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The lives of foreign academics in Poland: their motivations and adaptation in Kraków, a “Polish Silicon Valley”

Introduction¹

Cultural diversity and international exchange of ideas is one of the core characteristics of innovative, creative economies in the most developed countries. Many scholars, such as those referred to below, believe that HSMs (highly skilled migration) contribute to the prosperity of a region. Immigration is considered one of the bases of a creative milieu. Charles Landry and Franco Bianchini are of the opinion that settled immigrants (“outsiders and insiders at the same time”), because of their backgrounds, have different ways of looking at problems and different priorities. This can give a creative impulse to a city (1995: 23-25), as Saskia Sassen states as well (1991: 32). According to Richard Florida, a “large number of studies point to the role of immigrants in economic development” (2002: 252; see also Damelang and Haas 2012). Some regions have introduced special programs to encourage scientists and other talented people to settle in them (see Yeoh and Yap 2008: 177-202; Findlay, Jovett and Skeldon 1991).

The growing sensitivity of public opinion and the academic community to migrations, links between spatial mobility, and reproduction of socio-economic inequalities have given rise to a “mobility turn” in social research (see, e.g., Urry 2002; Faist 2013). A new characteristics of this perspective (paradigm) is, according to Thomas Faist, a trend towards a reconsideration of patterns and manifestations of special mobility, in which two approaches in research became crucial: applying the frame of the “network society” and the frame of transnationality.

Unlike traditional Polish mass migration (to and from), what we call “highly skilled migration” (HSM) does not have a vast literature even though it seems to be particularly important in the context of the modernization debate taking place in international

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(see, e.g., Sinatti and Horst 2014) and Polish migration studies (see, e.g., Okólski 2012; Piekut 2014).

The aim of this article is to analyze both the motivations of foreign scholars² (who constitute a significant portion of the HSMs) to come to Poland – specifically to Kraków – and their ways of adaptation to this academic center. Why do Eastern and Western scientists want to work here? Is it difficult to adapt to the Polish culture? What is the level of satisfaction of foreigners in Kraków, and where do they find themselves culturally and socially?

So far, Poland as a whole, particularity in the field of education, remains rather homogeneous. Polish scientists are working hard to earn international recognition, with varying results (some are successful, others are not), but the most visible thing is that Poland fails to attract many foreign scholars. An unpublished Polish report issued by the Ministry of Science (SIoSW 2012; Mucha and Łuczaj 2014) states that 1,887 foreigners were employed full-time in academic positions in Poland in November 2012, constituting 1.9% of all academics working in the country. Also Eurostat gathers data on researchers³ working in the EU member states plus Serbia⁴. This institution, however, distinguishes between researchers employed in the government sector and the higher education sector. The percentage of foreigners employed in the higher education sector in Poland slowly increased from 1.26% in 2010 to 1.64% in 2014. Compared to other countries this percentage of foreign researchers is rather low, even if we consider similar countries such as Hungary or the Czech Republic (see: Table 1). In most of the cases, however, the corresponding percentage was below 6 percent. The only exceptions are Estonia, Malta, Portugal and Cyprus and this difference can be easily explained on historical grounds. Earlier data from Eurostat (2006) shows that other countries with a significant proportion of foreign researchers are Luxembourg (62.9% of foreigners) and Switzerland (43.7%),⁵ countries with equally complicated histories.

² We use the terms scholars, academics, and scientists interchangeably.

³ According to Eurostat, “Researchers are professionals engaged in the conception or creation of new knowledge, products, processes, methods and systems and also in the management of the projects concerned”, see: http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/cache/metadata/en/rd_esms.htm, accessed 12 January 2017.

⁴ Unfortunately, after 2010, for many countries (including Germany, France and the United Kingdom) this kind of data is missing. Eurostat presents information on 17 European countries (see Table 1).

⁵ Source: Eurostat, see: http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.vphp?title=File:Researchers_in_the_government_and_higher_education_sectors_by_citizenship,_available_countries,_2006.PNG&oldid=25021#filehistory, accessed 11 January 2017.

Table 1. Foreign researchers in higher education system (2014)

Country	Researchers in HE	Foreign researchers in HE	Percentage
Cyprus	1,527	397	26
Portugal	51,924	5,293	10.19
Malta	849	81	9.54
Estonia	4,811	395	8.21
Czech Republic (2011)	20,732	1,136	5.48
Spain	119,29	6,243	5.23
Italy	79,220	4,119	5.20
Serbia	10,769	428	3.97
Slovakia	17,668	535	3.03
Slovenia (2013)	4,310	124	2.88
Lithuania (2012)	13,939	350	2.51
Hungary	15,925	346	2.17
Greece (2013)	38,724	837	2.16
Poland	70,771	1,158	1.64
Bulgaria	8,505	39	0.46
Croatia	6,966	12	0.17
Romania (2011)	15,086	22	0.15

Source: Own compilation based on Eurostat – R&D statistics; rd_p_perscitz data (last update: 12.12.2016). Exceptions to the reference year: CZ, GR, LT, SI, RO

If this is to be changed, and policymakers are willing to attract more international scholars, it is important to look at people who have decided to move here and analyze their motivations and problems to overcome.

Looking at the data from early 2013 we discovered 146,253 applications (137,328 of them concerned Ukrainians) to the Polish local Labor Offices stating the need to employ foreigners (Gadowska et al 2014: 49–115). Most foreigners were needed in agriculture. Under the separate administrative code for “professionals, scientists and technical personnel”, the very small number of registered applications (743 people, including 614 Ukrainians) indicates that HSMs do not belong to the mainstream. HSMs are very important, however; their share of the migrant population can be treated as a touchstone of innovation and the attractiveness of Polish higher education and the science system.

In 2015 there were 520 institutions of higher education in Poland (see www.polon.nauka.gov.pl; accessed July 25, 2015). Around 101,600 “scientific workers” were em-

ployed⁶. According to the most prestigious 2015 ranking of institutions of higher education in Poland (*The Perspektywy Ranking*), among the top 50 (out of 90 analyzed schools), there are 10 institutions from Warsaw and five each from Kraków (the capital of the Malopolska region in southern Poland), Poznań, and Wrocław. As well, most of the high-tech companies operating in Poland have their headquarters in these cities. Therefore, we can call them, metaphorically, the Polish “Silicon Valleys”. Of the Kraków institutions, Jagiellonian University is ranked 1st in the country, AGH University is 6th, Cracow University of Technology is 38th, the University of Agriculture in Kraków is 39th, and Cracow University of Economics is 47th⁷. The Pedagogical University of Cracow, in which we are also interested, is ranked between the 51st and 60th positions (more details in: Mucha and Łuczaj 2016).

In the international rankings of universities, only Poland’s University of Warsaw and Jagiellonian University are listed (usually in the fourth hundred, out of the about 500 institutions included). In the top 500, in Central and Eastern Europe (CEE), there are these two schools from Poland, two schools from Hungary, one from the Czech Republic, and one from Slovenia⁸. However, when we look at countries receiving Erasmus exchange students in 2014, Poland is in the 6th position in the European Union, with the Czech Republic and Hungary 12th and 18th, respectively⁹. The motivations of those students remain unknown. We attempt here to interpret motivations of their more “mature” counterparts – international scholars.

Polish scholars of HSM have published a number of reports on migration of “specialists” in the context of Polish membership in the European Union (see, e.g., Kaczmarczyk and Okólski 2005), highly qualified foreign specialists on the Polish labor market (see, e.g., Konieczna-Salamatin 2015), on the “brain drain”¹⁰ and emigration of

⁶ Most of them “academic teachers;” see: www.polon.nauka.gov.pl, accessed 25 July 2015.

⁷ See: www.perspektywy.pl/RSW 2015, accessed 25 July 2015.

⁸ <http://www.shanghairanking.com/ARWU2015.html> 28022016, accessed 10 March 2016.

⁹ See: http://ec.europa.eu/education/tools/statistics_en.htm, accessed 10 March 2016. Jagiellonian University receives the most Erasmus students in Poland (http://ec.europa.eu/education/library/statistics/2014/poland_en.pdf, accessed 10 March 2016).

¹⁰ Migration of highly qualified personnel is often analyzed in terms of “brain drain”. It refers to “a phenomenon in which people of a high level of skills, qualifications, and competence, leave their countries and emigrate. The most typical case of the brain drain happens when students from developing countries studying in the developed countries decide not to return home after their studies” (Baruch, Budhwar and Khatri 2007: 99). The term appeared in 1963 to be applied to the emigration of scientists and engineers from England to the United States (Hart 2007: 44). Global multidirectional transformations have brought forth new concepts, such as “talent flow”, “brain gain,” as well as “brain circulation” (see, e.g., Jalowiecki and Gorzelak 2004: 299; Baruch, Budhwar and Khatri 2007; Fontes 2007: 285; Ackers and Gill 2008). From today’s perspective,

Polish scholars (see, e.g., Hryniewicz, Jałowiecki and Mync 1997; Jałowiecki and Gorzelak 2004), the “homing” or return policies and return realities in the case of Polish scholars working abroad (see, e.g., Wagner 2010; Wagner 2011), “expats” and their social life in Warsaw (Piekut 2013), and the intentions of foreign scholars in their potential employment in Poland (Łazarowicz-Kowalik 2011). Moreover, young emigrating Polish scholars (mainly after the Polish accession to the EU) were studied by foreign scholars (see, e.g., Ackers and Gill 2008). In the following, we are not elaborating on these topics, but will refer to some of the concepts and ideas in due course. As mentioned above, we are not interested in all kinds of HSM, such as “expats”, Polish scholars emigrating or returning back home, but in foreign scholars who come to Poland and their motivations and adaptation.

Conceptual frameworks

Migration flows have an internal social stratification: various ethnic (or racial) groups move from country to country, and men and women migrate to similar or different jobs and positions. There are also class inequalities. Internationally mobile scholars are usually included in a much larger and ambiguous category of highly skilled migrants (HSM). There is a vast literature on this subject of the “emergence of new ‘global elites’ [...] with unprecedented mobile and cosmopolitan lifestyles” (Favel, Feldblum and Smith 2006: 2; see also: Nowicka 2005). Managers, experts, engineers, physicians, and scholars belong to this privileged end of the continuum. Reflecting on globalization and postmodernity, Zygmunt Bauman, in his analysis of two categories of mobile people, tourists and vagabonds¹¹, says that we are now witnessing two opposed social worlds (from the point of view of migrations). For those who live in the first world, the cosmopolitan, borderless world of people of global business, managers of global culture and academics, state borders cease to exist. For members of the second world, the walls of immigration control, policies of permanent residence and “zero tolerance” are increasingly higher (1998, Chapter 4).

The first world is also diversified: there are, for instance, distinctions between the HSM and “expats” in terms of recruitment, institutional dependence, career course, lifestyle, etc. (see, e.g., Riemsdijk, Basford and Burnham 2015). Some migrants who are highly educated and skilled in their home countries must, due to labor market conditions, take menial jobs in the countries of destination. Skills and education are not

it can be observed that despite the undeniable asymmetry of the exchange, all of partners seem to benefit from it, and all parties usually share the costs (see also: Mucha and Łuczaj 2014a).

¹¹ In earlier works, he distinguishes four models of postmodern identities: tourist, vagabond, pilgrim and player (see, e.g., Bauman 1996).

enough to belong to the mobile “elite”. Students, nurses, and midlevel employees, as well as many academics and artists, should instead be analyzed as “middling” in class terms. On the lower end of the continuum, there are unskilled or semi-skilled, underprivileged migrant laborers, and also war victims, refugees, and displaced persons (see, e.g., Conradson and Latham 2005; Favel, Feldblum and Smith 2006; Faist 2013; Rutten and Verstappen 2014; Riemsdijk, Basford and Burnham 2015; Luthra and Platt 2016; Loacker and Śliwa 2016). We will be using the concept of HSM, but with all the reservations mentioned above.

What seems to be particularly important in the processes of spatial mobility of scholars? Their migrating has been an important aspect of the *habitus* of knowledge production. Its main features seem to be the relatively independent and individual ways of the organization of migration¹², stimulated mainly by the ambition to achieve higher prestige and recognition. Scientific curiosity and self-realization are also important motives. Individual economic motivations are important, but the intention is rather to get access to good infrastructure, to the *tacit* aspects of knowledge production. In many cases, mobility is not so much a matter of choice as a necessity. For professors moving to low-prestige universities in another country, reasons to go may be the “limited available positions in their home countries or places of choice that commensurate their degrees”, or “to seek career advancement through further research and international teaching experience” (Chihye Kim 2015: 607, 611; see also, e.g., Richmond 1994; Ivancheva and Gourova 2011; Mucha 2013, Mucha and Łuczaj 2014; Morano-Foadi 2015; Bauder 2015; Ganga et al. 2016).

In the journal papers related to academic (and, in some cases, highly skilled in general) migrants, six main research topics could be identified. The first research area, in which we are interested here, deals with patterns of spatial mobility: places from which immigrants come to the scientific centers abroad, life or career trajectories of migrating scholars, and the concentration of scientists from one home country in another host country. The second area is a broadly understood environment of academic work (labs, classrooms, libraries). This is beyond the scope of this paper. The third is the functioning of the global world of science. From this perspective, migrating scholars are considered as potential links between home and host countries (and also other countries where they can and do find employment). “Return migrations of scholars” is a very important sub-type of this area which is beyond the scope of our interest here. Fourth, on the intersection of the global problems of the world of science and the problems of national academic systems, the issue of academic diasporas becomes more

¹² However, there is a new body of literature on self-initiated expatriates referring mostly to managers. See, e.g., Al Ariss, Koali, Özbilgin and Suutari 2012; Biedman and Andersen 2010; Cao, Hirschi and Deller 2012; Doherty, Richardson and Thorn 2013; Selmer and Lauring 2012.

and more important. We only touch upon this issue. Fifth, research on communities of highly skilled expatriates from various countries, who work and live in a particular place abroad is worth mentioning. We have not come across communities of expatriated foreign academics in Poland, but we ask the question to what extent it might exist in Kraków. Another popular research area is that of ethnic acculturation and integration (see, e.g., Mucha and Łuczaj 2014a).

Despite strong recent criticism of theoretical models of classic acculturation, adaptation and assimilation (see, e.g., Redford, Linton and Herskovits 1936; Herskovits 1960; Gordon 1964), these concepts have returned in new contexts of mass migration (see, e.g., Alba and Nee 1997). According to John W. Berry and his followers, when analysing acculturation (assimilation, adaptation), one has to separately consider: a) migrants' intention to maintain (all or some of) their original cultural patterns, and b) their intention to adapt to some patterns of the receiving society. If we attribute two values (yes or no) to each of the two dimensions, we come up with a four-field model of attitudes adopted by migrants: a) integration (yes/yes), b) assimilation (no/yes), c) separation (yes/no) and d) marginalization (no/no). Empirical studies show that most migrants prefer integration and are against marginalization. However, different migrant groups prefer different acculturation options, and these groups are rarely homogenous in their disposition to acculturation. It is necessary to analyse not only the migrants' perspective, but also that of the host society. The receiving country's population usually has different approaches to migrants' acculturation, depending on their characteristics, and both immigrants and host society group strategies can change from generation to generation (see, e.g., Berry 2009). Marisol Navas' (and her colleagues') "Relative Acculturation Extended Model" (RAEM) adds new factors to Berry's ideas: a) a distinction between acculturation attitudes preferred by both generalized involved parties (immigrants and host society), or the "ideal situation" and, on the other hand, the strategies they actually adopt, or the "real situation," b) the consideration of various domains or spheres of socio-cultural reality in which different strategies can be proposed. According to the RAEM one should distinguish between the "hard core" (private action, or symbolic) zone and the "periphery" (public action, material) zones in the cultures of the groups in question. Attitudes tend to be more strongly maintained and defended in the former zone. Acculturation, of both the migrant groups to the host society and the host society to the cultures of immigrants, will always be partial and selective (Navas et al 2005; see also Mucha 2016).

Method and sampling

We present the methods of our Internet study and of our interpretative analysis as well as the sampling; intentions of foreign scholars to come to stay and work in Kraków

and ways of self-identification of mobile scholars; basic types of immigrant academics in Kraków; barriers and facilitators of adaptation to Poland and its academic world, and the international contacts of foreign scholars. To the extent it is possible, we compare our findings with those of other studies, conducted in Poland and abroad.

Based on the content publically accessible on the university websites, we identified 85 foreign scholars from the six biggest universities in Kraków, one of the most important academic centers in Poland. Nearly half of the scholars we identified were employed by Jagiellonian University (48%), and more than one-fourth by the AGH University (27%). The remaining scholars worked at the Pedagogical University (13%), Cracow University of Technology (7%), University of Agriculture (4%), and Cracow University of Economics (1%).

The coders looked up all scholars holding foreign names or surnames, and then verified if the people in question were foreigners¹³ or felt as such. The onomastic method allowed us to find a specific subcategory: besides “typical” immigrants (i.e., the foreign-born), we identified people who were born in Poland and then spent a considerable part of their lives (including education) abroad and later returned to Poland and defined themselves as immigrants. We have two such cases in our interviewed sample¹⁴.

Our onomastic method (Salentin 2014; Recchi 2015) allowed us to gather more in-depth data compared with official statistics, often partial and imperfect. Among others, it allowed us to utilize additional criteria, such as gender, unavailable in the database of the Polish Ministry of Science and Higher Education. As we have noted elsewhere (Mucha and Łuczaj 2016), the ethnic background of the scholars in our Internet sample corresponded with nationwide percentages of foreign nationals, with a vast majority of eastern Europeans¹⁵.

¹³ Referring to the solutions adopted in the international studies, mainly the “onomastic method” (see, e.g., Salentin 2014, Recchi 2015), we initially classify as a “foreigner” a person who had a foreign or ethnic first name and last name (e.g. Petra Berg), foreign last name, even if it is accompanied by neutral or Polish first name (e.g. Adam Savigny) or foreign first name accompanied by Polish last name (e.g. Noam Kowalski). However, further scrutiny shows to what extent the first criterion was correct. In all cases, investigators were obliged to use the Google search engine to verify whether the person actually was a foreigner (especially in the second and third case). It allowed us to eliminate a situation when scholars with foreign first or last names would be invited for an interview despite the fact they were raised in Poland and are Poles from the ethnic point of view.

¹⁴ One of these informants was a member of an ethnic minority in Poland, and the second emigrated when he was a young university student and returned to Poland recently.

¹⁵ According to the Urząd do Spraw Cudzoziemców, in 2014, Ukrainians possessed 31% of all residence cards, Vietnamese 11%, Russians 10%, Byelorussians 9%, Armenians (4%) and Chinese (4%). Poland is an attractive destination country for Ukrainians because the spatial proximity and

We intended to interview similar numbers of a/ male and female scholars and b) representatives of natural and technical sciences and of humanities and social sciences. Eventually, we interviewed 23 immigrant scholars. They worked full time as researchers and academic teachers in Kraków in 2015¹⁶. All interviews except one were conducted in Polish but the interviewees had the opportunity to choose the language¹⁷. We draw this sample from the database created in the course of our Internet study based on the onomastic method, mentioned above. Along with scientific literature that supports this method, common sense knowledge and the results of the scrutiny justified this choice¹⁸. All qualitative interviews are based on selective memories of informants. Their stories represent today's accounts of the dynamics of their trajectories. In the interviews, we attempted to capture unique experiences and focused on matters that seemed to be relevant for interviewees. We put premium on the motivations to work in Poland as well as the process of adaptation. The technique of individual in-depth interviews (IDI) allowed us to deepen our understanding of key notions discussed in the remainder of this paper (Kvale 2008; Rubin and Rubin 2012). Although our project should be considered a case study and its results cannot be easily generalized, it enabled us to discover recurring career paths and analyze international cooperation at the level of the individual (Lahire 2003).

Due to the small number of international scholars in Kraków, the most challenging issue was related to anonymity and privacy of our informants. When presenting quotations from the interviews, we decided not to reveal any information on nationality and gender. Instead, we refer to our interviewees as members of two broad groups, "Westerners" or "Easterners".

Among our 23 informants, there were 15 male and 8 female scholars, of which 9 came from Ukraine; 3 from Italy; 2 each from Germany, France, and Russia; and one each from Armenia, Czech Republic, Hungary, Slovakia, and Vietnam. Thus, "Easter-

partly common history. Some of them are temporary workers in agriculture and construction, others in the cleaning sector. The Vietnamese students (mostly at the AGH University) started to settle in Kraków in the 1960s. Armenia is a Caucasus country (about 2700 km from Poland), but the tradition of Armenian settlement in Poland, including Kraków, is very long. The first settlers appeared here in the Middle Ages (Gadowska et al. 2014: 11–47, 49, 55, 69; Brzozowski and Pędziwiatr 2014).

¹⁶ We intended to reach a balance between male and female scholars, coming from the "East" and the "West" and representing both natural sciences and humanities.

¹⁷ We thank the following students majoring in sociology at the AGH University: Łukasz Gałczyński, Wojciech Kobylański, Kamila Molga, Ela Murias and Katrina Pawuś for conducting and transcribing the IDIs.

¹⁸ Even during our interviews one of informants acknowledged that this type of identification is commonly used in everyday life.

ners” constitute two-thirds of our sample: Ukrainians, Russians, the Armenian, the Czech, the Slovak, the Hungarian, and the Vietnamese (see also note 23). The “Westerners” were Italians, Germans, and French. Our interviewees worked at Jagiellonian University (14 scholars), AGH University (7), University of Agriculture (1), and Pedagogical University (1).

Five of our informants (only men) were older than 60 years, when academics’ mobility tends to decline. The mean age was 47 years (range between 38 and 66 years). This is a much higher mean than of foreign scholars in Western countries (see, e.g., Bauder 2015: 86). Due to the very small number of Westerners, we actually do not oppose the two regional categories but let the reader know who has stated opinion in question. Fifteen scholars represented the humanities and social sciences (HS); they worked mostly at Jagiellonian University and Pedagogical University. The remaining eight represented the natural and technical sciences (ST); these worked mostly at AGH University and Agricultural University¹⁹. One-third (or eight) were married to Poles. We used an instruction sheet based on 50 questions, focused on the family situation of the interviewee; the lives of other foreigners coming from the same country; the scientific life of the interviewee; motivations to come to Poland; the Polish language; an assessment of Poland as a country to live in and conduct research; and the interviewee’s plans for the future. Each interview was recorded and subsequently transcribed. Transcription was then encoded using specialized software (NVivo 10).

In the first step of our analysis, we present what interviewees think about Poland and Polishness.

Why move to Poland? Is Poland a western country?

Many academics with Eastern European backgrounds emphasized that migration to Poland meant to them migration to Western Europe. They usually were well aware of the fact that salaries in Poland are much lower than in Germany (which, along with the United States, they seem to see as an emblematic Western state), but still much higher than in their native countries. Research conditions are also better in Poland. One of our interviewees said:

As far as Poland is concerned, let me say that for [an Easterner] Poland is a country located between the proper West and Eastern Europe. (Easterner)

It seems that most of our interviewees from Eastern Europe belong to the category of “status seekers”. As mentioned earlier, key universities in Kraków employ migrants

¹⁹ Representatives of humanities and social sciences gave us usually more details. They were more focused than the “natural scientists” on narration itself. We observed an inclination of natural and technical scientists to quantify their opinions, using percentages and scales where the humanists gave qualitative narratives and evaluations.

mainly from the CEE. Moreover, migrants from the former USSR are also an essential part of all migrants in contemporary Poland. This is also true of Kraków and the Małopolska region. Ukrainians, Russians, and Byelorussians comprise more than a half of all the documented migrants²⁰. One should add that there is a conviction in Poland that Eastern immigrants westernize Poland in many senses and make it an “economically developed country” because westbound migration is a phenomenon nowadays. Interestingly, Poland (particularly Warsaw) belongs to the in-between category for the intra-EU highly skilled temporary immigrants as well. These professionals see Poland as a space between “exotic” places and familiar “European” places. From the point of view of the Westerner Polish cities, having “Starbucks and Coffee Heaven,” are “still Europe”²¹.

Polish cities are “still Europe” but not totally Europe. Our interviewees see the geopolitical and cultural status of Poland as being essentially different than Western Europe. For instance, Poles were perceived as a nation very strongly attached to cultural and religious traditions and customs – far less secularized than inhabitants of Western Europe. In the East, however, and also in Italy, there still are people similar to those in Poland. Some of our interviewees, mainly the Easterners, see cultural similarities with their own countries and feel at home here.

For many interviewees, Poland was attractive to come and stay because of the local culture that seemed to be similar to what they knew from their home countries. Let us quote some interesting statements:

I had already spoken about emotions. I like to come to Poland and to be here, because Poland is, for a Slovak, a closer country than the Czech Republic. A Pole is more of my sibling than a Czech. I believe that this is this mentality, positive emotions. (Easterner)

Poles and [Easterners] are closer than Poles and Germans. (Easterner)

I am a [southern Westerner] who likes cold. Where contact with other people is concerned, I did not have, actually, any problems. I believe that there a common worldview, and also, that it has religious roots. The value systems are similar, and even if somebody is not a believer, he/she will have their values inculcated from early childhood, and this similarity stimulated contacts and was responsible for my decision, when I had to make it, that I would be here. I had the chance to move to England where I had been earlier as a translator, I was in Germany earlier, but I never thought that I would stay there. And in Poland I feel very good, this worldview is so similar. (Westerner)

²⁰ See, Gadowska et al. 2014. There are also illegal foreigners in Poland who have entered the country based on temporary visas and resident cards issued by another EU member states, or extended their stay beyond the visa conditions. According to the estimates, most of these undocumented migrants are Ukrainians.

²¹ See, Piekut 2013. “Coffee Heaven” became later rebranded into “Costa.”

Our interviewees believed that in Polish society, people whom they meet every day on the street, in the offices, at the university (like students, colleagues, administrative personnel) were friendly toward them. This is consistent with a recent study concerning some selected groups of immigrants in the Malopolska region (Ukrainians, Vietnamese, Armenians, and people from the MENA or Middle East and North Africa countries). Immigrants were asked to describe the attitude of the public administration and average people to the foreigners. Most of those interviewees were of the opinion that these attitudes were “rather friendly” or “very friendly” (Brzozowski and Pędziwiatr 2014).

The perceived image of Poland and interviewees’ opinions about Polishness may serve as a background for findings presented in due course. Many foreign scholars agreed that there are some significant common characteristics of Poles. In a less optimistic light, it is the grumbling and complaining. They also perceive Poles as more jealous than their own compatriots. One of our interviewees cited an epigram by a great Polish Renaissance poet, who (according to this scholar) described a situation in which the devil did not need a guard in hell’s room for Poles because they watched each other very closely. In the opinion of one of our interviewees, a Westerner, Poles tend to display their social status in an awkward way – unlike in Italy, here a car is still the ultimate symbol of status. To the contrary, some interviewees argued that Poles are clever and resourceful. Some foreign academics, based on their historical knowledge, emphasized the advantages of Polish romanticism and the poetic soul. These opinions seem somehow idiosyncratic. One thing is sure, however: the Polish mentality is neither a very strong motivator to come here nor a strongly discouraging factor. This is a culture of the semi-periphery (Zarycki 2014) – a country in the middle of the road. This theoretical notion, introduced by Immanuel Wallerstein, may serve as the key to our analyses in the remainder of this paper.

Who I am here? national and European and “scientific” identification

Some interviewees noted that after spending years in Poland they became first of all a part of the Polish community. For a significant part of migrant scholars, this kind of Polish identity was self-evident and intuitive. They did not have to debate it when constructing a narrative. This assimilationist view is visible, for instance, in the story of an Eastern female interviewee.

This country (Poland – JM and KŁ) has spent money on me, and now, working on my PhD and doing research at this university I can somehow do something for Polish science and wherever I publish, a give this affiliation, as a scientist from Poland, and I am recognized as a Polish scientist, and not an [Eastern] one, or whatever else. (Easterner)

In our opinion, the fact that many immigrating scholars perceived themselves as members of Polish society (or at least expressed a deep emotional attachment to the host country) has at least two sources. First of all, there are some standard processes and life events that accelerate acquiring this new cultural identity. These can be related to personal contacts with Poles, participating in local (neighborhood) community and/or school experiences with their children. There might also be a second source. We believe that Polish membership in the European Union may contribute to it. Poland's Europeaness (Vergara 2007) as well as the idea and practice (at least at the time of the interviews) of a common Europe make it easier to perceive oneself as a member of Polish society (even if not an ethnic Pole) and therefore European. Let us present some quotations stressing this European aspect.

I feel European because I am aware of our European common roots founded on great Latin and Greek cultures, and also on Christianity, which is a pillar of Europeaness. (Westerner)

I strongly identify with Central Europe since my grandmother was an Austrian. There is this tradition. (Easterner)

I would say that at the moment this first option: rather European than Polish. I do not feel a Pole, since there is no Polish descent. I feel a member of Polish society, though. In [the East], I am not totally "one of us," either. (Easterner)

Intensive integration and assimilation are not commonplace among foreign scholars working in Kraków. Some informants have strongly emphasized that they were not Poles by any measure, but, again, were attached to the host society. This was visible when one of them was talking about some Polish right-wing political parties:

It offends me and my wife [who is Polish – JM and KŁ], and please note that my wife in particular, even more than me, when the president, a minister, or a member of parliament, says about the society "we Poles," "we have always been here for all Poles." I am sorry, but not only Poles live here ... (Easterner)

We encountered interesting identity-related situations within some families. One informant told us about some differences in cultural approaches between himself and his son. While the interviewee was still more interested in his Western politics and sport than those of Poland, he strongly believed that his child raised in the Polish culture would be much more interested in the host country than he was. Our interviewee had a strong Western identity, despite many relationships with Poles. It should be noted, though, that the identity of his child was not an essential and painful problem for him, unlike it often is in opposite cases of migrants with lower education. Authors of the report "Immigrants in Lesser Poland. Between integration, assimilation, separation and marginalization" (quite often referred to in this article) captured this latter situation. Their Vietnamese interviewee claimed:

For me Poland is OK, and my company has no problems. The bad thing is with our children. They are like Poles. I do not know how to talk to them. My son thinks like a Pole. I am a Vietnamese and he is a Pole. For me, this is extremely difficult (Brzozowski and Pędziwiatr 2014: 203).

It is also interesting that national self-identification was not crucial for many of our interviewees, mostly, but not only, those representing natural sciences. They expressed the view that they are, first of all, a part of an international scientific community, and hence their nationality is less important here. This is clearly visible in the following quotations:

You know, I would never imagine to divide science into national and international. It is international out of definition, at least in my field. (Easterner)

You know, it is not the place that makes a person but a person constructs a place. Regardless... if I were now, for instance, in Slovakia, I would do the same. I could be in the Netherlands, as well. And I would do the same. (Easterner)

Nationality is irrelevant, people are relevant. It is not that on Tuesdays and Thursdays I socialize with my countrymen and on Mondays and Wednesdays with Poles. (Easterner).

For most of our informants, the international character of their work is more important than close bonds with one particular country (e.g., the homeland or “new homeland”). It is tempting to state that they all are cosmopolitans for whom borders do not have much importance. This would only be partially true, because based on our data we can divide international scholars from Kraków into four different categories.

The migration literature shows a number of typologies of HSM, in contexts other than ours. Let us give two examples, one taken from the US (Indian and Mexican engineers and scientists in Silicon Valley) and the other from Germany, with Russian immigrant academics. However, some categories would overlap with ours in Kraków. Rafael Alarcon’s interviews revealed “four types of highly skilled migrants coming from developing countries: children of immigrant families, former employees of subsidiaries of U.S. companies located abroad, former foreign students at U.S. universities, and ‘high-tech braceros’” (1999: 1387). Andreas Siegert sees four types of Russian academics migrating to Germany and intending to return to the home country: global scientists, individualists, germanophiles, and patriots (2011: 980).

Four basic types of academic migrants in Kraków

Our typology, as does Siegert’s proposition, comprises four different types of migrants. These should be treated as ideal types stressing the most important characteristics and not as distinctive analytical categories, i.e. a member of one category can also be (more or less typically) representative of another. A “commuter” can also be

a “status seeker” or an “enthusiast of Poland,” but we have not found many overlapping cases. The list of types is not closed. Our focus on just four types means that in Kraków we did not encounter recurring patterns of migration linked with a distinguishing factor that binds its members together and makes them similar in this respect. Since our case study was of an explorative nature, we concentrated on distinguishing clear-cut categories. Further research may bring new ones, but it is clear that the four kinds described above are present in Polish academia.

Economic migrants and status seekers are our first type of migrants²². They are similar to Siegert’s individualists. As mentioned above, for some migrating scholars, Poland is very attractive for reasons of economy (much higher salaries and better lab equipment) and status. Such opinions were usually expressed by people from the former Soviet Union (or generally the Soviet Bloc), who perceived Kraków as a Western city and Poland as an important part of the West (or even the heart of that region)²³.

And, obviously, my first choice was Jagiellonian University and for me it was a wow, a big challenge, because I come from a middle-size town, like Opole in Poland, after studying in [the East], to go to such university like Jagiellonian for a PhD was really ambitious. This is what I wanted very much, I had this ambition: and why not? On the other hand, there was this performance anxiety. (Easterner)

This group of motivations is rather straightforward (better economic situation of the country means better working conditions, higher safety and security, and better individual standard of living), but according to the international literature on scholars’ migration, individual remuneration and higher standard of living abroad are not necessarily a particularly significant motivation for international mobility. Interestingly, in some cases, scholars decide to choose foreign academic employment, risking a much lower income and a decrease in prestige, but gaining other rewards (Chihye Kim 2015). The higher status of the receiving institution and better equipment are, however, important (see, e.g., Allison and Long 1990; Ivancheva and Gourova 2011). This observation is aligned with narrations of our interviewees. Some of them admitted that academic work was impossible or very difficult in their countries of origin:

²² According to the international literature on scholars’ migration, individual remuneration and higher standard of living abroad are not particularly significant as a motivation for international mobility. Higher status of the receiving institution and better equipment, however, are important. See, e.g., Allison and Long 1990; Ivancheva and Gourova 2011. Interestingly, in some cases scholars decide to choose a foreign academic employment risking much lower income and decrease of prestige, but gaining other rewards. See Chihye Kim 2015.

²³ We have already given some quotations to this effect.

And the situation got worse in [the Eastern Country], during the war. They started to turn off electricity (...) It was necessary to stand a whole night in line to buy some bread in the morning, and this bread was inedible anyway. And he [her husband – JM and KŁ] got an offer to work here. (Easterner)

I knew the situation in [the Eastern Country], and in other countries and I started to look at many things differently. The fact that you fulfill all your duties, write a PhD thesis, complete everything on time ... [doesn't mean anything – JM and KŁ]. New obstacles emerge over and over and you can't do anything about them. (. . .) I started to rebel against all of this. (Easterner)

The narrative of this young humanist reveals that international contacts are not always perceived as something favorable. He suspected that his compatriots could be jealous because he could earn more on study visits abroad than they were earning on-site. Negative factors (war, corruption, bureaucratic paralysis) were more important than the general economic situation of the receiving country, so we argue that “economic migrants and status seekers” do exist in the modern world, although often their choices were unrelated to simple willingness to increase their socioeconomic status. A career in the semi-periphery may be the only alternative to structural barriers in some marginalized, peripheral countries.

Enthusiasts are similar to Siegert's “germanophiles”. They have been and continue to be fascinated with Polish culture. A Westerner, a fan of his native city's famous soccer club, emphasized his former admiration for a very well-known Polish soccer player, a member of this club's team. Moreover, he had been a faithful reader of Stanislaw Lem, a Polish novelist. Another, an Easterner, had been an enthusiast of Polish customs and liked to organize Christmas Eve dinner in the Polish style. Family bonds (Polish heritage, Polish spouses) helped as well. Fascination with Polish culture particularly affected former students of Polish universities. Therefore, they remind us the third type distinguished by Alarcon. Most of the enthusiasts are people who had studied in Poland at the master's level, and therefore spent their youth here. Although some of our interviewees did not know much about Poland before coming to this country, when they decided to stay here, they later became fascinated.

But not every scientist who decided to move to Poland is fascinated with this country. “International scholars” or “**cosmopolitans**,” the ones who came to Kraków without any particular interest in Poland or Polish culture and typically had very practical job reasons to choose this country are another category. They also remind us of Siegert's individualists. As Paul Kennedy, who studied middle-class skilled EU migrants to Manchester says, this kind of mobile people have “cosmopolitan capital”: middle class background, English language proficiency and previous experience of studying abroad, or childhood exposure to other cultures (2009).

A very good example of such a person is a native speaker of a popular Western European language who came here as a university language instructor. The life of academia was for him an international endeavor *per se*, and the international academic community was an ultimate point of reference for him. Sometimes, of course, this type of migrant thought that membership in the international community may be accompanied by the membership in the “native” local community. Usually, such people liked traveling and some of them have already decided to move again, in the future, abroad (to a country different than Poland and their homeland). These interviewees can be referred to as cosmopolitans. Most of them have already visited, for private or professional purposes, many countries during their academic careers. Some of them keep two houses in different countries. Some live, simultaneously, in different cultures, having no problem with this fact.

My life in Kraków is rather connected with academic work than family relations, because my husband lives, in Berlin, and, obviously, since it is not very far away, we can be together quite often; everything is linked to the work. (Westerner)

In fact, let me tell you in private, and I am revealing myself: I think in French, count in German, pray in German. (Westerner)

Cosmopolitan attitudes seem to be specific for migrants with very high cultural capital. Among the majority of migrants who settled in Malopolska, they occur quite seldom. The report quoted above (Brzozowski and Pędziwiatr 2015) presents data according to which the thinking about oneself in the category of a “citizen of the world” is very rare, and the only cosmopolitan immigrant group here was of the Armenians and the MENA nationals who, historically, have a very long tradition of emigration and diaspora building (Brzozowski and Pędziwiatr 2015: 222).

We also have distinguished the category of “**commuters**,” which is important but somehow specific. Thanks to the geographical location of Poland, it is feasible for some scholars to commute to this country in order to do research and teach at Polish universities (some Poles do the same, lecturing in neighboring countries). Those scholars are specific because they have very limited practical everyday experiences with Polish culture and local communities. One of our Eastern interviewees told us that she could not answer some of our questions because, although employed in Kraków, she simply does not live in Poland but stays in a university dormitory from time to time. For some immigrant scholars, dormitories and university guesthouses are the only places where they meet Poles who are not their students and co-workers.

Right, because this was the situation in which I did not leave anybody behind, since I was coming here once a week, my family was not affected. At that time I had children in the age of..., well, the boys attended already a high-school, so they could have managed without me during these few days and it did not make any special difference for them. So, when I was hired here, for a moment I was

scared how would I manage these trips, since the sun doesn't shine every day, and, well, I leave my town in East (about 450 km from Kraków – JM and KŁ) at about 5 pm or 6 pm, and my son once said: 'you like driving, no problem'. (Easterner)

In fact, you know, I didn't leave anyone because I used to commute once a week. My family didn't suffer because of that very much. At that time, I had children in high school, and they managed to live without me for a couple of days and they didn't feel the difference, though my wife also works in Kraków. (Easterner).

Commuters seem to be similar to cosmopolitans, at least when we take into account simultaneous contact with multiple cultures. Status seekers and enthusiasts, on the contrary, decided to live in one particular country. What is common to all these groups is a necessity to adapt to Polish society and Polish culture. Let us analyze now the barriers and facilitators pointed out by the international scholars of Kraków.

Adaptation. Barriers and facilitators

We will not debate at this point on similarities and differences between adaptation and acculturation (see, e.g., Herskovits 1960; Gordon 1964; Berry 2009; Navas et al. 2005). We use the concept of adaptation as a weaker form of adjustment to the situation of relatively long culture contact that does not demand deep identity transformation. As mentioned at the beginning of this article, we believe that broadly understood adaptation or assimilation could be analyzed in at least four models, is usually not unilateral, occurs differently in various domains, and faces barriers but also facilitators.

Adaptation is a cultural and structural process that often starts with culture shock (Oberg 1960) and has its ups and downs²⁴. The initial phase has been depicted by one of our informants:

When I started to work here, on the one hand, an awareness appeared, that not everything is so rosy, as it was. Poland, like any other country, has its advantages and disadvantages, and perhaps there are more disadvantages than I had imagined. As I said, at the very beginning I looked at it through rose-colored spectacles. On the other hand, another awareness appeared, that since I accepted a new job here, I would really stay here; when they renew my contract, I will stay here. And only then this awareness emerged that I am uprooted, separated from my culture, my family, and it was a new emotion, to which I had to get accustomed. And, at the beginning, it was not easy. (Easterner)

Our interviewees understood that when they go to another country, they have to adjust to it:

Poland was not my first foreign country, so I was used to staying abroad. Before Poland, I worked in Russia. When one goes abroad, one has to accommodate, willingly or unwillingly. (Westerner)

²⁴ See, e.g., the concept of the "U-curve" and reversed U-curve, referring to the stages of adaptation of migrants to new environments; Coelho, Ahmed and Yuan 1980.

Aleksandra Grzymała-Kazłowska and Halina Grzymała-Moszczyńska (2014), in their article on integration of Polish descendants from Kazakhstan, refer to the contributions of Bronisław Kozłowski and Paweł Hut²⁵, who debated the main types of adaptation problems from “repatriates” to Poland. They distinguished among sociocultural, legal, and administrative; material (related to the living standard); employment; and climate-related problems. Let us follow this typology and show which factors were important to our interviewees, even though their legal situations, educational status and social prestige vary widely. Nevertheless, it should be strongly emphasized that these problems were more cumbersome at the beginning of the stay in Poland, and they often lost significance later²⁶.

Language issues²⁷ are often discussed in the literature on HSM. They belong to sociocultural factors. For the Slavic immigrants, they were actually far less severe. For instance, about two-thirds of the interviewed Ukrainians were of the opinion that now, after a number of years spent in Poland, their command of Polish was very good. For the non-Slavic scholars, it was not that easy. Usually, perhaps of cultural capital there was nearly no problem with children:

My younger son came to Poznań not knowing, in practice, Polish. After several months, in June, his command of the language was excellent and he received an A, with no special treatment. And my children are not exceptional, rather normal kids, but the boys learned Polish very quickly. (Easterner)

Language is not the only sociocultural factor to occur in the narratives of our interviewees. Family relations, institutions funding international research grants, and prospective employers can speed up or delay the adaptation, depending on their character and dynamics. As mentioned above, eight interviewees had Polish spouses. Usually, those partners who work have high-skill positions themselves. Support from colleagues was not to be underestimated:

For about five years, I lived in a dorm. I really got used to it. We had two small rooms. And this is not a flat but a dorm. What have we done??? A dorm at our age!! And in [capital of a neighboring Eastern country – JM and KŁ] we have an apartment in a very nice neighborhood. Friends, family, you understand, every

²⁵ We combine their typologies. Obviously, there is a number of significant differences between the repatriates and immigrating scholars.

²⁶ It might be interesting to mention the ethnic issue. We did not hear any complains, perhaps due to the fact that the overwhelming majority of interviewees are not visible as „others.” In one case, however, the interviewee mentioned that there are in Poland negative stereotypes concerning the “non-whites.”

²⁷ The command of the local language and English are often listed as significant barriers of the success in doing research abroad (see, e.g., Chiswick and Taengnoi 2007; Hwang 2012; Monteiro and Keating 2009), but not necessarily in the private sphere.

thing. But, here, the dean of the faculty suddenly came, and said (to me, but also to a colleague of mine): you know, there is a chance, nothing big, nothing sensational, rather small, but still an apartment. And he was monitoring the situation, helped when there was a need. It is difficult to talk about that from a statistical or sociological point of view, but, this individual attitude on the part of this person who knew our situation, and this started from his help with my daughter, when she was very little and we needed help placing her in a music school. (Easterner)

During the first year, I did not work, so I was spending time mostly at home and was growing plants and sometimes I was going with my husband to his work and spoke with his colleagues. I do not even remember details. It seemed so natural. (Easterner)

Some scholars also mentioned unbearable legal and administrative problems. However, these did not seem to be crucial for the majority: “*Western administration isn’t perfect either*” (Westerner). Usually immigrants to Poland note that the legal and administrative issues are very important barriers to adaptation (see, e.g., Brzozowski and Pędziwiatr 2014), but this is not necessarily true in the case of HSM. Even people from outside of the European Union did not have trouble obtaining the required Polish documents. Scientific migration is strictly institutionalized, and the administrative problems are usually less tedious for migrating scholars.

With the exception of the housing problems, which are not as serious as they seem (either salaries were high enough or the universities rented them their own apartment), we did not find, in our study, any problems related to the living standard or to other economic issues. Migrating scholars took it for granted that the salaries are lower in Poland than in the (generalized) West and that the research budgets are lower. There were, however, some interesting general problems related to employment of our interviewees or their partners, problems responsible for mobility. These were not problems emerging on the job but with finding a job adequate to their education and experience. They occurred both under the socialist rule and after the democratic changes of 1989.

Lack of work. When you come with a wife or husband, finding a job for her or him is not always easy. Sometimes you look for it for months, even if your position is somehow privileged. The Communist Party helped us. (Easterner)

I stayed for three months in Lublin. I was looking for a job but could not find one. So, I returned to my [Western country], to look for a job there. After a few days, I returned to Poland, because I received information that I have a job here. (Westerner)

Successful adaptation, in an overwhelming majority of our cases, results in a relative reluctance to “return home”²⁸, in spite of the attachment to the countries of origin.

²⁸ For the analysis of the painful process of return migration of scholars, see, e.g., Delicado 2010; Morano-Foadi 2015.

To return and live there? I would feel more alien than I feel in Poland.

(Easterner)

How would I find, again, this energy, to start the second, after-lunch, part of the day? There are no lunch breaks here and I know that after dinner the day is over.

Siestas? If I slept in the afternoon, I would not wake up and function normally.

(Westerner)

This relatively hassle-free adaptation is related – in our opinion – to the Europeaness of Poland, and cultural similarities, which we have already described. It has less to do with the semi-peripheral status of Poland and more with its geographical location – between East and West.

International contacts

Most of our interviewees come from countries relatively close to Poland, so physical contact is easy and occurs more often than with countries far away. Therefore, Armenians and Vietnamese do not go home very often:

We go home every fourth year, because the air tickets are expensive, but we do it in such a way, that we do it alternately, so every second year somebody goes.

We do it in order to visit with the family and friends, to see, how the country is growing. Also, as tourists, because I do not know some parts of my country, they are exotic to me; I have not been in many places. (Easterner)

Not only long university vacations but also academic events give a chance to go to the homeland, sometimes to attend conferences, sometimes on religious holidays, to visit relatives. Sometimes “visits back home” give a chance to talk about Poland:

When I return to my [Eastern – JM and KŁ] country, very often people ask me “how do you live there”, “that is the West, they are our enemies”, how do the people over there treat you.’ And I always, simply, tell them that it is stupid to think in this way, that I have lived in Poland for three and a half years and when I meet people, nobody mentions anything negative about the politics of my country. (Easterner)

In addition to visits “back home”, relatively regular contacts with compatriots take place in Poland, particularly in Kraków. Some immigrant scientists socialize with them in the workplace; some have PhD students from their home countries, just as in other countries where “labs directed by foreign-born faculty are more likely to be populated by students from the same country of origin than are labs directed by native faculty” (Tanyildiz 2015: 50). Some attend the Eastern Orthodox Church, which is not only a religious institution but also a place where people from various Orthodox countries come and talk after the service. There is also a German community at one of the Roman Catholic churches where the German-speaking immigrants gather. Some meet their compatriots who work for international corporations in Kraków. They go to restaurants

and clubs together and watch soccer games. Only one group of Easterners, the Armenians, is organized in a stronger way, having its own small club, Sunday school, etc. This group also quite often organizes home parties.

Where do they meet their compatriots? Some have known them from the time of their university studies in Kraków. Others go to the markets where their compatriots are selling imported goods. The “internet diasporas” (Nedelcu 2008) are unpopular among our informants. Only some of them belong to the closed Facebook (or a group on other social media site) groups of their nationals (or people who share their language) who live in Kraków, and there are infrequent users. A large portion of our interviewees have no contacts with their compatriots in town and are not seeking them. This applies mainly to the cosmopolitans but not only them. When we look at the research findings of the general immigrant community in Kraków, we could say that most of the Ukrainians (who are usually low-skilled migrants) do not belong to any local Ukrainian organizations (Biernath 2008), and they gather, almost always informally, at the Orthodox church and the only Ukrainian restaurant in town (Gadowska et al. 2014: 60). The average Armenian socializes with compatriots at home relatively often, at least once a month (see Brzozowski and Pędziwiatr 2014: 186). In both cases, in low and high-skilled migrants, there were only relatively weak bonds between compatriots. There are, in our opinion, two possible explanations for this. First of all, we can say that the small population of immigrants from the selected countries effectively prevents the possibility of emergence of active diasporas. It is also possible, however, that in the European Union, local identities become less important. As we have already said, our interviewees have stated that they feel like Europeans in the first place.

Moreover, the digitalization of today’s world and other technological and economic innovations have changed the world of migration and adaptation of migrants. Inexpensive phone calls and inventions such as Skype make everyday communication not only with families but also with collaborators far away (and the latter is particularly significant in the case of scholars) much easier and faster. Physical transportation (not only to visit families but also to attend academic congresses and foreign laboratories) has become much more affordable thanks to low-fare airlines and carpooling schemes (such as BlaBlaCar) both for mass migrants and HSM.

What is important to the academics, Internet access to full-text databases, Internet bookstores, websites devoted to exchange of scientific information, online preprint publishing, e-learning, have all changed the situation of scholars even more than they have the situation of other kinds of today’s transnational workers. However, it seems that it has not decreased the volume of academic migration. The costs and accessibility of modern communication inventions and, in particular, lab equipment strongly differ in the globalized world and the physical contact and everyday collaboration between

researchers, access to “tacit knowledge”, and contact between academic teachers and their students have only been partly replaced by information technologies.

Concluding remarks

In general, the ethnic composition of the collectivity of foreign scholars in Kraków reflects the composition of the group of academic immigrants to Poland and of the general group of immigrants to Poland and, in particular, to the Malopolska region. Our study was not of a comparative character, but when confronted with literature of immigration to Malopolska, it shows that many everyday life issues of our interviewees are similar to those of other kinds of migrants. Poland is located in the middle of the chain of academic migration. Many Polish scholars emigrate to Western countries, while most of the immigrating scholars come from Central and Eastern Europe. Those are partly the status seekers and people interested in higher salaries and better lab equipment. Some immigrating scholars had studied in Kraków and spent “the best time of their lives” here. They are strongly attached to Polish culture. Their core identification is now not ethnic but rather “scientific”. Even if they have spent more than one decade in Poland, they do not think of themselves as Poles, but, on the contrary, they are a true part of Polish society. One of the advantages of being a member of this society is Polish membership in the European Union. Problems with adaptation to Polish society are not exceptional in the case of our interviewees, but they have one obvious advantage – it is much easier for them to get legal issues solved. In general, our interviewees were relatively satisfied with their lives in Poland and did not intend to return “back home”. We distinguished four types of immigrant academics in Poland. Obviously, this is a tentative typology, and it was created to shed some light on different motivations of migrants rather than to strictly separate one group from another. We also have proposed an analysis of barriers to adaptation (language, administration, housing, work-related) and its facilitators (family bonds, institutional bounds). If we had to advertise Poland based on these opinions, we would say that it is a European country with a long history, populated with relatively kind people (at least when we narrow down the analysis to the social circles known to the academics). The rich history is important because it is a factor that attracts “enthusiasts”. Cultural similarities with many European countries are another important advantage of Poland in the eyes of foreigners. Also, the location in the center of Europe, both from geographical and political (as a semi-periphery) points of view, is convenient. Poland offers scholars much more (in terms of infrastructure, funding, and international contacts) than most less-developed countries. Returning to the Berry/Navas typology, we would say that “our” Kraków foreign scholars opted for three out of four strategies. Economic migrants and status seekers were interested in “integration”, enthusiasts in “assimilation”, while cosmopolitans seem to be closer to “separation”.

As we have noted, migration to Poland, for some of our interviewees, appeared to be the only chance to work in academia. Moreover, Poland is a relatively big country with great needs. There is demand not only for language instructors from Western countries (who are usually females all over the world) but also for good mathematicians and physicists (usually males who typically come here from the East). Kraków is a “Silicon Valley” for them. As some of our interviewees noted, they were not world-class scientists but they just wanted to do their jobs as it should be done (*I’m simply a modest member of a working class in the world of science* [laugh], Easterner). In this sense, they resemble the craftsmen depicted by Richard Sennett – people who desire to do a job well for its own sake (see Sennett 2009). Poland makes it possible. Scientists with outstanding scientific achievements (mainly Easterners) who decided to move here also valued Poland, but their motivations were different. Poland appeared to them as an alternative to the West, which they knew from their previous experiences. A spouse of one Easterner, as he reported to us, did not want to live in the United States anymore. He also admits that Poland is “closer” – mainly because of similarities between his mother tongue and the Polish language. Other similarities between Poland and their own countries, described at the beginning of this paper, can also increase a sense of familiarity and facilitate their careers. We are planning to analyze them in another paper on migrating scholars in Kraków.

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The lives of foreign academics in Poland: their motivations and adaptation in Kraków, a “Polish Silicon Valley”

The aim of this article is to analyze both the motivations of foreign scholars to come to work in Poland – specifically Kraków – and their ways of adapting to this significant Polish academic center. Most studies on highly skilled migrants (HSMs) concentrate on the flows between developing and highly developed countries. We concentrate on Central and Eastern Europe. This paper, based on in-depth interviews with 23 foreign scholars working full-time at four universities in Kraków, is a follow-up to a study presenting a 2015 analysis of websites of universities from Kraków. We look closely at barriers to and facilitators of foreign scholars’ adaptation to Poland and their perceived image of Poland and Polishness, their national identification and international contacts. We propose a typology comprised of “cosmopolitans”, “status seekers”, “enthusiasts”, and “commuters”. Our investigations reveal who decides to move to a semi-peripheral country such as Poland, and why. Certain parts of the narratives can be used in building a strategy of attracting more international scholars to academic centers such as Kraków.

Key words: highly skilled migration, Polish academic centers, foreign researchers, life in a foreign country