Introduction

Małgorzata Budyta-Budzyńska

The twentieth century is described by some authors (Castles, Miller 2003) as a century of migration. While other authors have pronounced it the age of revolutions and social movements (both being contemporary phenomena closely related to modernization), and yet others – an age of totalitarianism and ethnic conflict, it does not seem that migrations are a phenomenon particularly characteristic of the twentieth century. Indeed, migration is as old as mankind itself – after all, wasn't man's exile from Paradise a migration from his previous home? Wasn't the wandering of the people of Israel a great migration, called the search for the promised land? Let us also recall that all modern European peoples (other than the Basques) arrived as migrants from Central Asia; some of them, such as the Vikings, continued migrating in search of land, or fleeing from excessively oppressive rulers. Migrations are integral to the history of mankind, and are not at all a recent nor atypical phenomenon. At most, we might say that the twentieth century has brought an increase in certain forms of migration: temporary – not leading to settlement, or family reunification[1]. What is new in the twentieth century is the study of migration. Migrations have become a subject of scholarly analysis, while previously at best the wanderings of particular peoples were reported[2].

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[1] According to some, the growth in migrations followed the increase of the schooling index, when education made people aware that there are countries that provide better living conditions (this applies primarily to the Third World). A similar effect is observed on nationalism, which often increases with schooling. Paradoxically, an increase in schooling may lead both to an increase in nationalistic tendencies, and a growth of migration.

[2] Nomadism tends to be associated with the pre-modern era, while modernity – with settlement. Post-modernity, as argued by Bauman, introduces a new form of nomadism: elite nomadism.

The twenty-first century, with increased ease of communication, greater openness of borders, the growth of information technology, and processes of globalization and unifying tendencies resulting from the influence of global mass media – will surely see an intensification of migration processes. A growing number of migrant minorities will appear alongside the old national and ethnic minorities, the so-called autochtonic ones (*autochton*: Greek for native); and a growing number of people will comprise these so-called allochtonic minorities (*allochton*: Greek for alien). Issues related to the incorporation of immigrants into the host society are already a very important part of the internal policy of modern states. Success in integrating immigrants depends on many factors, including a correct diagnosis of the situation within the majority and minority communities – hence the large number of studies on the subject of immigration.

In April and May of 2010, we conducted a sociological study among the Polish minority in Iceland. The team carrying out the study was composed of sociologists and students of sociology from Warsaw's Collegium Civitas, and anthropologists and students of anthropology from the University of Iceland in Reykjavik – lending increased interest to this study, since in addition to varied research perspectives: Icelandic majority vs. Polish minority, immigrants vs. hosts, there is a variety of approaches: sociological vs. anthropological. On the Icelandic side, the team was headed by Professor Unnur Dís Skaptadóttir, while on the Polish side – by Dr. Małgorzata Budyta-Budzyńska.

The situation of the Polish community in Iceland is in many ways peculiar. While the community is **small** in comparison with the numbers of Polish minorities in other countries, it is the largest of the national minorities in Iceland, this being the only such case in the world. The dominance in numbers of Poles among immigrants in Iceland is so strong (nearly 11 thousand in early 2010, of a total of 27 thousand immigrants) that foreign immigrants are often equated with Poles, and any misconduct by foreigners is automatically attributed to Poles.

The Polish community is also rather **recent**, having arrived in the country not long ago. Iceland was never in the past a target of Polish settlement, therefore there is no old immigrant community here, and the typical split between old and recent immigrants is not present. (Of course there is always a division between old and new, since there always are

more and less recent arrivals. "Old" and "new" are relative concepts – in this case, however, we are referring to the distinction observed among Polish emigrants to Western Europe and the US: the old being those who arrived soon after World War II, and the new being political emigrants of the 1980s and the even more recent ones). Since the Polish community in Iceland is so recent, the issues concerning the second and third generation of immigrants, described by many scholars, for instance in Robert Park's pioneering studies on immigrants, do not appear. There are no adult second-generation immigrants torn between their parents' nation of origin, and the land of their birth. Currently, the second generation of Polish immigrants in Iceland is at pre-school or at most – grade-school age. It is growing in numbers, since Polish children are being born in Iceland; it may be foreseen that the issues described by Park are yet to arise[3].

Polish emigrants to Iceland emigrated purely due to economic or cognitive reasons – there are no political emigrants among them. What stimulated settlement in Iceland were mainly the island's excellent economic conditions, Poland's accession to the European Union and the consequent opening of Iceland's labour market (Iceland belongs to the Schengen zone), and for some – Iceland's exotic character. The lack of political emigrants is significant, since it influences the political involvement of immigrants in Iceland's civic life, their participation in Polish community organizations, and most importantly the very character of those organizations.

Finally, emigration to Iceland is rather **difficult**, in view of the natural conditions and considerable distance from the home country. The climate being entirely different than in Poland, the radically dissimilar landscape,

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[3] We should mention here the syndrome of the "new one" in a train compartment. Every person who joins an already partly occupied train compartment is treated by those who were there before him/her with apprehension, until a new "new one" appears. At that point, the previous "new one" becomes one of the "old" and the distance towards him/her vanishes. This mechanism was invoked by Norbert Elias to explain ethnic tensions in housing projects in England in the 1960s. His conclusion was that the time of settlement, and not ethnic differences, were the main factor behind ethnic conflicts (cf. Scheffer 2010). The syndrome of the "new one" in the train compartment may also be observed within emigrant groups. Conflicts arise not only due to clear generational, historical or demographic differences, but mainly due to the different times of arrival in the new home country.

and hazards related to volcanic eruptions and earthquakes cause the issue of climatic and environmental conditions to appear in many conversations and make it a factor in planning for the future.

Other than the features mentioned above, the community of Polish emigrants to Iceland is typical of post-accession times: it's young in age (often meaning lack of family ties, which can influence the duration of emigration and the amounts of money transferred to the home country; also, their work abroad is often the emigrants' first job), better educated than most emigrants in the past, quite mobile – many of our subjects had prior experience as emigrants, mostly originating from small or medium-size cities (up to 200 thousand inhabitants); with regard to general demographic characteristics they do not differ from typical recent, post-accession Polish emigrant communities in other countries (Iglicka 2008; Grabowska-Lisińska, Okólski 2009; Jończy 2009).

One may inquire whether Polish emigration to Iceland at the turn of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries is a transient phenomenon, or the beginning of long-term Polish settlement in Iceland – which of course, in view of the island's size, will never be a massive movement. In most cases, the targets of emigration were dictated by tradition (certain countries were traditional destinations for emigration), and facilitation tendencies (attraction of peers) resulting from the existence of emigrant social networks. In the case of Iceland, the sole factor that stimulated the arrival of the first immigrants was the excellent economic climate of the last 20 years, and Poland's accession to the EU. However, in view of the island's current economic crisis, and the opening for Poles of other labour markets – most importantly, the German market, will the stream of migration to Iceland continue, or will it rather dry up? Our study was aimed at producing a "sociological snapshot" of the Polish community in Iceland as of 2010 AD. In a few years, such a "snapshot" may become of purely historical value if the Polish community all but vanishes, leaving behind just a few who established family ties in the new country. However, it might as well become a document of the beginnings of a lasting Polish community in Iceland. Today it is difficult to predict whether the Polish community will become a permanent fixture in Iceland's social landscape, or whether it will shrink; whatever the future may bring, it seems to be worthwhile to perform such a snapshot.

Another point of interest lies in describing the contact between two communities, which until recently were nearly entirely ethnically homogeneous and had little experience of multiculturalism. Only 20 years ago, Iceland was an almost entirely ethnically uniform nation, people of foreign origin were few. Other than the group of a few thousand US military stationed at the Keflavik base, whose contacts with the local population were very limited, and seasonal fishing workers from the Faroe Islands, in 1989 Iceland had 10 thousand resident foreigners, slightly above 3 percent of the island's population (a number roughly equal to the percentage of Poland's population made up of national and ethnic minorities, and resident foreigners).

Practice in multiculturalism is important, since an ethnically homogeneous society tends to be less receptive towards outsiders than a multi-ethnic one. A classical example, which in addition makes an interesting comparison due to its insularity, is provided by Japan.

Studies on immigrant communities are also of relevance to the host society – or perhaps primarily to the host society, since the presence of immigrants forces a change in the understanding of the category of nation and national identity. In many cultures, the image of the alien had an impact on the group's self-image; the "alien" was usually a negative reflection, in opposition to which the self-image was shaped. In Poland, this role was usually given to the Germans, the Russians, occasionally to the Turks. In Iceland, due to ages of isolation, the situation was radically different: there were no "aliens" to relate to in forming a self-image (one can hardly consider the Danish authorities a group with which the local population maintained social relations). A (positive) mirror was provided to the Icelanders by their ancestors from the period of initial settlement, whose acts, both valiant and repugnant: disputes, quarrels and intrigues, were described in the sagas. The point of reference for the shaping of national identity was given by the society of the sagas; the ancestors were the "others" in reference to whom the Icelanders formed their modern identity (Hastrup 2008). At present, Iceland has its "aliens" and Icelanders realize that this new situation demands from them a redefinition of their idea of nation and national identity. The debate on immigrants: how best to incorporate them into the society, what their rights should be, is actually a debate about the hosts – how they understand citizenship, membership in the nation, national culture and national identity. Such

a debate has now begun in Iceland (Skaptadottir, Loftsdottir 2009). Currently, it is no longer possible to state, as does the main character in the book *101 Reykjavik,* that "the only reason people live here is that they were born here" (Helgason 2001, p. 36).

Research topics

In the last decade of the 20th century, together with the development of the aluminum industry, construction and fishing, the number of immigrants in Iceland began to grow explosively, reaching nearly 10 percent at the end of the first decade of the 21st century. In 2007, the first document concerning the policy of immigrants' integration was issued – earlier there was no need to address the topic. The historical and political conditions underlying migration to Iceland are described in the first chapter, by Unnur Dís Skaptadóttir, titled *The context of Polish immigration and integration in Iceland.*

In the following text *History and characteristic of migration from Poland to Iceland*, Anna Wojtyńska describes the history of Polish migrations to Iceland. Though not a long one, this history is interesting as it rather differs from the cases of other countries. Even in such a brief history, it is possible to distinguish several phases of Polish emigration to Iceland. Whether more phases will yet follow remains an open question.

The present study was aimed at describing the degrees and ways in which Polish immigrants make their "entry" into the community of the majority. For this purpose, a theoretical model of the "entry" of aliens into the host society was formulated, distinguishing four analytical categories: separation, adaptation, integration and assimilation, which are referred to four dimensions of the life of individuals and groups: the economic, the socio-political, the cultural, and concerning identity. The "entry" of immigrants into the host community happens at different rates and intensities in each of the four mentioned areas, therefore they need to be analyzed separately. The chapter titled *Adaptation, integration, assimilation – an attempt at a theoretical approach*, by Małgorzata Budyta-Budzyńska, describes the theoretical model used in the present study. Let us remark that not all the cases enumerated and described in the model were actually observed in Iceland: some of them were sporadic while others were clearly over-represented.

The eagerness to learn a new culture and to "enter" into a foreign society is most certainly affected by what were the motives for leaving one's country. The motives for leaving determine emigration strategies and often affect how the first job is sought. This, in turn, is indicative of the person's capability to find his/her way around in the new social environment. These relationships are the subject of the chapter by Katarzyna Tworek, *The motives of migration and the types of migration – the case of Polish emigrants to Iceland.* The author describes the types of migration observed in the case of migrations to other countries, and inquires whether similar types are observed as well in the particular case of Iceland.

In the economical dimension, an indication of the successful "entry" into the host society is given by competence in dealing with the labour market, and acceptance of the hosts' work ethic. This was the subject treated by Daniel Gutowski and Paweł Maranowski. In the chapter *Work and corporate culture in Iceland as seen by Poles*, they described the Icelandic work ethic – the extent to which it differs from the Polish one, whether it is accepted by Polish workers, what Poles find annoying in the Icelandic way of working, and what they find likable.

Our research was carried out in a period that, while interesting, was difficult for the people of Iceland – during a time of economic breakdown and financial crisis on the island. It seemed interesting to describe the adaptive strategies applied by Polish immigrants in the face of an economic crisis affecting the host country. These are quite varied and depend on the language and cultural competence of the subject, his/her first profession, but above all on his/her motives for leaving the home country and plans for the future. The crisis in Iceland and how Polish immigrants react to it is described by Małgorzata Budyta-Budzyńska in the chapter *The Icelandic financial crisis and adaptation strategies by Poles in Iceland.* Paradoxically, as shown by the author, in spite of suffering a higher unemployment rate than native Icelanders, Poles were to a lesser extent affected by the economic breakdown – for several reasons, among them their highly conservative economical conduct.

In the social and cultural dimension, the degree of "entry" of immigrants into the host society is affected by how the majority group is perceived by the minority – in this case, the perception of the Icelanders by the Poles. May one speak of the existence of a national stereotype

concerning the locals, among Poles in Iceland? Do jokes or anecdotes exist that either ridicule or praise the features of the hosts? An attempt to answer these questions is made by Małgorzata Budyta-Budzyńska in the paper *Polish perception of Iceland and Icelanders.*

The process of "immersion" into the majority community, like any social process, should be analyzed from two perspectives: that of the minority, and of the majority. We were interested in how Poles perceive Icelanders, but also in how Icelanders perceive Poles. The image of Polish construction workers among Icelandic businessmen is described by Álfrún Sigurgeirsdóttir in the chapter *Polish labour workers in the construction industry in Reykjavik.* The picture that arises from her work is not single-colored. The interviewed Icelandic businessmen expressed conflicting opinions about Polish workers – while they appreciated the punctuality and diligence of Poles, they also pointed out their lack of self-steering and the need for constant supervision and incentives ("stick and carrot"). Generally, though, Polish construction workers compared favorably to other nationalities.

The process of "entry" of immigrants into the majority is affected by the image of immigrants in the media and by integration policies of the host state. Those subjects were treated in the texts by Helga Ólafs and Helga Ólafsdóttir.

The former author describes the image of the immigrant in the media, based on an analysis of media content and on opinions obtained from those concerned. The media can be one of the main instruments of integration, as their influence is extremely powerful. On one hand, they are a vehicle for public opinion, but on the other – they themselves form and model public opinion. The media in Iceland do not favor the process of integration, and this is stated by both researchers and immigrants. Why this is the case is explained in the work titled *Polish immigrants and the Icelandic media.*

The latter author, in the chapter *Integration and adult education for immigrants in Iceland,* analyzes the role of language courses for adult immigrants as an element of the state's integration policy. Until recently, Icelanders translated legal documents and regulations applying to immigrants into the immigrants' national languages; in addition, translations of important articles from the Icelandic press were to be found on the Internet. Presently, the language policy has changed, and not only

as a result of the crisis. It was decided that translations delay the process of integration and cannot be a substitute for learning the language. In addition, the pressure to learn the Icelandic language is to serve to protect the language itself, an aspect which has long been valued by the hosts.

The social and cultural dimension may be analyzed via the description of holiday celebration. The subject of Polish celebrations in Iceland was treated by Monika Nowicka in the chapter *Celebrating and relaxing as isolation practices*. How and with whom do Poles in Iceland celebrate holidays and family ceremonies? Do they take part in Icelandic feasts, and what do they know about them? Celebration can be a source of integration, being a good excuse for social meetings – but can as well become an isolating factor.

The subject of participation in feasts and public events is treated also by Ólöf Júlíusdóttir in the chapter *Inclusion and exclusion of foreigners in the Westfjords of Iceland*. The author attempts to answer the question why immigrants, and Poles in particular, do not take part in cultural events. What omissions are being made by the Icelandic side in organizing public events, and what faults can be attributed to the Poles. Immigrants are quite eager to participate in events that appeal to their ethnic roots – but might not such a presentation render a false image of their national culture?

The last dimension of "entry" into a foreign society is that which concerns identity. To what extent do Poles in Iceland maintain contact with their country of origin and follow events in Poland, and to what degree are they immersed in the Icelandic life? Do they stick together and manifest solidarity towards each other, or are they rather a loose group that appears uniform only to outsiders? An attempt to address these questions is made by Małgorzata Budyta-Budzyńska and Julia Olesińska in the paper *Reactions of Polish emigrants in Iceland to the Smolensk disaster*. The study was carried out a few days after the Smolensk disaster, which motivated us to approach this subject. We regard the reactions displayed by Poles in the face of this event as an indicator of their involvement in the affairs of the home country. The disaster united Poles and pulled them towards "togetherness", but beyond this incidental occurrence, Icelandic Poles are neither united, nor well-organized as a group. Just like in other Polish emigrant communities, divisions do exist among Poles in Iceland (though perhaps to a lesser extent than elsewhere).

Methodology

The present study was conducted employing qualitative methods. In a qualitative study, attention is given to individual experience and the sense that the subject makes of it. The point is not in analyzing correlations and cause-effect relationships, but in emotions and reflections. It is a study of the actor's perspective: how he/she perceives the social environment; what it actually is like is of lesser importance. What is described is not the social situation as such, but rather how it is perceived and interpreted by the interviewees (Thomas's classical definition of social situation).

The research reported in the present volume was focused on describing the variety of strategies of adapting to a new social environment, and on determining the degree to which the immigrants have made their "entry" into the majority community. The main method employed was semi-structured in-depth interview. This is the method most suited to the study of the issues defined within the project, in addition, it fits perfectly within the times – we live in a "interview society", the interview is ubiquitous. We carried out nearly 60 (exactly 56) two-hour interviews. The sample studied was in no way representative – as is usual in the case of studies on "hidden" communities; it was rather aim-oriented, obtained by the "snowball method", or by locating prospective interviewees in meeting places or at work. The questions were of an open character, allowing the interviewees to freely lay out accounts of their lives as emigrants.

The study was carried out in Reykjavik, because it is here that resident Poles are subject to acculturation processes. There are Poles who reside in fishing villages along the coast, but in most cases they represent a model of incomplete emigration: earn your money here (i.e. in Iceland), spend it there (in Poland); they live within closed Polish groups, rarely interacting with Icelandic society, and plan to return to Poland. There do exist individuals who, living in the villages, have decided to remain there permanently – but as shown in our study (see Olof Juliousdóttir's contribution), they seldom undergo acculturation processes.

Other than the interviews, our report also makes use of certain pre-existing data: statistics, opinions encountered on the Internet, results of other studies. In particular, pre-existing data were employed by the Icelandic part of the research team in analyzing the media discourse, attitudes of employers towards immigrants, and the integration policy of

the state and local governments, namely data including statistics, press articles, and government documents concerning policy on immigration and integration and own studies carried out at the University of Iceland.

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