration to the UK. The article continues, however, by comparing and contrasting the much smaller English-language literature on Polish migration to other European countries. This literature consists mostly of individual journal articles, although there are also a few books and special issues featuring contributions about both the UK and other destinations (including *International Migration* 52(1) 2014, ed. E. Gozdziak). My article makes some observations about country comparisons in Polish migration research and concludes by discussing the research on return to Poland and migration's impact on

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Poland. The article does not address literature on migration to countries outside Europe, although, ever since Thomas and Znaniecki's classic *The Polish Peasant in Poland and America*, this has been a significant strand of Polish migration research.

<u>UK-based Polish migration research in the context of Polish and international migration studies and the development of a 'transnational optic'</u>

Migration is most commonly researched at universities in receiving countries, but until recently Polish migration scholarship took place largely in Poland. Kraków leads in historical research and research on the USA, while in the 1990s the University of Warsaw emerged as a centre of research into contemporary migration in Europe. Adapting the methodology of Massey's Mexican Migration Project, scholars at the new UW Centre of Migration Research conducted ethnosurveys into labour migration from small towns and rural communes (Anacka et al, 2011). They shed light on a phenomenon which Marek Okólski labelled 'incomplete migration' and Morokvasic (2004) identified as being 'settled in mobility'. Typically, one family member worked abroad, returning occasionally, while the rest of the household stayed in Poland. Hence the migrant had a foot in each country, but felt that s/he lived in Poland while working abroad. Jaźwińska, Fihel, Praszałowicz, Weinar and Kaczmarczyk (2007, p. 15) observed that 'this type of earning a living has gradually become a permanent life strategy, a lifestyle' for hundreds of thousands of Poles.

   Contemporaneously, US anthropologists began to focus on the 'transnational practices' of migrants circulating between the USA and the Caribbean. Although the concept was widely criticised, it soon seemed self-evident to researchers that in the age of globalisation migrants could only be understood by taking into account their simultaneous connections with sending and receiving countries. Although Polish research was mostly quantitative and not anthropological, 'incomplete migration' seemed to fit within the transnational paradigm. Additionally, researchers in Western Europe, investigating mobility within the EU, pointed to more privileged types of transnational existence, such as the cosmopolitanism of adventurous young 'Eurostars' in European capital cities (Favell, 2008). With EU enlargement in 2004, it became evident that Central Europeans could also be Eurostars. 'While the previously established temporary, often seasonal migration patterns remained, new groups of migrants can be identified, such as young migrants, often students or graduates, without family obligations and without clear plans concerning their future life' (Glorius, Grabowska-Lusińska and Kuvik (eds.), 2013, p. 8). Slany and Solga (eds.) (2014, p. 1) contextualise this within the overall Polish trend of a 'growing individualisation in choice of life options'.

   After 2004, and against this backdrop of changes in international scholarship and European migration patterns, UK-based Polish migration research suddenly blossomed. The hitherto small band of researchers had focused mostly on the post-war Polish diaspora and their descendants (see e.g. Burrell, 2002; Sword, 1996; Temple, 2001). [2] Jordan and Düvell (2003), by contrast, wrote about more recently arrived young Polish migrants to London, whom they identified as being thrusting and ambitious. Funded research conducted immediately after 2004 tended to have a different focus, seeing Polish migrants as vulnerable workers, in the context of existing UK concerns about migrants' social exclusion. These projects also explored social cohesion and labour markets in specific UK locations. (See e.g. Anderson, Clark and Parutis (2007); Anderson, Ruhs, Rogaly, and Spencer (2006); Green (2007).) Such research had a policy focus. However, researchers were also excited by the

opportunity offered by the new migration wave to explore a set of inter-related questions about mobility which had become central to migration scholarship and theory. How 'new' was this new migration, how much agency did migrants enjoy, were they migrating as individuals or household members, did new migrants have a sense of joining a diaspora, what was the nature of the Polish society (surely more than a mere 'community') which had suddenly come to existence in the UK, and what did this latest migration wave illustrate about 21st century transnational ties and practices?

UK-based researchers quickly began to collaborate in exploring such matters. The ground was laid at workshops organised in 2007 by Aleksandra Galasińska (Wolverhampton) and Kathy Burrell (de Montfort University, Leicester); the Leicester symposium resulted in the first book about post-2004 Polish migration to the UK, Burrell (ed.) (2009). Further conferences and workshops in London, Newcastle and Bath helped to consolidate a sense of shared identity among Polish migration researchers and to bring more researchers into the network. From 2009 the Polish Migration Website[3] has publicised projects and outputs of Polish migration research, backed up by an email network of researchers. Research includes a handful of mixed quantitative-qualitative studies (e.g. Drinkwater and Garapich, 2013; Goodwin and Goodwin, 2009; Okólski and Salt, 2014). Mostly, however, this has been qualitative, in-depth research, including many PhD projects. In-depth research is facilitated by the high proportion of ethnically Polish researchers, many of whom are relatively recent arrivals in the UK.

Migration research is multidisciplinary and scholars were working within disparate subject areas and contributing to the advancement of knowledge in a variety of disciplines. Not all scholars knew one another and some fascinating and original research (e.g. Kubal, 2012, on legal culture) was produced outside the 'mainstream'. However, the fact that many researchers shared a sense of collaborating in building a composite picture of Polish migration to the UK undoubtedly strengthened Polish migration research as a recognisable sub-section of UK migration studies.

From the start, UK research was appropriately transnational, with many scholars publishing in both English and Polish and a number pursuing academic careers spanning Poland and the UK. Some projects have included fieldwork in both countries (e.g. Eade, Drinkwater and Garapich, 2007; White, 2011; Grabowska-Lusińska and Jaźwińska, 2014). Research about the UK is published by scholars based in Germany and other countries. Most significantly, Poland-based researchers have been closely involved in UK research, participating in British conferences and contributing to joint publications. UK academics with no background in Polish studies, who had begun studying Polish migration because this emerged as an important social phenomenon in the UK, were fortunate to be able to call on the linguistic and cultural skills of Polish research officers (some trained as migration researchers in Poland) and to connect with Poland-based migration research. Launching the new journal *Comparative Migration Studies*, Martiniello (2013:1) lamented the fragmented nature of migration research, 'the first line of fragmentation [being] between migration studies and post-migration studies'. However, UK-Polish research partly avoided such fragmentation, thanks to the participation of Polish scholars expert on migration flows in discussions of the Polish migrant experience within the UK. Hence questions about migration and integration could be asked together: going abroad and being abroad were understood as part of the same process (with integration conceptualised as a process rather than an end point) and the optic was clearly transnational.

A similar situation obtained in the Republic of Ireland. Researchers based in Ireland – especially, but not exclusively, those participating in the Trinity Immigration Initiative – were in contact with researchers in Poland and the UK. The similarities between Polish migration to Ireland and the UK, and the fact that migrants moved between the three countries, contributed to a sense that this triangle was an identifiable transnational social space for both migrants and scholars. Rotterdam, Oslo and Berlin have also emerged as centres of Polish migration research, but the dominance of English in international scholarship means that Polish migration journals are unlikely to publish articles in Norwegian, Dutch or German, nor will presentations in these languages be made at conferences in Poland. Hence the privileged position of research conducted in English-speaking countries is likely to remain.

Specific topics covered by UK research

The agenda for UK-based Polish migration studies was set to a considerable extent by two early Economic and Social Research Council-funded projects, with end of project reports published as Eade et al 2007, *Class and ethnicity – Polish migrants in London* and Ryan, Sales, Tilki and Siara, 2007, *Polish Migrants in London: networks, transience and settlement*. These reports sketched out some answers to the big questions raised above. Both studies found evidence of typical circular or one-off, target-earner migrants, 'storks' and 'hamsters' according to Garapich's memorable typology. Nonetheless, 'searchers' emerged as the most common group. These were Poles who practised a strategy of 'intentional unpredictability' (Eade et al, 2007). Both studies found that migration to the UK was often speculative and experimental: 'most respondents were uncertain about how long they would stay and when or if they would return to Poland' (Ryan et al, 2007, p. 6). While Eade el al focused on individualistic and individual migrants, Ryan et al (2007) and White (2011) (in a chronologically overlapping project) identified families as an important category. This was already evident from statistics about Polish children enrolling in British schools. Ryan et al and White showed that families who often arrived with somewhat open-ended plans nonetheless quickly showed signs of settling as they became more integrated, especially through having children in school.

In addition to exploring intentions about duration of stay, Eade et al (2007) also set off discussion about migrants' integration into the workforce, and their identity as workers: the non-monetary rewards of work, migrants' attitudes towards the connections between work and social status, and their expectations regarding social mobility. Like Parutis (2014) and Trevena (2014), Eade et al emphasised that young migrants tolerated low-skilled jobs as a temporary expedient, a stepping stone to eventual upward mobility in a meritocratic society. As a stage in life, 'drifting' (Trevena 2014) could be enjoyable rather than humiliating (cf. Krings et al, 2013, on young Polish migrants in Ireland). Szewczyk (2014), echoing Grabowska-Lusińska's (2012) arguments about boundaryless careers, identified some migrants as pragmatically acknowledging changeability: recognising that in today's world you might need to switch career path several times, but seeing this in a positive light. Trevena (2014) and Nowicka (2012), however, also demonstrated that some migrants had become stuck in unsatisfying work. Knight, Lever and Thompson (2014) suggest that English language competence and composition of social networks are the main factors determining upward mobility or its failure to occur. Adopting a different angle, Cieślik (2011), Judd (2011) and White (2011) emphasised that 'good'

work was often perceived as such not because of its status but because it offered security, autonomy and/or respect – qualities which interviewees had not associated with their work in Poland.

The earlier research also focused on Polish networks and social interactions between Poles. The newcomers' failure to integrate into post-war diaspora networks emerged as a theme in UK locations with existing Polish populations. After 2004, Polish institutions were overwhelmed by the new demand for services such as Saturday schools. However, the established diaspora had to accept that many new migrants had no interest in participating actively in Polish émigré social networks. The two groups differed in the intensity of their ties to present-day Poland but also – or so it was often assumed - in their opinions about Poland, Polish patriotism and ethnic identity (Bielewska 2012; Brown 2011; Fomina 2009; Garapich 2008b, 2009, 2013; Pustułka 2013). However, research also suggested that this was not just a clash of world views: unlike the post-war diaspora, Poles who arrived after 2004 tended to keep their distance from all Polish migrants, outside their immediate circle of friends and family. The social and informational support offered by networks of friends and family was significant in helping Polish migrants come to the UK and feel at home, but the prevailing opinion was that Poles abroad were selfish and unhelpful towards one another. A 'discursive hostility towards co-ethnics' identified in London by Eade et al (2007:16) was corroborated by a string of other researchers, and, as several commented, mirrored the findings of Grzymała-Kazłowska (2005), despite the fact that Grzymała-Kazłowska was writing about competition among undocumented Polish workers in Brussels before EU accession.

While a great deal of research has focused on ethnic identity construction, it is noteworthy that most studies do not discuss ascribed identities. With exceptions such as Garapich's analysis of stereotypes (actually more about self-stereotypes) (Garapich 2013); Cook, Dwyer and Waite's study of white, Pakistani and Caribbean residents of Leeds (Cook et al 2011); and a few accounts of employers' perspectives (see below) there is surprisingly little on attitudes towards post-2004 migrants in non-Polish parts of the receiving society. This is despite the political significance of anti-Polish sentiment in the UK. Insofar as the receiving society is described, this is often to note the ethnic diversity of UK cities as the cultural context within which Polish integration takes place, and the rather polarised reactions of Poles towards that diversity.

Instead of focusing on the receiving society, the research, which is mostly conducted by Poles and adopts an insider perspective, treats the construction of ethnic self-identity as something personal and individualised: exploring, for example, how and why migrants choose to attend mass or watch television in Polish, whether and where they buy Polish food, and how often they visit or communicate with people back in Poland. Many aspects of Poles' transnational lives are discussed in recent books and journal articles. (For an extensive bibliography, see the Polish Migration Website.) However, this literature is not exhaustive. Certain transnational practices are underexplored - a gap addressed by articles in this special issue. In addition, UK contexts vary considerably, and the same transnational practices have varying forms and significance in different locations and among different occupational groups. Transnational activities can exacerbate a sense of temporariness, but equally have the effect of creating a 'home from home' and making the UK less strange. Migrants have different degrees of choice about the take-up and outcomes of transnational practices. As Botterill (2011, p. 67) writes in her critique of over-optimistic assumptions about Polish migrant mobility: 'Youth affords choice and wealth affords more choice'. Transnational practices surely promote

integration more readily when they are freely chosen and not the result of constraints such as limited money or poor English language skills.

The accessibility of local Polish institutions helps determine migrants' ability to be 'Polish' in the UK. Despite their mutual mistrust, Poles newly arrived in the UK rapidly created an impressive network of Polish businesses and media outlets (Garapich, 2008a; Kucharczyk (ed), 2013; Vershinina, Barrett and Meyer, 2011). The scale of Polish business activity was only sustainable because the considerable volume of Polish migration to the UK created a 'critical mass' for goods and services. Shops and internet media are plentiful, but Polish churches are in short supply and not always viewed positively, while Saturday schools – despite their remarkable expansion in recent years – can be seriously oversubscribed. (On the Catholic Church, see e.g. Gill, 2010; Krotofil, 2013; Trzebiatowska, 2010; on Saturday schools see Praszałowicz et al, 2012.)

Overall, despite many Poles' conviction to the contrary, it is clear that post-2004 UK-based Poles organise many activities, even though these may be largely invisible to the wider UK Polish population, especially if they are one-off events and/or not 'ethnic' in character (Pustułka 2013). However, apart from Fitzgerald and Hardy's (2010) work on trade unions, Polish migrants' engagement in civil society and politics remains an under-researched area. Recent publications (Driver and Garapich, 2012; Kucharczyk (ed.), 2013) have begun to fill this gap and the latter volume in particular provides insights into transnational aspects of civil society activity. On the one hand, it seems that Poles who are active in particular causes in the UK often brought their activism from Poland; on the other, some UK-based Polish activists who have tried to find support from organisations based in Poland have been disappointed (Pustułka, 2013).

The articles in (Kucharczyk (ed.) 2013) demonstrate that some Polish activists are much readier than others to collaborate with non-Poles. Research overall suggests that Poles display a wide range of acculturation strategies and will or capacity to join networks in the receiving society. This partly results from individual choice, but the links between integration and social background/capital have been explored in a number of studies. For example, writing about Poles in Bradford, Fomina (2009, p. 1) asserts the existence of a gulf between the 'parallel worlds' of English-speaking newly-arrived Poles who feel Polish but distance themselves socially from other Polish migrants and 'less resourceful' (*mniej zaradni*) Poles who associate mainly with co-ethnics. White and Ryan (2008) see instead a spectrum ranging from more to less 'confident' migrants. A significant strand of research has focused on the different social capital of different groups of Poles and their strong and weak ties with the non-Polish community (e.g. Gill and Bialski, 2011; Knight, Lever and Thompson, 2014; Ryan, Sales, Tilki and Siara, 2008.)

Polish migrants to the UK and Ireland are well-educated, compared to the overall Polish population and to Polish migrants to other countries, but most of them are not university graduates (Fihel and Kaczmarczyk 2009, p. 34), many have poor language skills and they include marginalised sub-groups such as homeless people (Garapich, 2011) and Roma (Staniewicz, 2011). Nor are all UK Poles so very young. Research on older migrants shows that they are not just appendages of their families (grandmothers who come over to look after the children) but also individuals with their own agendas and autonomy (Pemberton and Scullion, 2013). Not surprisingly, a population of over half a million UK

Poles is characterised by considerable diversity and by no means consists only of highly mobile, English-speaking individuals, without family ties or language barriers.

   Despite recognition of this diversity, certain groups have been neglected in the research. The focus has tended to be on Poles who might stay, and their integration processes. With a few exceptions such as Findlay and McCollum (2013) and Datta (2008), migrants engaged in agriculture, domestic work or construction (typically lone migrants abroad temporarily) have been somewhat neglected in UK scholarly literature. This is despite the fact that Poles certainly do work in such occupations in the UK (see e.g. White, 2013) and there are many short-term migrants without their families. Hence the UK literature could give a somewhat misleading impression and overstate Polish migrants' propensity to settle.

Poles in Continental Europe

Not surprisingly, seasonal and domestic workers feature more prominently in studies of other West European countries, countries which only gradually opened their labour markets during the seven years after 2004 and which in some cases – notably France and Germany – had long-standing institutional arrangements facilitating Polish temporary work. Classic seasonal agricultural migration to France and Germany is discussed, for example, by Becker and Heller (2009); Glorius (2008); Kępińska (2008) and (2013); Michelon and Potot (2008). Unlike the UK research, which tends not to take into account employers' perspectives (with exceptions such as Findlay and McCollum, 2013, or Jones, 2014), these studies of other countries illustrate the confluence of interests between employers/agencies and individual migrants, for whom temporary migration is a sensible livelihood strategy.

   Going deeper into employers' perspectives, Friberg (2012a), writing about Norway, analyses similar dynamics, describing how Norwegian employers value Poles as conscientious, albeit unimaginative workers. (Identical UK stereotypes are reported in Jones, 2014.) Friberg describes how Poles resent but simultaneously play up to stereotypes to maintain their jobs. By contrast, Van Riemsdijk (2013) discusses how Polish nurses attempt to challenge Norwegian stereotypes. Both scholars examine the interplay between identity ascription and self-ascription, as compared to much of the UK literature which, as already discussed, focuses on self-ascription. This literature (see also Van Riemsdijk 2010) is particularly valuable because it sheds light on how processes of economic and cultural integration are intertwined and can be blocked by stereotyping on the part of receiving country employers.

   By contrast, the experiences of Polish domestic workers – workers who have particularly intense relationships with their employers - has generally been explored from the viewpoint of the women themselves. See Kowalska and Pelliccia (2012); Małek (2011); Rosińska–Kordasiewicz (2005); Sischarenco (2011), all on Italy; and Elrick and Lewandowska (2008), comparing Germany and Italy. As Kowalska and Pelliccia (2012, p. 95) point out, domestic work is an entry point to the Italian labour market even for Polish women with university degrees. One aspect of these studies is that they consider the situation of live-in domestic workers who, rather than inhabiting a 'migrant bubble' - like many migrants - live in a 'receiving society bubble'; for these women, a key moment in their integration trajectory involves moving out of the Italian households where they work and acquiring

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more autonomy to construct their own identities as Poles in Italy. Being so isolated, domestic workers often particularly feel the need for co-ethnic social support. The Catholic Church is described as being important in the lives of Polish domestic workers and publications on Italy tend to emphasise the supportive role of the Church, contrasting with the more critical attitude of scholars writing about the UK.

However, there are numerous points of similarity between the UK and other literatures, a similarity partly stemming from the increasing heterogeneity of the Polish migrant population in many countries. For example, young adventure seekers - even if they formed a smaller share of the total number of Polish migrants than in the UK or Ireland – also went to other European countries after 2004. Kowalska and Pelliccia (2012, p. 81) observed 'a visible growth [in Italy] in the presence of young people, often students, who come not just to earn money but also to study or continue their studies, to improve their qualifications, learn the language or explore a new culture'. Once again, as the volume of migration increases, so does the diversity of its social composition.

That increased volume of migration also results from family members arriving to join the 'pioneers'. Recent literature describes a process of family reunification occurring in different European countries. See Friberg (2012b) and Erdal (2014) on Norway; Levrau, Piqueray, Goddeeris and Timmerman (2013) on Belgium. As these studies show, family reunification indicates an increased propensity for Polish migrants to settle, although, as Levrau et al point out, integration cannot be taken for granted and - as in the UK - is often complicated by lack of access to receiving country language courses (cf. White, 2011). Ślusarczyk and Nikielska-Sekuła's 2014 article on Polish children in Norwegian schools reveals numerous parallels with the findings of UK studies. For example, they stress the unplanned and experimental nature of much family reunification; this contrasts, nonetheless, with parents' universal concern to see their children integrate into Norwegian schools. (Cf. Flynn, 2013, White, 2011, for similar findings in the UK.)

Toruńczyk-Ruiz (2008), writing about Amsterdam, scrutinises class divisions within the Polish migrant population. She distinguishes between dense co-ethnic networks of less well-educated Poles and their more individualist, highly educated counterparts in Amsterdam who barely notice that there are Poles in the city: 'parallel worlds', to cite Fomina (2009) on Bradford. Kowalska and Pelliccia (2012), like many UK scholars, comment on intergenerational divides in Rome, referring to distinct diaspora communities who cannot 'find a common language' (p. 91). As in the UK, some research also draws attention to marginalised Poles who exist separately from any mainstream community. Mostowska (2013) describes the dense social networks among homeless men who have adapted to life on the street in Oslo, similarly to Garapich's (2011) study of homeless Poles in London.

Transnational ties and practices are the direct focus of several ethnographic studies. For example, Wojtyńska's (2011) exploration of how Poles celebrate festivals in Iceland neatly illustrates the integration process as migrants - sometimes despite their best intentions - begin to combine Polish and Icelandic practices. Nowicka (2013), writing about Polish entrepreneurs who live between Germany and Poland, emphasises the imperative to research sending and receiving countries simultaneously in order to understand migrants' transnational lives and livelihoods; she argues (p. 26) that there are remarkably few such studies to date.

There is also a Polish-language literature which compares migrants in different European countries. Krzyżowski (2013)'s *Polish Migrants and their Ageing Parents* is based on fieldwork in Poland, Austria and Iceland. The destination countries were chosen because Austrians and Icelanders have different norms and views on care for older relatives. Cieślińska, in her book *Migrations Near and Far* (2012), illustrates how migrant communities construct 'proximity' on the basis of cultural rather than geographical distance. She compares the perceptions of migrants from north-east Poland about culturally 'close' UK and culturally 'distant' Germany. Main compares the transnational lives of Polish women in Barcelona and Berlin (see e.g. her 2013 article on food and identity, or her contribution to this special issue). Comparisons between the UK and other countries are less common. An exception is Rzepnikowska (2013) on women migrants in Manchester and Barcelona. Rzepnikowska's chosen cities, like Main's, are comparable because of their ethnic diversity: this would seem a promising point of departure for research comparing Polish migrant experiences across Europe today.

The merits of a comparative approach perhaps seem more evident to researchers based in sending countries such as Poland. To them, it is self-evident that receiving countries differ. By contrast, migration studies in receiving countries can sometimes appear introspective, since the receiving country is considered to be important in its own right, rather than being treated as a case study which illustrates aspects of some wider phenomenon. This is especially the case if the research has policy implications.

Lack of comparison and cross-referencing creates a danger of reinventing the wheel, as illustrated in several of the English-language articles discussed above, which do not reference similar studies published – even in English - in other countries. Their authors can however surely be forgiven, in view of the fact that projects overlap chronologically and research findings are not always published immediately after the project is complete. Other articles about continental Europe, however, employ concepts developed in the UK and Poland and merge seamlessly with that literature.

Transnational ties and practices: the view from Poland

The literature on transnationalism is based on the assumption that migrants, while living abroad, inhabit transnational social spaces. Less attention has been paid to people in sending countries – both returnees and members of migrants' social networks - who inhabit transnational social spaces. Perspectives from Poland (not surprisingly, often in Polish) tend to be embedded in scholarship on the impact of migration on sending countries and, as is common in this literature, often have policy implications. The proportion of quantitative to qualitative research is also higher in research about Poland than in publications about UK Poles. Traditionally, impact of emigration research did not apply a transnational lens. It viewed absence from the sending country, rather than connectedness with foreign countries, as the chief result of migration. Polish migration research also focuses to some extent on gaps and absences. Migration contributes to low fertility rates (Fihel and Solga, 2014); emigration 'exports unemployment' as unemployed Poles absent themselves to work abroad; and the labour market has experienced shortages of certain skilled workers and professionals, as well as a general exodus of young and well-educated Poles. 'Brain drain' could however sometimes be better conceptualised as 'brain overflow', taking into account the fact that the Polish labour market cannot absorb so many graduates (Brzozowski, Jończy and Kaczmarczyk 2014; Fihel and Kaczmarczyk, 2009).

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Related to this exodus are concerns about 'care drain' and the situation of migrants' parents and children still living in Poland. Polish researchers have analysed media treatment of these often emotive issues (e.g. Dzięglewski, 2013a, 2013b).

However, similarly to researchers investigating other sending countries, contemporary Polish scholars tend to see the emergence of transnational ties as the main consequence of migration, rather than gaps and absences. Hence, for example, Krzyżowski (2013) and Walczak (2014) deny the existence of a significant care drain with regard to migrants' ageing parents and children. Instead, they emphasise the transnational caring which actually takes place in families divided by migration. Walczak (p. 91) also shows that the number of children in Poland with parents working abroad has fallen in recent years, presumably because transnational ties have transformed into family reunification (cf. White, 2011, on the link between concerns about split families and migration with children).

Some recent scholarship focuses not only on kin ties, but also on the transnational links of whole communities. Ethnographic studies of particular locations and migration cultures include Elrick, 2008 and White, 2011. These sit within a wider anthropological literature on the post-communist region, which captures the re-conceptualisation of proximity and distance in 'global villages' (Duizings (ed.), 2013) where near now seems far, and far seems near. As Koleva (2013, p. 144) writes about Bulgaria, 'As a result of the global spread of visitors and relatives, the inhabitants are aware of their village being situated in a geographical and virtual space which they could hardly have imagined a decade ago… Their world has widened, reaching far beyond the nearby towns.' Elrick (2008) reminds us that this intense weaving of transnational ties is a novelty even in some Polish locations, despite the long tradition of emigration from others. Even those 'high-sending' locations have experienced a shifting of perspectives on proximity, as local people migrate to a wider range of destinations, and Iceland, for example, can seem as close as Germany. Moreover, throughout the post-communist periphery, some inhabitants experience a sense of disconnectedness from wealthy cities within national borders, while international destinations are affordable and familiar by comparison.

Social remittances, when 'migrants export ideas and behaviours back to their sending communities' (Levitt and Lambda-Nieves 2011, p. 3) are also under scrutiny in Poland, together with associated methodological and theoretical challenges. This is among the most truly 'transnational' types of migration research: research projects include fieldwork in both sending and receiving countries (e.g. Duda-Mikulin (2013); Grabowska-Lusińska and Jaźwińska, 2014). Scholars internationally are collaborating in developing the concept, but Poland can be seen as a particularly busy laboratory for social remittances research.

There is quite a sizeable literature, mostly in Polish, on the wider phenomenon of return migration (summarised in Anacka and Fihel 2014; White, 2014). A number of programmes have attempted to help Polish migrants return (Kaczmarczyk, 2013). Policy-oriented research (e.g. Szymańska et al, 2012) includes recommendations for how returnees can be successfully re-integrated and encouraged to stay in Poland. However, surveys (e.g. Iglicka, 2010; Kierunek, 2010) suggest that many migrants do not return to Poland definitively. Instead, they continue to lead transnational lives, keeping options open for further migration. A small body of research (Grabowska-Lusińska, 2012; Szymańska, Ulasiński and Bieńkowska, 2012; White, 2013), examines the cases of specific returnees, teasing out the

complexities of their transnational lives and revealing many forms of repeated migration, some of it more planned and regular ('circular') than others.

Conclusion

This article has argued that there is no sharp divide between research on Polish migrants produced in Poland and in receiving countries. This is largely thanks to the transnational quality of Polish migration research. Hence the 'fragmentation between migration and post-migration studies', identified by Martiniello (2013) as a general phenomenon, is hardly visible. The most striking distinction is between the volume of English-language research produced about Poland and the UK, compared with publications on other receiving countries. This reflects the impact and importance of new Polish migration to the UK, because of its scale, but also, as part of that influx, the arrival of a band of Polish migration researchers.

   While there are differences in content between the literatures - including a dearth of research into domestic and seasonal work in the UK, and a predominance in the UK of qualitative studies, often from an insider perspective - similarities are more significant. The 'old-new' quality of contemporary EU mobility attracts the attention of Polish migration scholars everywhere in the region. Transnational networks and practices are identified as significant topics by researchers, whether they proceed from analysing Polish migration in the context of globalisation and European integration, or ground their analysis in small-scale empirical research. At the same time, scholars everywhere have to contend with empirical evidence of increasing settlement abroad, as well as the heterogeneity of the new Polish migrant population which comes with volume. Old assumptions about free and easy young migrants (based on the stereotypical migrant to the UK) have had to be jettisoned, prompting new reflection on how twenty-first century migrants experience and manage the often competing pulls of transnationalism and integration, and the impact of their changing identities and practices on their families, friends and neighbours in Poland.

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[1] See (Nowosielski 2012) for a review of literature about Germany, mostly published in Polish and German, often before 2004.

[2] For other pre-2004 publications by the same authors, see the Polish Migration Website http://www.ucl.ac.uk/ssees/research/polish-migration/publications-polish-migration

[3] I created the Website at the University of Bath; it is now at UCL SSEES http://www.ucl.ac.uk/ssees/research/polish-migration Despite its size, the Website is not a comprehensive bibliography, even of English-language publications; the researchers listed on the site contribute their own content.