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**Identity construction in a transnational environment: the case of young
Ukrainian migrants in Poland**

CEERES Master's Thesis

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Abstract

After the political crisis struck Ukraine in 2014 and led to deterioration of its relations with Russia, new migration trends emerged in Ukraine. Within the following years migration of people from Ukraine to Poland has been growing exponentially. Along with growing number of workers arriving to Poland annually to find job on Polish job market, Poland gradually became Ukraine's #1 education destination. From 2010 to 2019 the total number of Ukrainian students in Poland grew by 703%, whereas they constitute up to 50% of the total number of international students that come to Poland for study purposes.

As young Ukrainians migrate to Poland at a very young age and enter their adulthood in migration, it is still unclear how they experience the migratory process, what factors pushed them into migration, how their identity and sense of belonging is formed within transnational spaces.

This research makes an attempt to study the process of formation of identity and sense of belonging among teenagers based on the case study of young Ukrainian migrants who moved to Poland at the age of 14-17 years old to study at Polish education institutions.

Keywords: youth mobility, national identity, European identity, belonging, migration, transnationalism.

Po kryzysie politycznym, który dotknął Ukrainę w 2014 roku i doprowadził do pogorszenia się jej relacji z Rosją, na Ukrainie pojawiły się nowe trendy migracyjne. W kolejnych latach migracja ludności z Ukrainy do Polski rosła wykładniczo. Wraz z rosnącą liczbą pracowników przybywających co roku do Polski w celu znalezienia pracy, Polska dla Ukrainy stopniowo stała się najbardziej popularną lokacją studiów. W latach 2010-2019 łączna liczba studentów ukraińskich w Polsce wzrosła o 703%, podczas gdy stanowią oni do 50% ogólnej liczby studentów zagranicznych, którzy przyjeżdżają do Polski.

Ponieważ młodzi Ukraińcy migrują do Polski w bardzo młodym wieku i wkraczają w dorosłość podczas migracji, wciąż nie wiadomo, jak przeżywają proces migracyjny, jakie czynniki skłoniły ich do migracji, jak kształtuje się ich tożsamość i poczucie przynależności w przestrzeniach transnarodowych.

W niniejszym badaniu podjęto próbę przeanalizowania procesu kształtowania się tożsamości i poczucia przynależności wśród nastolatków na przykładzie studium przypadku młodych migrantów ukraińskich, którzy przenieśli się do Polski w wieku 14-17 lat, aby kontynuować naukę.

Słowa kluczowe: mobilność młodzieży, tożsamość narodowa, tożsamość europejska, przynależność, migracje

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Introduction

Ukraine and Poland are two states that share rich history and culture, besides also sharing a common border. As neighboring states, both countries always had some level of reciprocal migration, with the majority of migrants moving from Ukraine towards Poland. The striking difference in development of both states - where Poland is more politically stable and economically flourishing, and Ukraine is going through a series of political and economic crises (Bilan, 2017; Bondar, 2019) - became the reason why migration from Ukraine to Poland was growing exponentially since the beginning of 1990-s (Główny Urząd Statystyczny, 2019). Since 2014, when Ukraine's relationship with Russia deteriorated that eventually led to the military conflict on Donbass and annexation of Crimea, the Ukraine government took 180 degrees turn in choosing its political allies. As the dilemma of whether choosing pro-Russian or pro-European direction in politics has been a part of political discourse for a very long time (Rotar, 2017), the above-mentioned conflict pushed Ukraine towards Poland and the European Union, respectively.

Rapprochement of Ukraine and Poland in the context of Ukrainian European integration has been in place since Poland joined the EU in 2004. However, against the backdrop of events of 2014 (and following years), the integration process accelerated and is supported not only by governments but also by Ukrainian people themselves.

The Ukrainian migration is very important to Poland and adoption of migration policies ensures retention of the constant flow of migrants from Ukraine. As of 2018, Ukrainian labor migrants contributed to 13% of the country's total GDP growth (Pavlyuk, 2020). Moreover, Poland experiences the outflow of their own labor force into the countries of Western Europe, mostly into the United Kingdom and Germany (Brunarska et al., 2016; Główny Urząd Statystyczny, 2019). Therefore, the importance of Ukrainian migrants increases as they fill in the gaps on the market. In the same way, Ukraine highly relies on the emigration of compatriots abroad because they ensure stable inflow of financial remittances into the country. Currently, the inflow of remittances from Poland constitutes 8% of the country's GDP (Pieńkowski, 2020) and they represent a substantial part of Ukraine's economy. With the change of political discourse within Ukraine, the migratory preferences of potential migrants have changed as well.

Since 2014 the number of Ukrainian migrants coming to Poland for working and study purposes has been growing exponentially. As Poland was experiencing a deficit of workers, Ukrainians were willing to take over and fill jobs in various economic sectors. As Ukraine

became more and more open towards Western world, young Ukrainians have also chosen to go to Poland for study purposes, instead of Russia.

Youth migration is a relatively novel phenomenon in the history of Ukrainian-Polish migration (Birchenko and Mikhailov, 2021). Migration of young people became widespread in the last decade, specifically in the light of deterioration of Ukrainian internal political life. Young people choose to migrate to Poland looking for higher quality of education and wider life and career opportunities. Poland as an EU member lures potential Ukrainian migrants with higher standard of life, political stability (Krasnyanskaya, 2018). As of 2018, $\frac{1}{3}$ of all Ukrainian students studying abroad go to Poland (ibid).

By moving countries at a young age of 14-17 years old, young migrants have different experiences of the migratory process in comparison to adults (Williams et al., 2018). Just about to enter into adulthood and realising their place in life, migration contributes to massive changes in the mindsets of young people. Being young Ukrainian citizens, living in Poland creates an ideal basis for migrants' psycho-social shift that contribute to the already evolving identity, making them question their sense of belonging. Prone (just like any migrants) to high level of stress related to migration, migrants also construct transnational fields around themselves that help them to overcome hardships (ibid).

This thesis will examine how young Ukrainian migrants' identity and sense of belonging are constructed in a transnational environment, where they share their life between being physically present in Poland and supporting ties that connect them to Ukraine.

Purpose of the research

By studying how young migrants experience the process of migration with their families or sometimes on their own, this research will hopefully contribute to broader understanding how self-identification is formed through migration within the borders of the transnational environment, how culture as well as psycho-social factors affect identity construction process. Young people as a demographic group are incredibly important because they have the growing power of directly affecting the direction of society development. Therefore formation of their identity plays a crucial role in this process, as it becomes a uniting factor of the nation and helps in achievement of state goals.

Considering that a lot of policies are in place to facilitate the migration process, not all migrants succeed in their life abroad and in general enjoy the migration process. As migration is a global

phenomenon, occurring in every country and every social stratum of society, the risks included with it may also have negative effects on transnational families and individuals. By looking at the case of Ukrainians in Poland and the construction of their identity in the new environment, this research attempts to broaden the understanding of how migration is experienced and perceived on the individual level.

Research questions

This thesis aims to study and better understand the nature of national self-identification among young Ukrainian migrants. Therefore the following research questions will be analysed:

- 1) What are the reasons behind young people's decision to migrate to Poland?
- 2) How is the understanding of national identity formed among young migrants?
- 3) How does the transnational environment affect the formation of identity and the sense of belonging?
- 4) What are the main obstacles young migrants face when growing up in a different environment?

Thesis outline

This work consists of 5 chapters: Contextual background, Theoretical background, Methodology, Research findings and Conclusion.

The contextual background chapter sheds light on the historical perspective of Ukrainian-Polish relations and studies various factors that historically contributed to the convergence of both states, besides sharing a common border. A large part of this chapter is dedicated to the analysis of migratory background and processes that evolved between both states in the last 30 years, after the collapse of the Soviet regime.

Theoretical background unwraps main theoretical concepts that are used in the research. These are studies on youth mobility, transnationalism, belonging and national and European identities. The later chapter examines available scholarship on these concepts framed into the case of Ukrainian-Polish migration. Thus it helps to highlight gaps in existing academia and what current research aims to fill.

The chapter on methodology describes the research design for this project. It outlines the methodology, sampling method and the process of recruitment of participants for the purpose of research. It also gives a glimpse on limitations that slowed down the research process.

Lastly, the last chapter represents the interview results and following analysis. The chapter on research findings categorizes all responses of participants into 4 main groups: 1) reasons young people decided to move to Poland, 2) how they negotiate their identity in the migration, 3) how transnational habits affect their identity and sense of belonging, and, finally, 4) their thought on how migration changes Ukraine.

The chapter on research conclusions gives an general overview on interview findings and sets recommendations for future research in this field.

Contextual background

Ukrainian migration to Poland

Modern day Polish-Ukrainian relationships can be described as friendly, even fraternal to some extent. By accepting shared history, even despite disagreements over some past events (Copsey, 2008; Kononczuk, 2018), and all cultural aspects that bring the countries together, there are many political and economical agreements that contribute to the convergence of Poland and Ukraine (Szeptycki, 2019). Migratory trends in the CEE region are generally shaped by three historical elements: economic and institutional underdevelopment, an oversaturated labor market and instability of state borders (Brunarska et al., 2016; Okólski, 2001).

After the collapse of Soviet Union, Poland became a popular destination for migrants from Ukraine who wanted to get more job opportunities in the neighboring state, trying to escape misfortunes at home (Brunarska et al., 2016). These were mostly small traders who were known more as “chelnochniki” (челночники) (Górny and Kindler, 2016; Vedeneeva, 2019). These migrations happened at the dawn of massive Ukrainian migration into Poland and were barely regulated, if at all. The minister of social policy of Ukraine - Andriy Reva, stated that after the collapse of the USSR, up to 7 million Ukrainians left the country for working purposes (UkrInform, 2019). However it is difficult to estimate how many of them went to Poland itself. Okólski (2001, cited in Górny and Kindler, 2016) stated that these movements were usually

limited by 2-3 weeks and did not have a long-term character. The main problem with these kinds of migrations, was that it was difficult to trace the real volume of these migration flows and the remittances that migrants sent back home (Kucherenko and Reznik, 2020).

After Poland's accession to the European Union, it became harder for Ukrainians to travel to Poland (Brunarska et al., 2016). As the country joined the Schengen zone and new visa requirements were introduced, it became extremely hard for Ukrainians to get a visa. Within the first 2 years after the accession, the number of visa rejections among Ukrainian applicants grew from 3.1% to 10.9% (Bieniecki et al., 2008). Within the next few years Poland initiated travel facilitation for those who lived within 30 kilometres of the Polish border (Brunarska et al., 2016). However, despite these complications, the Ukrainian government received institutional support from Polish authorities in their desire to become a member of the European Union. It is reported that Poland was the one of the few European countries to lobby Ukraine's interests and was among those who initiated the EU programme - European Neighborhood Policy (ENP) (Marcinkowska, 2016). The ENP got Ukraine a lot closer to the EU allowing it to enjoy some of its benefits such as lucrative trade agreements and facilitated mobility (and starting from 2017 free mobility) within the borders of the Schengen Agreement member states (ibid).

Before the introduction of free movement, Ukrainians had very favorable views towards the opportunity to travel to the EU without the necessity for a visa. Especially after the events of 2014, the general public opinion started to shift in favor of Ukraine getting closer to Europe rather than to Russia. Public polls suggested that 57% of all Ukrainians believed that they would benefit from visa free movement to European countries (Eurointegration.com.ua, 2016). Skoczyńska-Prokopowicz (2018) states that at the time when Ukraine was in economic decline (since the start of Russian-Ukrainian conflict) the possibility for Ukrainians to go abroad to look for seasonal work became a lifeline for people in despair. Therefore, they turned their gaze towards Poland and the EU.

The massive influx of migrants from Ukraine happened after 2014. It is worth noting that prior to the dramatic decline in Russian-Ukrainian relations, Ukrainians were mostly leaning towards Russia as a potential destination country for work and study purposes (Fedyuk and Kindler, 2016). In the mid 2010s Ukraine was already one of Europe's biggest migrant-donating countries (Fedyuk and Kindler, 2016; Jóźwiak and Piechowska, 2017; Leontyeva, 2014). There were estimated to be between 2 and 7 million Ukrainian citizens working and living abroad

(Leontyeva, 2014). However, while Ukraine was going through a deterioration of internal politics, the annexation of Crimea by Russia and the beginning of war in the Donbass, Ukrainians started to seek out alternative “exit strategies”. Politically driven, they turned their backs on Russia and started seeking job opportunities in the West (Pieńkowski, 2020). While the economy was rapidly weakening in Ukraine, Poland seemed a great option for them: the political situation was much calmer, language was more or less understandable, liberal migration rules were in place for Ukrainian nationals and, most importantly, salaries that 5-6 times exceeded the Ukrainian (Babakova, 2019) and even Russian ones. In addition, for the majority of Ukrainian men, migration became a way to get away from being recruited into the army. In the light of the unstable military situation in the country, Ukraine at the time was actively mobilising men to take part in the armed conflict in the Donbass (Bondar, 2019).

Since then, the Ukrainian migration into Poland has only been growing. In 2013 Ukrainians have received 1694 residence permits and 9795 temporary residence permits (up to 3 years). Later, in 2014 these numbers have almost doubled - 3484 residence permits and 17103 temporary permits (Golovashina, 2019). Gomołka (2016) and Golovashina (2019) have reported that by July 2016 Ukrainians constituted 31% of migrant residents of Poland. In general, 66.5% of Ukrainian migrants in Poland intend to obtain Polish residence permit (*karta stałego pobytu*) (Serova, 2021). Consequently, Poland received a big inflow of young people intending to study there. In 2014 and 2015 the total number of Ukrainian students doubled at Polish universities (Golovashina, 2019).

As of now Ukrainian migration to Poland has turned into a more organized process (Jaroszewicz et al., 2018; Skoczyńska-Prokopowicz, 2018). With accession to the EU Poland had to re-shape its rather sporadic migration policy and make it comply with European standards. The migration policy that Poland has adopted in 2012 made a statement by prioritizing migrants coming from countries with close cultural and geographical connections to Poland (MIA, 2012), hence Ukraine, for example. This institutional support provoked the change in the portrait of a typical Ukrainian migrant in Poland. Jaroszewicz et al. (2018) have reported that since the Polish government rolled out a new migration policy, migrant’s status has become more regulated and, therefore, more legally protected. In general, they indicated that migratory trends are less sporadic in the last few years and have become more stable and organized (Jaroszewicz et al., 2018). From this point Poland attracted more qualified workers who were able to find a full-time job in factories, trading companies and startups. This step up

also gave people a chance not to leave their families behind but sometimes take spouses and children and try to start an absolutely new life.

At the same time, Poland gradually turned into #1 destination for young Ukrainians wishing to pursue higher education there (Główny Urząd Statystyczny, 2019; Gracz et al., 2018). Since Ukraine joined the Bologna process in 2005, more and more Ukrainians have chosen to pursue their education in Europe, including Poland (Semiv and Hvozdozych, 2012). Despite drastically improving its migration policies, Poland still does not have a comprehensive migration strategy that includes policies on internationalizing the higher education system (Gracz et al., 2018). The number of Ukrainian students increased in the past 10 years by approximately 703%, with a major influx of Ukrainian students happened after 2014 (Główny Urząd Statystyczny, 2019), when events of Euromaidan and beginning of armed conflict in the Donbass took place. In 2012 the number of Ukrainian students in Poland was 9 747, in 2014 - it was 23 392 and in 2016 there were 35 584. GUS (2019) reports that the share of Ukrainian students in Poland grows every year and they constitute approximately 30% of all international students. The latest data shows that around 40 000 Ukrainian students arrived in Poland for study purposes in 2019 (Główny Urząd Statystyczny, 2019). Table 1 shows a detailed breakdown of Ukrainian and international students in Poland in 2010-2019.

Academic year	Number of Ukrainian students in Poland	Number of all international students in Poland	Share of Ukrainian students
2010/2011	4 873	21 474	22,69%
2011/2012	6 321	24 253	26,06%
2012/2013	4 979	29 172	17,07%
2013/2014	15 123	35 989	42,02%
2014/2015	23 392	46 101	50,74%
2015/2016	30 589	57 119	53,55%
2016/2017	35 584	65 793	54,08%
2017/2018	37 829	72 743	52,00%
2018/2019	39 203	78 259	50,09%

Table 1. Statistical data of share of Ukrainian and international students in Poland in 2010-2019.

Previous research from Gracz et al. (2018) on Ukrainian students in Poland showed that Polish universities are becoming more popular among young Ukrainians for several reasons. When

young people were asked why they chose Poland, answers varied from high quality of education to having more opportunities to find employment in the EU (Gracz et al., 2018). Overall, Poland is viewed among Ukrainians as a solid starting point to launch a successful career or a potential new country to settle in.

In addition to this, Pirozhkov, Malinovska, Khomra (2003) list the following factors as possible 'push' factors that force young people to leave Ukraine: high unemployment rate in Ukraine and low employment opportunities, salary divergence between Ukraine and abroad, housing problems. Scholars state that poor capacities make young migrants seek for opportunities abroad as they will have better chances to build a successful career. Semiv and Hvozdoanych (2012) state that young people in Ukraine have 'emigration' moods, meaning that they are seeking for different ways to leave the country. Empirical research about young Ukrainians visions of the future showed that 64,7% of young people see themselves moving to another country in the future as they do not see any opportunities for themselves in Ukraine (Plyusch et al., 2017). Young people who have left the country for educational purposes seriously consider settling in other countries outside of Ukraine (Semiv and Hvozdoanych, 2012).

However, Birchenko and Mikhailov (2021) suggested that external push factors like financial dissatisfaction are not the only reasons for migration of young people. They tie migration with the so-called identity crisis when young people, by witnessing political and economic downturn in their home country, seek to find prosperity and stability abroad. They imply that those young Ukrainians who have decided to migrate abroad, mostly look for the recognition of their talents. Highly supported and sometimes even pushed by more influential family members, young people go abroad in order to identify their role and level of belonging to a certain country or region.

Empirical research (Vrublevskij, 2012) suggests that relations within Ukrainian families imply scattered views of family members on identity. Young people have in mind the idea of national identity tied closely to culture and language. At the same time, Vrublevskij (2012) admits that adults' vision of identity is far from nostalgic notions, with some having pessimistic views on ideas of Ukrainian nationalism, ready to support only those ideas that will help them to survive. These polarized views suggest that adult members of Ukrainian families use their influence to promote their life values among their offspring in order to prepare them for the possible hardships of life.

Altogether, migration from Ukraine to Poland is characterised by a compound of various factors such as the poor political and economic situation in Ukraine and visa liberalisation with the EU. Over a couple of decades, the portrait of a typical Ukrainian migrant in Poland has changed from seasonal and low skilled worker to high skilled professional or young aspiring student. Active migratory processes in place between both countries that have started right after the collapse of the Soviet Union. In the last decade educational migration of young people from Ukraine has become more and more significant as Poland attracts potential students with its EU membership and wider opportunities. Youth migration from Ukraine is usually identified by two factors: young people who do not see opportunities to grow in their home country and the influence of family members who promote the idea of getting education abroad. Complex relations within Ukrainian households create an environment for young migrants' re-evaluation of their belonging and identity while living in between countries.

Theoretical Background

This chapter introduces the key concepts used when studying migration within transnational spaces. It reviews concepts of youth mobility, transnationalism, belonging and national and European identification. This is followed by a subsection on identifying gaps in the research, drawing attention to under-researched aspects of those concepts and theoretical postulates need to be conceptualized with regard to youth migration in the CEE region.

Youth mobility

Experience of migration has a great power to affect young people's entrance into adulthood and future migratory behavior. Studies show that youth migration tends to be more dynamic and flexible compared to migration among older people. Theoretical frameworks on youth mobility usually represent it as an integral part of transition into adulthood (Krzaklewska, 2019) alongside completing education, finding a job, moving out of the parental house, finding a partner and having children (Billari, 2001; Krzaklewska, 2019; Settersten, 2007). In the works of Cairns (2013), Cuzzocrea and Mandich (2016), Forsberg (2017) and Prazeres (2018) youth migration was presented in a positive manner as a crucial part of entering adulthood (Ní

Laoire, 2020) . The overall understanding of how youth experiences migration on different stages of life, has implications for scholars in the research field.

“Youth” by itself is a very vague concept that lacks precision. As it is placed between adolescence and adulthood, it refers to transitional changes in life where an individual learns how “to make choices, take on responsibilities”, generally speaking, how that individual takes their place in a specific point of their lives (Maunaye, 2013). General research on youth migration usually mentions the official definition of the UN, referring to young people aged 15-24 years old (Perold et al., 2003; UN, n.d.). However, some scholars instead refer to the definition of a child in international law as “every human being below the age of eighteen years” ({Updating}).

Generally speaking, youth migration is often associated with attempts to fix economic well-being and the search for better employment opportunities. However, evidence suggests that economic factors are not the sole reasons driving young people to move between countries (Belmonte et al., 2020). Classic migration theories also focus mainly on economic, social and cultural motivations for migration (Massey, 1990). Belmonte et al. (2020) suggested that education, romantic relationships, armed conflicts, and the search for personal independence can be other possible reasons for young people to move away. Therefore, young people may have the same reasons to relocate as adults that are equally broad and are not only linked to attempts to fix financial well-being.

In addition, there is a general opinion that young people in the process of age transition can experience polarized effects of migration. The Scientific Panel on Adolescent Life Course in Developing Countries of the International Union for the Scientific Study of Population (IUSSP) reports that migration in the course of entering adulthood can bring both feelings of empowerment and increased vulnerability (McDonald et al., 2013). In the first case, migration often allows young people to secure more education and employment opportunities, which consequently can lead to improved living conditions. In the second case, however, migration can bring a variety of risks, such as loss of support from their habitual social bubble, disruption in schooling, alienation and other negative outcomes.

Most important in this framework, is identifying the decisive moment that inspired the decision to migrate. Here it is also important to note the nature of youth migration that is often divided into two types: 1) joint migration with parents or family members and 2) independent migration (Bryant, 2005). However, in both cases, the young people concerned are not always in charge

of decision making. The New Economics of Labour Migration (NELM) argues that voluntary migration is a decision that has been negotiated and accepted within a community or a household (Massey et al, 1993). NELM does not fully reject the major economic factors influencing decisions, it focuses on migration on the macro level. Within Central and Eastern European countries, where the role of family is very high in societal relations, Wickramasinghe and Wimalaratana (2016) suggest that NELM explains the logic behind collective decisions on migration on all stages, from choosing where to migrate to where to work.

Massey (2015) suggests that the role of family and community is equally important in the decision-making process and that the cultural peculiarities of relations within the household, matters of parenting and political moods of a single country can affect the decision making process. Moskal and Tyrell (2016) state that in the conservative households where intergenerational relations between parent and child are clearly delineated, young people are treated as dependents and, therefore, do not have decisive power of whether to or not to migrate. Sime, Fox, and Pietka (2010) suggest since young people rarely have agency in the decision-making process within their household, it is usually parents who make all key decisions for them. When it comes to migration, parents feel that they are acting in their children's benefit and interest by compelling them to move away. This is presented as giving opportunities to provide their child with more educational and employment opportunities in the future (Moskal and Tyrell, 2016). Therefore, decisions regarding future migration are usually made within the household, where young people have limited power to voice their preferences.

However it is also possible that different settings offer different outcomes. In societies going through massive political transitions towards more openness to the outside world, it is possible that young people willingly step onto the process of migration. King (2018) suggests that with neoliberalism taking over countries that used to be less liberal, less democratic, like CEE states, the transition towards liberal-democracy allows citizens to enjoy freedom of travel abroad. Taking the above discussion on decision making into account, it is hard to say who generally holds the power in this: young people or someone within their family or even community.

Despite the difficulties that scholars face when conceptualising "youth" or "youth mobility", the importance of studying it becomes more and more obvious. The migration of young people is a growing phenomenon as the number of young people choosing to migrate increases annually (Belmonte and McMahon, 2019). However, despite common reasons that lie behind their decision to move (fixing economic well-being), young people tend to have a broad

spectrum of reasons to move. At the same time, taking into account familial relations with family members in some societies, it is possible that youth migration can be initiated by more influential members of the family, who push young people into the migratory process.

Transnationalism

The concept of “transnationalism” just like “migration” is often studied through the lens of other fields, such as political and economic sciences, cross border entrepreneurship, citizenship rights and many others (Tedeschi et al., 2020). As a theoretical framework, transnationalism only emerged towards the end of the 20th century. At the same time globalisation contributed to changes in the conceptualisation of transnationalism as a theoretical term (ibid). This section will study the old and new definitions of transnationalism and how nation-states are influenced by it.

Steven Vertovec was one of those who attempted to define transnationalism as a theoretical framework and link it to the fields of migration and self-identification of migrants. In fact, it was not difficult to make. Starting from the beginning of the 21st century, scholars began to argue that migrants retain strong ties to their place of origin, based upon evaluations of the volume of remittances sent (Vertovec, 2001) and their desire to conserve traditions and habits from their place of origin in the new space. Schiller (1992) also suggested that migrants tend to maintain connections with their home country and people left behind while they are trying to adapt to the new environment. Vertovec (1999), supports this statement, with reference to multiple scholarly works, that transnationalism implies a certain set of connections between people or organizations on an international scale. In his vision, these connections did not necessarily exist within countries but could go beyond the physical borders of nation-states. Vertovec (1999) assumes that transnationalism as a phenomenon appeared before nation-states have appeared, and evolved over the years. Both Vertovec (1999) and Schiller (1992) express an opinion that people who participate actively in the life of transnational communities may live and exist in two countries at the same time. However, the degree of intensity of these ties define how “loyal” migrants will be to one country or another.

With globalisation and the boom of information technologies, transnational connections have intensified even more. Some view transnationalism as a direct consequence of globalisation, implying that those ties only appeared after people became more mobile (Portes et al., 1999). Bauböck and Faist (2010) state that transnationalism is not a constant value but a process that

continuously evolves, greatly influencing people's identities and sense of belonging. Scholars like Erdal and Oeppen (2013) suggest that transnationalism does not prevent integration of migrants into host society, in terms of adaptation, not political or normative dimension. It rather makes them negotiate their role in the host country and forces them to constantly re-evaluate their belonging to certain societies. Lucas and Purkayastha (2007) suggest that individuals can be integrated into a host society and at the same time hold multiple identities while actively supporting transnational links dictated by their own "cultural understanding of belonging and mutual obligations" (Itzigsohn and Saucedo, 2002). There also exists the opposite angle of the so-called rejection based transnationalism outlined by Beauchemin and Safi (2020). They suggest that rejection based transnationalism is a natural outcome of segregation in the host country, usually caused by racism. When a situation like this emerges, migrants intensify their connections in the country of origin as they feel that they belong there more than in the host country (Beauchemin and Safi, 2020). Eventually, these perceptions may lead to return migration.

It is also important to note that transnationalism is experienced differently across regions, countries, communities and/or people of different ages and backgrounds. It has a significant impact on the economic, socio-cultural and political levels (Vertovec, 2001), however transnationalism has a different strength of influence on each of them. For example, Andreotti et. al (2013) report that in Central and Southern Europe transnational ties tend to be more tangible within local communities and small businesses. Molina et al. (2015) argue that transnational fields that appear during the migration process are only possible if ties between two or more nation states exist and are framed into personal connections of migrants and non-migrants. In some cases, close ties turn out to be a barrier for proper integration into the host society. One of the possible aftereffects is the inability to learn a new language, as migrants living and operating in a transnational field essentially do not need it (Savoskul, 2010). Savoskul (2010) also pointed out that initial social status in the country of origin acts as an indicator of intensity of transnational ties after migration. In her opinion, high social status guarantees a high degree of transnational activities and vice versa.

When speaking of how young people live in transnational fields, several studies suggest that transnationalism is responsible for the formation of hybrid identities that allows them to speed up adjustment to the new environment (Falicov, 2006). In a 2019 study about transnational youth, it was said that children growing up in a transnational environment develop stronger ties to two or more countries they live in (Asomoza, 2019). According to Zúñiga and Hamann

(2009) one of the main effects that migration processes have on young people growing up in transnational spaces is constant changes to their perception of the world around them and their identity construction. Young people tend to constantly re-evaluate their values and produce a set of specific qualities and skills that assist them in life. Asomoza (2019) developed this idea, stating that transnational youth usually swing between two or more cultures and constantly negotiate these frameworks.

Transnationalism is a very broad and dynamic term that has been thoroughly studied within various scientific fields. Transnationalism in migration is conditioned by the influx of migrant population into the country of destination that creates a mix of ethno-cultural practices. When speaking of how transnationalism evolves in migration, it is important to bear in mind that this phenomenon is experienced differently on different levels.

Belonging

As a theoretical concept, belonging began being studied in the 1990s with the rise of studies on transnationalism and migration studies. Usually belonging was studied as one of the components of a broader theoretical concept, and was mostly used by scholars in the fields like citizenship (Painter, 2013), geography (Malone, 2007; Schueth and O'Loughlin, 2008), cultural (Duruz, 2002) , and sociology (Marshall and Foster, 2002). Yuval-Davis (2006) outlined an analytical framework to the term 'belonging' that is considered by others as the most comprehensive work on this topic (Antonsich, 2010). In this work, Yuval-Davis projects belonging through three different analytical levels: social locations, identification and emotional attachments, ethical and political values, that affect the formation of a sense of belonging. In her research, Painter (2013) adapts Yuval-Davis's approach and insists that belonging should also be studied as a dependent variable, as it is also prone to being affected by a variety of factors. These include, "diversity, changing social connections, or other socio-demographic traits or economic factors" (Painter, 2013).

Hagerty, Williams, Coyne, and Early (1996) were among those who made a first attempt to define belonging. In their view belonging refers to the individual's involvement in the experience of living in a certain environment and being a part of this environment. They also described it as a social and psychological phenomenon. Later this statement was supported by Grzymala-Kazłowska (2016) who defined "belonging" as a phenomenon experienced by a group rather than one individual within a socio-cultural environment. Kristin Walseth (2006)

conceptualised belonging in relation to social experiences that are developed through participation in community or family activities. However, at the same time, belonging can be analysed at different levels of relationship: for example, of an individual to a group. When speaking of how individual develops sense of belonging, Pollini (2005) suggests that alongside a traditional vision of belonging that is ascribed by place of birth and residence, a migrant can also develop one of three non-traditional forms of belonging ascribed by 1) birth alone, 2) residence, or 3) elective belonging. Goodenow and Grady (1993), Levett-Jones et al. (2009) and Strayhorn (2008) to some degree echoed Pollini's statement and defined belonging from the point of view of an individual. They conceptualised belonging as a degree to which an individual is welcomed, valued and respected by other members of the group. Specifically, Goodenow and Grady (1993) outlined the importance of having a feeling of membership in a certain group that serves as a prerequisite for development of the feeling of belonging.

Overall, the concept of belonging is closely tied with living in a transnational bubble. Bauböck and Faist (2010) connected the interdependence of transnational links and sense of belonging. They suggested that an individual who has a sense of belonging to a diasporal organization in the host country was able to live in three different dimensions - "transnational world scale, the local scale of the community and the scale of the host or home country" (Bauböck and Faist, 2010). At the same time, maintenance of strong links between migrants and their friends and families in the homeland, being a natural outcome of transnationalism, contributes to the development of the sense of belonging to their state of origin. Cassarino (2004) suggested that the intensity of transnational activities can be viewed as a direct outcome of migrants' belonging to their home country or migrant community.

According to Lishuang (2021) transnationalism is the main "subproduct" of globalisation and is responsible for how identity is constructed in human beings. Most importantly it affects how individuals experience their life in the transnational communities. And in this scenario national identity and the sense of belonging are the first subject for transformations. Sense of belonging is something that is usually formed within social circles and in some cases individuals are ought to escape it (Calhoun, 2003). However, in the same article Calhoun (ibid) argues that it is impossible to exist independently outside social groups: the sense of belonging appears in any case and in any situation. The only difference, Calhoun says, is the degree of this experience which that individual may have. Calhoun (ibid) further suggests that "differential resources give people differential capacities" to form the sense of belonging with regards to different types of social connections.

Interestingly though, when studying a sense of belonging scholars suggest that migrants negotiate their identity and belonging at the same time. Marco Antonsich (2010) assumes from referencing to works of other scholars, that belonging and identity are inseparable values. He even supposes that the meaning of both terms is equal. However, both identity and belonging are very dynamic values that are prone to constant changes, therefore it is hard to say what comes first and what has a bigger effect on migrants. Geng et al. (2012) assumed that in some particular cases belonging may step forward and it has a lot to do with expectations/reality matrix. The study on the formation of a sense of belonging among young migrants (Geng et al., 2012) has highlighted several interesting findings regarding this issue. As young people in some cases have no power over decision making in their household, they may form faulty or exaggerated imaginations of the destination point. As they receive the news about the future relocation, they usually turn to social media and television to source some information about the new place. And during the first months there, the first thing they do is re-evaluate the image by comparison to the real picture.

When discussing belonging and identity, scholars usually find it difficult to say what comes first. However, what is certain, that both concepts are inseparable and should be studied together as they both influence the degree both are formed in the individual. As a sub product of transnationalism, belonging can be developed on different levels (birth, residence or by choice). What is more important is that the interaction of an individual with the society serves as an essential prerequisite to the development of belonging.

National identification

The question of national identification among migrants is by default very sensitive as it may be tied to politics or migrants' personal experiences. This and the following sections will examine how national identification and European identification are conceptualised by scholars with regards to its study through the lens of migration studies.

To start with, identity is a very ambiguous concept that can be and is interpreted differently across the world (Brubaker and Cooper, 2000). Several attempts to conceptualize this term were made in the 1950s and 1960s by scholars like Berger and Luckmann (1966), Strauss (1959), Goffman (1963) through the social angle. However to date, identity remains understood and applied differently across various disciplines, due to its relevance in almost any field from political science to sports. Brubaker and Cooper (ibid) divide several possible

options of ‘using’ identity, as basis and product of social and political actions and collective phenomenon of being the same as members of a certain group (belonging to a group). Huntington and Dunn (2004) conceptualized identity as self-awareness of individuals or a group. Levina-Kramer (2008) echoes their definition, adding that human beings should be aware of their belonging to a certain group or community. This allows them to determine their place in the socio-cultural space and make it easier to navigate in the world surrounding them. Levina-Kramer (ibid) highlights that identification is essential for an individual. It allows them to operate their life within communication ties with other people.

As discussed above, identity as a subject can be studied through lenses of different research fields and what is more important can be interpreted differently. Scholars like Lishuang (2021), Kochetkov (2010), Yanakova (2017) insist that when it comes to migration studies, it is important to differentiate the national and ethnic identification, as they are often confused. Confusion usually comes in different perceptions of identity in different countries. For example, Lishuang (2021) explains that Chinese scholarship has a different vision of identity compared to Russian scholars. While the first have different views on national, state and supranational identity, the latter often see belonging to one state and nation as one type of identity. Generally it is believed (Sikevich et al., 2020) - and majority of scholars stick to this definition - that national identity refers to a country of origin and the ethnic identity defines belonging to a certain ethnic group.

It is, however, important not to exclude the matter and influence of ethnicity on the construction of national identity. Even though Lishuang (2021) and Levina-Kramer (2008) insist on the division of national and ethnic identities, in their vision ethnic identity implies “spiritual, emotional, cultural-historical, linguistic, religious attachment to a specific people, ethnic group, its identity and identification with this ethnic group” (Lishuang, 2021) that has nothing to do with national identification. At the same time, in Cooper and Brubaker’s “Beyond ‘Identity’” (2000), the inseparability of ethnicity in the matters of national identification is underlined. Gong (2007), after conducting a review of several research projects on self-identification of young migrants, also suggests that in regions that have large representation of different ethnic groups, ethnic identity constitutes a part of national identity.

National identity is usually studied through differing approaches, as scholars take different perspectives on it. Some examine it as a constant variable. Kochetkov (2010), for example, defines national identity in a very contrasting way to a sense of belonging, inclusiveness or,

vice versa, rejection. From his point of view, national identity has two characteristics - commonality and distinctiveness. Commonality is the degree of homogeneity of a nation, which is achieved by myths and ideas about its history, territory, institutions, language and religion. It reflects the inner dimension of national identity. Distinctiveness shows how similar or different a nation is from other nations that are members of the international community. In the same way, how a person can find out how generous or greedy, brave or cowardly he is, only by entering into communication with other people, nations learn about their uniqueness and characteristics in interaction with other nations. Distinctiveness reflects the external dimension of national identity. Kuznetsov and Shelin (2015) study the distinctiveness of national identity as a unique way to build a strong and stable state. They imply that national identification of individuals can only happen if they share state supported ideas of 'nation', 'state' and 'national identity'.

The inclusion of factors such as ethnicity, race, gender and others suggest that national identity is not in fact a polarized structure, especially in terms of migration studies and, therefore, cannot be viewed as constant value. As migrants living in the host country perform transnational actions and keep ties with their country of origin in one way or another, we can assume that transnationalism contributes to the formation of pluralizing identities (Levitt and Jaworsky, 2007; Zapata-Barrero, 2019). It is also underlined that it is impossible to separate culture from identity, therefore identity cannot be narrowed down to one single definition (Khanlou et al., 2018). Khanlou et al. (2007) see identity as "multiple, overlapping, and evolving", pointing out that it can change under any circumstances. Transnational migration offered a new perspective on how people relate to new environments and how it affects their self-identification (Simon et al., 2013). It is suggested that migrants existing in transnational spaces create fluid and multiple identities applicable both to countries of origin and destination (ibid).

When speaking of young migrants and indeed all migrants, in general, multiplication of identities is most likely to happen. Easthope (2009) said that human beings may have a spectrum of different identities that develop, change and transform over the course of their lives depending on their geographical and social position at a given point of time. So it is very possible for migrants to exhibit different identities when they come to a new environment. This mostly depends on the level of their attachment to their country of origin and destination (Easthope, 2009). Ní Laoire (2020) shares a similar view on cosequential dependence of national identity from the sense of belonging. She labels young migrants as social agents

alongside their parents or guardians, whereas by creating their own socio-cultural bubble they constantly form and negotiate their identities and belonging.

The constant negotiation of identities can possibly lead to a situation where migrants in fact do not associate themselves with any nation or country. They find themselves above the traditional identity nexus and prefer to observe a variety of identities and pick out traits and practices that they find more applicable for their more comfortable existence.

European identity

The definition and issues of 'European identity' are under attentive gaze in the discourse of the European integration process. The term 'European' includes many factors such as geographic location, shared history and culture, which all play their role in the formation of European identity (Chopin and Foucher, 2017; Jacobs and Maier, n.d.) which at the same time is full of contradictions and uncertainties (Morin, 1990). It is still unclear what criteria exactly define European identity: the political borders of the EU, geographical boundaries of the European continent, or general self-identification of nations as European? Some scholars suggest that European identity does not equal national identity as unlike the latter, European identity is based on legal, territorial prerequisites, while national identity carries important emotional and nostalgic value (Kaelberer, 2004; Kohli, 2000). In any case, European identity deservedly can be labeled as unique, because, despite the continental 'melting pot' of a variety of different cultures, each state has the freedom to develop their own national identity without the urge to adjust under some Pan-European norms.

The geographical boundaries of the European continent contribute to some degree to the formation of European identity. Mostly this is caused by historical events, when for centuries European borders were shifting between empires (Guibernau, 2011). Even in modern history, events influencing the political borders of Europe (e.g. unification of Germany, separation of Czechoslovakia, Baltics exit from the USSR) indicate that political borders, as Guibernau points out (2011), play a less important role in the formation of identity than actual geographical belonging to the continent. Formation of identity within the boundaries of the European continent, build up towards cross-border trust between inhabitants and their governments and further develop European identity (Ciaglia et al., 2018). On the other hand, some scholars (Bergbauer, 2018; Cerutti, 2003) believe that shared political culture and practices serve as a solid foundation for the formation of European identity.

All these factors have a major impact on the perception of shared history and value without overshadowing national identity and inclusion of those who live in non-EU states. Keulman and Koós (2014) generalize this as simply “socio-territorial identity”. They compare it to national identity, where European identity does not have sharp edges and solid characteristics, and is “conceived of as an emerging, fluctuating and changing phenomenon” (ibid). The perception of ‘European identity = European Union,’ causes obvious separation in perception of European identity by those inside the borders and those outside. This binary positioning was at first created by European elites (Tekiner, 2020) which allowed them to distinguish ‘us’ as Europeans and ‘the others’ as non-Europeans. This separation between ‘us’ and ‘the other’ is quite vital for Europe, because without ‘them’ the sense of ‘us’ will be lost (Pang, 2011). For those who were excluded from the European equation, self-identification as European became an important stage of self-affirmation and adds up to a general sense of belonging and protection. Schimmelfennig and Sedelmeier (2005) point out that with the collapse of the Soviet Union, some of the former countries of the USSR and Eastern bloc expressed an immediate desire to join the EU. At that point they did not necessarily identify themselves as Europeans, but inclusion into the EU was meant to be a source of protection from possible future aggression from Russia. Political protection was not the only reason for these states to seek to become European. As the 20th century was rich in political events, Central and Eastern European states were often on the frontline of great change, being shifted and shared between empires. Therefore, with the collapse of the USSR and long-awaited independence, it was a matter of rationalism to “return to Europe” the place where they truly belong in order to escape association with the former Soviet Union anymore. Judy Batt (2001) argues that the rhetoric of ‘being associated with Europe’ and ‘to be seen as European’ means recovering national self-esteem by joining a family of more powerful countries that will allow the establishment of traditionally European norms of democracy, market economies, and the protection of human and minority rights. Over the course of years this rhetoric filtered down to people who also started to associate themselves with Europe.

Bergbauer (2018) also considered the above-mentioned factors as variables that affect the formation of European identification on an individual level. In his opinion, an individual's self-identification as European comes from “self-categorisation as European together with their evaluations of their membership in the European collective and their affective attachment to Europe and other Europeans.” Therefore, his approach implied that state-centered factors are not always main prerequisites for the formation of European identity in individuals.

As a concept, European identity allows nation states to nurture their unique national identities along the formation of unified regional identification. Conditioned by shared history and geographical boundaries, European identity has already evolved to some degree in people residing in Central and Eastern Europe. Another important conclusion to draw from this, is that the formation of several identities, including European, can be possible if an individual separates society in their mind into two groups: “us” and “them”.

Identifying the gaps in the research on Ukrainian-Polish migration

Scholarship on Ukrainian-Polish migration and politics has touched upon many topics covered by this thesis. Many works have been dedicated to the problems of migration between two countries, as well as the construction of the national identity of Ukrainians in the past couple of decades. This section highlights what exactly has been done in these topics and shows what gaps this research aims to fill.

Ukrainian-Polish migration is a rather unique example of a cross-border migratory process. The mobility of people from Ukraine to Poland equally corresponds to fundamental classic migration theories like NELM or those outlined by Lee (1966), Harris and Todaro (1970), and Galor and Stark (1991) with certain adjustments taking into account the peculiarities of Ukrainian society. This research will look into the nature of Ukrainian-Polish migration using all three of these theories as they all explain theoretical aspects of migration trends between these states. Ukrainian migration to Poland exhibits certain traits typical for each theory but at the same time it is not typical to any theoretical framework at all. Migration from Ukraine to Poland is characterised by strong push factors from the Ukrainian side: political decline, poor economic situation, absence of opportunities for young people. At the same time Poland “pulls” migrants, attracting them with higher wages, EU membership (therefore, potential access to the EU labor market), higher quality of life and education. However, economic opportunities are not exclusive reasons for people to migrate. Ukrainians see Poland as a land of greater choice and numerous opportunities that will open more doors to them and their children. Therefore, this case should be studied not only through the lens of economic opportunities but - as de Haas (2021) said - it is also important to consider the nature within which migration is being nurtured: age of main actors, transnational links, construction of identity and sense of belonging.

Another aspect worth researching, is the role of family and familial relation in Ukrainian households in the decision-making process. As said in the theoretical part of this thesis, NELM theory suggested that families play a big role in the individual's decision to migrate. Upon King's (2018) suggestion, in the countries like Ukraine that are in the process of transitions from being less liberal to liberal-democracy, gives citizens more liberty in choosing where to go. Combining these two principles together, the field work of this research will look into how decision-making evolves in Ukrainian households when it comes to youth migration and to what extent parents use their authority to send their child away.

Youth migration in Ukraine is mostly studied through the lens of educational migration and its impact on Ukraine (Libanova, 2019). Semiv and Hvozdoch (2012) somewhat echo de Haas's (2021) statements when elaborating Ukrainian youth's reasons to migrate abroad. The reasons for young Ukrainians to move abroad according to scholars (Semiv and Hvozdoch, 2021, (Pirozhkov et al., 2003; Balakireva and Valkovana, 2006) were not exclusively limited to economic factors; migrants were also looking for higher quality education (not only in terms of studying but also in terms of technical equipment), a lower level of institutional bureaucracy, and ways to resolve housing problems. Libanova (2019) also thinks that young Ukrainian migrants think beyond fulfilling their economic needs when moving abroad. She states that getting education in countries like Poland is, first of all, a matter of social status. Having European education means having access to greater career opportunities and a chance to "leave behind the miseries or poverty and receive a ticket to a high life society" (Libanova, 2019). The following research will also base upon Belmonte et al.'s (2020) vision of youth migration with regards that it is not uniquely characterised by economic push-and-pull factors. It is rather dictated by finding opportunities abroad that will eventually lead to possible economic prosperity. Young migrants are mostly moving to Poland for educational purposes, and they see this process as an opportunity to start a professional career in an EU country. Eventually, this work will try to unwrap what exactly lies behind young people's thinking when moving abroad and how above-mentioned theories will help to unfold these insights.

In the light of the major political events that took place in Ukraine at the beginning of 2000s, when the country was parted between Soviet past and possible European future, scholars paid a lot of attention to the transformation of Ukrainian identity (Onuch et al., 2018) and development of European identity. However, some believe that scholarship has limited overview on the development of European identity in the post-Soviet states (Minesashvili, 2020), there is a process of change within general public opinion towards European identity in

Ukraine (Fawn, 2006; Kuzio, 2002). Identity issues in Ukrainian and Western scholarship were usually studied within the borders of the Ukrainian state and mostly touched upon divergence between people's "Russian" and "Ukrainian" identification of people (MacDuffee Metzger et al., 2016; Onuch et al., 2018; Popson, n.d.).

In general, scholars like Minesashvili (2020) are confident in their statements that Ukraine as a state still contests to which identity they lean more. Large political events like revolution in the beginning of 2000s and 2010 as well as military conflicts, changed public opinion in a way that it favors more pro-European discourse. Mostly these transitions affected the Ukrainian younger generation as they transitioned from one stage of political life of their home country into another along with their own transition into adulthood.

Identity construction aspects among young Ukrainian migrants are generally poorly studied by scholars. As massive migration of youth has started only within the last 10 years, scholars did not have sufficient time to analyse all peculiarities of the process. However, this does not mean that migrants' identity was not studied at all. Using Ukrainian-Polish migration as a case study, I will attempt to analyse identity changes among young Ukrainian migrants using current scholarship on identity in general and those that cover Ukrainian or European self-identification. For example, Bilan (2017) stated that Ukrainian identity represents a fluid structure as people are not seen as Ukrainians, they are also not seen- as Russians, Poles, Slovaks or Austrians. Affected by the historical retrospective that united Poland and Ukraine, these perceptions contribute to the formation of hybrid identity among migrants. This also goes along with Easthope's (2009) vision of identity, where he described it as a spectrum that tends to change under the influence of various factors at different points of time or Falicov's (2006) study on the formation of hybrid identities among young migrants. The first problem that comes to mind is that global data on migratory trends and patterns of young people is not very representative; scholars across the globe produce inconsistent research on youth and youth migration respectively (Belmonte and McMahon, 2019). Ukrainian-Polish youth migration also falls under the category of another poorly covered topic in sociological scholarship. Despite the existence of a large number of research projects on adult and mostly labor migration to Poland (Fedyuk and Kindler, 2016; Mishchuk et al., 2019), minors or young adults are usually missed out from research. Insufficient coverage of youth migration conceal how young migrants experience migration, how they exist and act within transnational bubbles, how their belonging and identity is formed. When youth migration from Ukraine to Poland is not studied deep enough, all these key variables are missed out, making young migrants unseen and

unheard. It is also possible that scholarship covering these topics is mainly written in Ukrainian and Polish and therefore is overlooked by global academia.

When it comes to the study of belonging in the context of this research, I will see how young migrants' entourage effects on the formation of the sense of belonging according to Grzymala-Kazłowska's (2016) and Walseth's (2006) propositions, where the formation of belonging is conditioned by the dynamics of relationships between individual and a group. Just like self-identification, a sense of belonging appears within transnational space and exists if migrants maintain strong links between countries. There is no doubt that a sense of belonging appears among young migrants, however, it is important to know the degree or intensity of this sense in order to evaluate their overall experience of migration.

In general, matters of Ukrainian-Polish migration are studied via different aspects, including the formation of identity and sense of belonging within the transnational environment. At the same time a lot of attention is also paid to the issues of educational migration of Ukrainians abroad. However, it is still difficult to say exactly how young migrants experience migration, how their identity evolves in this process, how it affects their sense of identity and what role transnational fields take in this process.

Methodology

In this chapter the methodology of the research is explained. This includes the outline of methodological approach, time period of the field work, and limitations of the research.

Research design

The research method for this dissertation was chosen to be a series of semi-structured interviews. This method will highlight hidden implications within migration experiences among young migrants. As was said in the previous section, this research aims to connect together various research on youth migration and identity construction of Ukrainian migrants in Poland with a specific focus on those who moved to Poland in their teen years. The goal is to identify how Ukrainian migrants who moved to Poland at a young age experience the process of immigration to another country, how their identity is constructed and sense of belonging is formed in the transnational fields. The general goal is to find the practical support to theories outlined in the theoretical part of this research and answer the research questions.

Interview questions were designed in a way that participants would have a freedom to express their opinions in answer to a set of 30 semi-structured questions (see Table 2).

1. Introduction

2. Information about respondent

- 1) Can you talk about yourself? What is your name? How old are you?
- 2) Where were you born?
- 3) Where do you live right now?
- 4) What is your nationality?
- 5) What languages do you speak?

III. Before the move

- 6) Tell me about your childhood? Who participated in your upbringing?
- 7) What language did you use the most at home and at school?
- 8) Tell me about your friends and family
- 9) What was the reason for your relocation? Did you go to study?
- 10) Can you reflect on your experience of relocating? (What it felt like? What idea did you have of how long this relocation may last?)
- 11) Tell me about your emotions and thoughts when you learned that you would be moving to Poland soon?
- 12) Tell what you knew about Poland prior to moving there?
- 13) Describe how you prepared for the move?

IV. Coming to Poland

- 14) Tell me about your first encounter with Poland. Was there anything that you found surprising or unusual?
- 15) Could you describe how you felt after moving to Poland?

- 16) If you moved with your parents, to what extent you participated in decision making, e.g. which school to choose, where to live?
- 17) How would you describe the process of settling in Poland? Did you get any help settling in?
- 18) Did you stay in touch with family and friends who stayed in Ukraine in the first year of living in Poland? If so, can you tell me about it?

V. Living in Poland

- 19) Describe your current life in Poland.
- 20) If applicable, could you describe how relocation affected your relationship with family and friends in Ukraine?
- 21) Describe your current social circle, how comfortable you find your life in Poland?
- 22) What language do you use the most? If you moved with your parents, what language do you use at home?
- 23) Since moving to Poland, what habits and traditions from Ukraine do you still follow?
- 24) Do you participate in events organized by the Ukrainian diaspora? If so, why? Or why not?
- 25) Apart from family and friends left in Ukraine, what else is still giving you a sense of attachment to Ukraine? Try to think of both tangible factors (e.g. property) and intangible ones (norms, way of thinking)?
- 26) Since moving to Poland, can you say that you are behaving differently compared to when you were in Ukraine? For example, the way you speak and act towards those who live in Ukraine and those with whom you're in touch in Poland.

VI. Views of the future

- 27) How do you think your experience with relocation has shaped your views on Ukraine and Poland? How do you see yourself in this equation?
- 28) When you think of home, what first comes to your mind?
- 29) Do you consider ever returning to Ukraine? or staying in Poland?

30) Describe your plans for the future.

Table 2. Interview questions

Participants were expected to speak for most of the time while the interviewer only kept the conversation in the right direction. The narrative approach of this method was chosen as it allows access and retrieves more insightful data for later analysis.

Sampling method and recruitment of interviewees

The recruitment process of participants included snowballing using personal contacts and social media channels. Some participants were recruited via friends who live and work in Poland for a very long time. Later at the end of each interview, participants were asked to spread the word about this research among their friends and possibly attract more participants.

The second tool for the recruitment process was attracting people using social media. Several Facebook groups were contacted, including Krakow Expats, Русскоязычные в Кракове (Russian speaking people in Krakow), Жизнь русскоязычных в Кракове (The life of Russian speakers in Krakow), Наши люди во Вроцлаве (Our people in Wroclaw), Наши в Кракове (Ours in Krakow), Русскоязычные в Варшаве (Russian speakers in Warsaw), Русскоязычные в Кракове-Катовице-Вроцлав-Щецин (Russian speakers in Krakow-Katowice-Wroclaw-Szczecin). The total audience exposure in all these groups is equal to more than 100 000 people. The same message was posted in all of the groups, inviting volunteers to participate in the research interview. The majority of respondents were reached with the help of these groups.

The target group for the interviews included people who were matched following criterias:

- 1) Ukrainian born and/or citizens;
- 2) moved to Poland at the age of 14-17 years old;
- 3) currently 18-25 years old;
- 4) lived in Poland for at least 2 years.

The requirement for the age of possible participants had very strict specifications and it was important to follow them. As research intended to uncover the developmental changes in self-

identification of teenagers, it was important to interview people who had the experience of migration at this age. For ethics and safety reasons it was decided to conduct interviews only among adult participants. Despite this, the research was expected to benefit from this limitation as the interviews aimed to unpack teenage memories of migration experience, therefore, it was important that respondents had a chance to analyse their past experiences. In this regard, I decided to focus specifically on those who moved to Poland at the age from 14 to 17 years old, so the memories of relocation were still in place and participants could adequately evaluate and reflect on them.

Overall more than 35 people reached out to me in order to participate in the interview. During the screening process, the majority of people willing to participate were eliminated from participation as they were not eligible in accordance with requirements listed above.

Testing interviews

A series of pilot interviews were conducted in order to test the questions and adjust them to ensure a smooth flow of the conversation. Thus, for example, questions were not asked in the order they were initially outlined. Instead, participants were given freedom to move the conversation in the direction they preferred. In case participants were moving away from the topic of discussion, the interviewer gently pulled them back on to the topic of the research. In the same way, some of the questions were not asked in some of the interviews as they did not apply to a particular case (e.g. questions about moving to Poland with parents were taken down as participants moved independently for study purposes).

Pilot interviews served as a good starting point for a researcher as well. They helped to identify which questions need to be improved, what topics should be marked as sensitive and/or removed completely.

Limitations of the research

The research has faced several limitations that slowed down its execution. One of the major issues faced is problems with recruiting participants for interviews. Audio recordings of interviews are important for further analysis, however not all participants were willing to give permission to have the interview recorded. This became the major limitation of the research as it was difficult to find people willing to record interviews. In some cases, excessive

documentation scared off participants. When acknowledged with the set of documents that were handed to them before the interview, participants were reluctant to put their signature in forms. After reading the Plain Language Statement and Consent Form, some participants chose to turn down their participation in the research. Despite the huge number of Ukrainian nationals living in Poland at the moment, during this research I was only able to recruit 13. Out of these 13 interviews only 8 were used in this research.

The challenges faced during the interview stage of the research became the second biggest limitation of the research. The reasons for these varied. However, misunderstanding of research requirements was the major issue. Thus, some participants were constantly asking to pause audio recording in order to say something that according to them might be controversial. In some cases, participants agreed to participate in the interview and asked prior to the start to turn off the recording. In this case the interview could not be conducted any longer. One participant misunderstood the age requirements. And lastly, two participants later contacted me and asked to withdraw their data from the research completely.

From these two reasons a third limitation appears that the sample size for this thesis is very small and not very representative. However, the remaining 8 interviews have delivered significant insights and qualitative data that allowed me to conduct solid content analysis and collect deep insights from interviewees. Further, the participants' background was also not representative. The research lacks diversity and involvement of people of different backgrounds, social classes, gender, education and reasons to move to Poland. In any case, research provides a good starting point for future research in the field of identity and belonging among young migrants in Poland as there are no predecessors to it.

The global COVID-19 pandemic was an umbrella limitation to the research as it slowed down the research process at all stages. As I was doing my studies and interviews remotely, I could not carry out the research process and recruit participants ad hoc. Later I realised how many challenges brought my decision to carry out research remotely but while Europe was entering into second and later into third wave of COVID-19, it became clear that face-to-face interview will not be allowed in the nearest future. Therefore, I have chosen to prioritize safety above the research.

Technical issues were an outcome of the COVID-19 problem, as many interviews were canceled because of bad internet connection. In some cases, people could not ensure their privacy during the interview as they were obliged to self-isolate with roommates, therefore not

willing to open up during the interview. Another problem is that people who did not have access to printing and scanning services were unable to sign the Plain Language Statement and Consent form in time.

Interviews

Of 20 scheduled interviews, 13 interviews were conducted. For reasons explained above in the Limitations section and later elaborated in Summary of participants, this research will be based on 8 interviews.

An Ethics application was submitted to the Ethics Forum of the School of Social and Political Sciences before the start of the research. The approval process took approximately 4 weeks and, as a result, a list of interview questions, Plain Language Statement and Consent Form were approved for use in the research. Prior to the interview participants were given a Plain Language Statement and Consent Form (Appendix 1 and Appendix 2). Both forms were obligatory according to regulation of the School Ethics Forum.

Interview results were transcribed into a Word document and later analysed. All transcripts were divided into topics that participants were mentioning the most (see section Discussion of the results). Thus, categorization of speech topics allowed us to get more insightful data from the interviews.

Summary on interviewees

In total, 13 interviews were conducted. 8 interviews are used in this research.

Participants of the interviews, in general, represented middle and working classes of middle income. 7 participants were from nuclear families. One participant's parents divorced, however both parents actively participated in co-parenting. 2 out of 8 participants are ethnic Poles, who study in Poland under NAWA scholarship.

All of the participants moved to Poland for study purposes, where 2 were finishing high school education and the rest to pursue bachelor degrees in Polish universities.

For the reasons of confidentiality and security, all participants' names were removed from this thesis and replaced by pseudonyms.

#	Date of the interview	Participant's code name	Age	Sex	Occupation	Year of migration to Poland	Age at the time of migration	Purpose of migration
1	30 April 2021	Egor	19	Male	Student	2019	17	Education
2	1 May 2021	Alexandra	25	Female	Employed	2012	16	Education
3	5 May 2021	Margarita	24	Female	Employed	2013	16	Education
4	6 May 2021	Kseniya	24	Female	Employed	2014	17	Education
5	7 May 2021	Nadezhda	19	Female	Student	2018	16	Education
6	23 May 2021	Valeriya	21	Female	Student	2017	17	Education
7	25 May 2021	Taras	21	Male	Student	2017	17	Education
8	27 May 2021	Varvara	25	Female	Employed	2013	17	Education

Research findings

Reasons to move to Poland

Migration always starts with the decision to move. The decision to change countries for young migrants comes through their parents who make decisions for them. This section will explain how complex relations within Ukrainian families and unstable political and economic situation in Ukraine affected young people's decision-making process before moving to another country.

When asked about their reasons to move to Poland, all participants without hesitations answered that they wanted to get higher education in Poland. However, during the course of the interview, it was revealed that pursuing higher education was rather a tool to leave Ukraine and settle in a new country. The real reasons varied: these could be ways to escape patronising parents or desire to start a new, independent life.

“We lived in a communal apartment, three of us in one room. At some point I wanted to know how it feels like to live alone on my own. [...] I can’t say I didn’t like my school or classmates but I wasn’t comfortable studying with them anymore, I wanted something new. [...] When I arrived in Poland I decided that I will completely change myself and my life and start over.” (Nadezhda, 19)

During the interviews participants did not speak much about why they wanted to go to Poland. Admitting the fact that they were very young at the time, they said that at that time the only reason to go to Poland was to get a better-quality education. However, when speaking on behalf of their parents, they listed different things, such as the poor economic situation, military conflicts, and having more opportunities in Poland. This discrepancy in reasons to go to Poland, suggests that due to familial structures within Ukrainian households, teenagers never had a real chance to think over their upcoming relocation, because all decisions were made for them by adult family members. Similar stance has been described by Birchenko and Mikhailov (2021), when they reported that young people were pushed into migration under the influence of adult family members. A group of participants admitted that the idea of going to Poland has always existed within the family. They doubt that their decision to go to Poland was in fact of their own and it was rather imposed on them by one of the parents. In fact, the relations within families were so intertwined that sometimes teenagers were confronted with the fact that they will study anywhere but in Ukraine. Compared to above mentioned examples, in these cases the decision to go to Poland was made by parents who did not see the future of their child in Ukraine.

“It was a decision made by my parents and as I think of it, it was a forced decision to some extent. But when I was graduating from school, I was 16, I already knew that I would go to Poland. I really wanted to go there. [...] and it is difficult to say now, have I really wanted to go to Poland or not?” (Alexandra, 25)

“Well, they [parents] told me one day, that they can afford to send me abroad. All I had to do was choose a country and university and apply there. Later we found out that we have Polish origins and I am eligible for NAWA scholarship, so I didn’t even had to choose the country” (Taras, 21)

The above statements, support to some extent work of Moskal and Tyrell (2016), where they argued that in some households, young people are seen first of all as dependants, therefore all decisions are made for them for their own benefit. An argument supporting the idea that young

people were not initiating the migration to Poland is the fact that before actual relocation almost none of them knew anything about this country. They trusted their parents in this and started accumulating knowledge prior to actual relocation or during Polish language courses.

“Nothing, I knew literally nothing about Poland, except for the fact that we have some common history and Warsaw is not the nicest city in the world. That’s it.”
(Kseniya, 24)

“I only knew about Poland from history classes...and later when I started language courses, they told us a bit about different cities in Poland, about Polish lifestyle. But that was very generalized information” (Egor, 19)

“I collected most of the information about Poland right before coming here. The Internet is a great source, I joined some groups on VK.com and was reading everyday about Poland and stories of people who moved here.” (Nadezhda, 19)

The power of parents over the decision making proved to be a strong tendency among some of the respondents. Despite not saying this directly, the impression was given that parents were sending their children into migration in order to follow them later.

“My mother had already tried to send my sister away. She [sister] went to Germany twice but both times returned back. [...] ... She [mother] always told me that I will study in Poland. [...] When I lived here [in Poland] for four years, my sister and her family and my mother relocated to Poland permanently.” (Alexandra, 25)

In other cases, “soft power” was used in order to build up interest in Poland and its culture. Respondents were talking about attending cultural events and workshops organized by churches in different cities of Ukraine. At the same time, in one case, interest in Poland was seeded by a parent.

“It started with my father. He loved Polish culture and language. Everyday we listened to podcasts and radio in Polish. Watched movies.... This is how I started learning Polish in the first place - with my father.” (Valeriya, 21)

As said above the Catholic church played a big role in the popularization of Polish culture by organizing culture workshops and language courses for free for the congregation. At the same time, young people from Central and Eastern parts of Ukraine did not have this opportunity

simply because the Catholic church is not as massively represented in other parts of the country. Therefore, people had to find their own means to get to know about Poland.

“For people from the West it was much easier because a lot of people were able to attend free Polish language courses in churches. Here [in my hometown] we don’t have Catholic church. It is not widespread in this part of the country, while in the West you can have up to 3 churches even in the smallest town.” (Varvara, 25)

The political situation in Ukraine was one of the major reasons why parents were pushing children to continue higher education outside of Ukraine. Especially this concerned boys, as parents were afraid that their sons could be drafted into the army. During the interview process, the impression was given that young men do not fully realise the risks of going into the army. While they spoke, they voiced the concerns of their parents in the first place, however, they did not seem to care about the possible threats of being involved in military actions.

“Honestly, I never thought about [potentially] going to war. But I think my parents had these fears that if war becomes so massive, they [Ukrainian government] will recruit me into the army. Because as soon as war news appeared on TV, parents were like: “No way you’re staying in this country!” (Egor, 19)

“One day my parents just sat with me and said: “Here’s the situation [referring to military conflict in Donbass]. We have money and opportunity to send you to Poland and we believe this would be better for you” (Alexandra, 25)

“Situation was so unclear, my parents had fears that I could be taken into the army any moment.” (Taras, 21)

As described in NELM, familiar relations within Ukrainian households play a key role in the decision of young people to migrate. While young people are distanced from the political and social life of their home country, they allow their parents to decide for themselves what direction to take in their lives. As their direct and legal guardians it is rather obvious why parents are taking over the decision making process. Results of the interview have shown that for this group of young migrants (interviewees) education was the main reason to go to Poland. However, parents turned out to be the main power in the decision-making process and carefully planned their child’s relocation. For parents reasons to send children away were much wider. As witnesses of economic and political deterioration in Ukraine, parents were using various techniques to spark an interest in their child to go to Poland to pursue education. Parents

believed that the situation in Ukraine carries a lot of threats for their children, therefore as legal guardians, they planned their child's future relocation and in some cases simply informed them about their decision.

“Us vs Them” or “Us vs Us”: negotiating identity in Poland

An interesting observation was made when participants were asked to reflect on obstacles of being accepted and integrated by Polish society and by fellow Ukrainians. The results of the interviews suggested that young migrants were rather confused by striking differences between Poles and Ukrainians and the negotiation process of their identity and belonging became almost visible. The negotiation process involved first of all transnational activities that young Ukrainians were participating in. These activities like constructing a social group consisting of people sharing a similar mindset or only speaking Ukrainian, allowed them to balance between both countries and was supposed to help find a place in one of them.

Several barriers emerged since their relocation that significantly complicated the integration process in Poland for some participants. Besides differences between Poles and Ukrainians, they also noted that language differences and separation from locals affected their eventual perception of belonging to both countries.

All of the participants by the time of their arrival to Poland had a strict set of beliefs regarding fellow Ukrainians. Thus, in their mind, they divided all people they encountered in Poland into two groups: 1) Ukrainians and 2) others. Their deep knowledge about the people of Ukraine allowed them to choose carefully their friends and entourage among Ukrainians. In some cases they avoided being friends with people of a certain background. At the same time, they did not know what to expect from Poles and had a very cautious approach in connecting them.

“ 30-35% of my coursemates were Ukrainians and the majority of them were from Western Ukraine. I have nothing against them, I swear, we are just so different. People, let's say from Lviv, are very open, relaxed, they can approach you, chat with you for 10 minutes and then suddenly you are best friends with them. I wasn't used to this in my hometown. I find this very unusual.” (Kseniya 24)

The immediate ability to see the difference between Ukrainians originating from different parts of Ukraine also helps them to notice the differences between Ukrainians and Poles. Some of the interviews suggested that young migrants were constantly drawing a parallel line in their mind, constantly comparing themselves, other Ukrainians and Poles. This added up another dimension to their identity negotiating process.

“When I just arrived in Poland, I immediately noticed the difference between us and them. I don’t know how to explain this...Poles looked more conscious? I would say, they had this ability to critically assess situations that we don’t have. That was impressive and frightening at the same time.” (Margarita, 24)

Participants had doubts in identifying themselves as Ukrainians, Polish or Europeans. Some explained this with the general dissonance of living in Poland but being surrounded by Ukrainians all the time. The overall observation of participants indicates that they may have their own understanding about what national identification is. In some cases, they view national identity in the same way they view their citizenship, not ethnic belonging, for example. Two of the participants, ethnic Poles, had the same understanding of identity as others, meaning that their ethnicity played little role in the self-identification process. Ciaglia et al. (2018) and Guibernau (2011) argued that sometimes location within geographical boundaries of the European continent can make a greater impact on the development of identity. While young Ukrainians had very limited understanding of their national self-identification they preferred to think of themselves and each other as inhabitants of one continent.

Some participants based their judgments on their social group. If they were surrounded by Ukrainians, then they found themselves more Ukrainian. Surrounded by Ukrainian friends, who roughly have similar background and story of migration, participants felt understood and comforted by the idea that they are not alone. Being in a group made them organize around things that are common and only understood by Ukrainians, e.g. holidays. Therefore, these group activities eventually contributed to the re-negotiations of their identity. Besides that, some participants noted that difficulty ‘infiltrating’ Polish society made them even closer to Ukraine. In migration they came to acknowledge their roots and origins and became more interested in life in Ukraine. Even though young migrants were not spinning in the same circles with Poles, the observation of Poles pushed them towards re-evaluation of their usual values.

These interviews supported the idea put forward by Pang (2011) that identification cannot evolve unless it is not conditioned by development of senses of “us” and “them”. As soon as

young Ukrainians got into a new environment they used their existing knowledge about Ukrainians (specifically about Ukrainians coming from different parts of Ukraine) and applied to the image of Poles. Having in mind the fact that Poland is not only a neighboring country to Ukraine with almost similar culture and language but also a member of the European Union, young migrants were puzzled with their place in this country as Ukrainians, Polish or Europeans.

“I am not detached from Ukraine in any way. I follow all the news that comes from relatives and media. I also try to be closer to Ukrainian speaking communities here.”
(Valeriya, 21)

“I grew up with this idea, that everything is very bad here [in Ukraine] and all is much better in Europe. But after living in Poland for some time, I see that Poland is not perfect at all. [...] But people here don’t hide from problems, they try to fix them! And it made me realise how much I care about Ukraine. It has become almost a principle now.” (Varvara, 25)

All participants when reflecting about their identity and belonging had conflicting feelings towards self-identification. The fact that it was hard for them to fully assimilate in Poland, being surrounded by Ukrainians or other foreigners, made them question every day where they truly belong. When reflecting about Ukraine or Poland, participants were separating themselves from these places as they were disassociating places from themselves. As mentioned above, young migrants tend to associate themselves within the larger picture (of being located within one continent, for example) as described by Ciaglia et al. (2018) and Keulman and Koos (2014). Participants showed that they would only stick to one place in case it satisfied all their internal requirements.

“I don’t know how to call myself, to be honest. Ukrainian, Polish or European? I think it also depends [on circumstances]... My boyfriend is Ukrainian and most of my friends are also Ukrainians, so this makes me somewhat Ukrainian as well. [...] I try to follow the news and I know everything that happens there but I do the same for any other country in the region like Poland or Russia. But I do not associate myself with Ukraine anymore. And I can’t say that I lean towards Poland as well...”
(Alexandra, 25)

“Well, I would only go to Ukraine if they will change completely, like the health and education system. [...] Before coming to Poland I thought it was almost like another planet, where cars fly, you know. In reality, it is not really a Europe, even though Poland is a part of the EU. It has more in common with Ukraine than with the EU.” (Nadezhda, 19)

“My mother raised me in a way that family goes first, not country. So I cherish my friends, my family and my boyfriend. I think I can follow them anywhere and it will feel like home to me” (Margarita, 24)

When speaking of languages, some participants noted that language barriers played a significant role in the integration. During the interview participants had mixed responses on the use of Ukrainian language in everyday life. Usage of Ukrainian was an indicator of their origin and different respondents had different visions on it. However, only one of the participants tied the use of the language with their sense of belonging. Being a habit, a transnational link that indicated her origins and helped her to stand out among peers, Ukrainian language carried a nostalgic sense that tied her to Ukraine. As Baubock and Faist (2010) outlined - and in this case interview responses proved their suggestion - a sense of belonging evolves within transnational spaces that assists to live comfortably within this bubble.

“It is now important for me to speak Ukrainian, I feel this is how I support my origins. It's weird, on one hand, because I don't want to go back [to Ukraine] but also I don't want to forget Ukrainian. I want my children to be able to speak their mother's native language” (Varvara, 25)

In all of the rest of the interviews language was presented as a tool of communication with pragmatic notions without any nostalgic hint. Taking Calhoun's (2003) argument, that Ukrainian language became the tool of evaluating belonging within transnational spaces. However, it does not mean that this increased or decreased their sentiments towards Poland. Difficulties of accessing and practicing Polish language resulted in alienation from Poland and its society. Some young people gave up perfecting their Polish and becoming friends with locals. In this regard language serves for them only as a tool for communication, no more.

Use of language, Russian or Ukrainian, mostly depended on where they lived before going to Poland. Respondents who were born in the Ukrainian speaking community kept speaking Ukrainian in Poland. Others stated that since moving to Poland they rarely use Ukrainian

language. Participants originating from Ukrainian speaking communities in Ukraine admitted that it is easier to use Russian with all Russian speakers, whilst among Ukrainians they more and more give preference on using Polish rather than Ukrainian.

“Since I started learning Polish, it has just replaced Ukrainian. I can’t say I used Ukrainian frequently in my life. But since moving to Poland, I’m starting to forget Ukrainian little by little. If we want to say something in Ukrainian, we just use Polish” (Egor, 19)

When asked why they were speaking Polish instead of Ukrainian, participants took some time to think of the answer. Generally, responses were ambiguous and uncertain, participants were trying to find a reason for this and could not think of any.

“Yes, I agree, sometimes we switch into Polish. The language is practically the same, we don’t even notice when we start speaking Polish. It just happens, I don’t know how to explain this.” (Taras, 21)

When elaborating on language barriers some noted that they simply had no chance to learn Polish in Poland. Those participants who went to Poland to study found themselves in a situation where they were surrounded by foreigners or Ukrainians.

“There were 70 of us in the cohort and only 3 were Polish nationals. The rest were Ukrainians. Luckily I had no problem with Polish because I learned it for a whole year before moving to Krakow but those who didn’t, they really struggled with learning a new language. [...] There wasn’t an atmosphere to learn Polish for us because we were surrounded by Ukrainians.” (Egor, 19)

“When I started university, it was really really hard to become friends with Poles. Eventually, I managed to befriend a couple of them within Erasmus’ entourage. But again... with Erasmus people we had to speak English not Polish” (Valeriya, 21)

Another barrier that appeared on migrants’ way towards inclusion into Polish society was existence separately from Poland and Poles. Most participants said they were unintentionally alienated from Polish peers. The reasons for this were different. In some cases they were not accepted into the group as a member, however, they never encountered cases of hostility addressed towards them.

“I have never been in a situation when I was abused because of my nationality. I know that Asians encounter this a lot, though... [...] But I saw all the time that Ukrainians were hanging out with Ukrainians and Poles with other Poles. And international students who were in the visible minority just spent their time together. There was no hostility, Poles were always very nice and friendly to us but nothing more. They just existed separately from us.” (Valeriya, 21)

This statement, to some extent, goes along with Beauchemin and Safi’s (2020) concept of “rejection transnationalism”. However, instead of expressing hostility against Poles or vice-versa experiencing bullying coming from them, young Ukrainians reject the Polish lifestyle as they cannot find a way of communicating with Poles. With regards to this, in some cases, participants consciously choose to make friends with those with whom they have a lot in common, including memories of the past like the shared history of their countries, which echoes a lot with statements proposed by Kochetkov (2010) that national identity is characterized by commonality and distinctiveness. Affected much by stresses of relocation and assimilation in the new place, migrants wanted to share their concerns and experience with someone who was in the same situation as they were.

“It was much easier to build a friendship with Ukrainians or Belarussians, because we have so much in common. Same culture, language, memes, jokes. It was much easier. [...] Poles never understood us. Also when speaking to Poles, it was quite annoying to discuss the same topic over and over again. Like, for example, why not talk about news, music, or me? I am also very interesting! But we always ended up with war in Ukraine, politics, corruption and scandals.” (Valeriya, 21)

At the same time, when felt unwelcome or rejected, young migrants have chosen to abstract away from Poles, underlining their distinctiveness. Two participants noted that after having negative experiences with Poles they cautiously choose their friends. In general, they prefer befriending people with whom they have something in common.

“There was a situation in the dormitory one day, when two girls - Polish and Ukrainian - had a fight. And afterwards a Polish girl started yelling at all of us, saying things like: “Don’t forget that you’re all foreigners here, know your place”. [...] It is really hard to forget things like this when you’re 16 and since then I think twice before reaching to Poles.” (Participants 5)

In general, the testimonies of the majority of participants who had experienced a separate social existence from Polish society, suggests that young migrants do not want to be associated with the picture of Ukraine that exists in Poland. In the same way they refuse to debunk some of the myths about Ukrainians in Poland. Increased attention of the international community to the political crisis in Ukraine, makes them want to avoid excess attention from Polish peers. Instead of integrating, participants prefer to unite with people whom they have more in common with. And despite current political stiffness between Ukraine, Russia and Belarus, the results of these interviews suggest that young Ukrainians tend to lean towards migrants from post-Soviet countries.

These interviews have shown to some extent how young Ukrainian migrants identify themselves in Poland by highlighting features that bring them closer or apart from Poles or other migrants. In his work, Kochetkov (2010) raised a discussion on the factors of commonalities and distinctiveness that serve as a prerequisite to the formation of national identity. While some migrants were abstracting themselves away from Ukraine and dissociating with Ukrainian culture, others have chosen to stick to people with whom (as they think) they share similar interests.

Attachment to homeland: negotiating identity through transnational practices

Having ties in Ukraine allowed young migrants to think over their belonging to the homeland. Participants were able to develop characteristics of attachment to Ukraine by having tangible assets left behind, like, for example, property, religious practices, friends and family. These transnational links and practices urge young migrants to re-think their identity in a new country. The support provided by old habits, like celebrating holidays, attending church or cooking national dishes, turned out to be very important to migrants, as this manifests their belonging to Ukraine and over time transformed into transnational practices.

The prevailing majority of participants showed high levels of attachments to the homeland. However, interviews indicated that there is a correlation between the gender of respondents and the views they have towards Ukraine. Male participants have a very pragmatic view of Ukraine, as a place where their family lives, they have a house there, etc. On the other hand, it is also important to consider that males represented only 2 out of 8 of total participants.

“Of course, I will always have ties to Ukraine. My parents are there...we own a property there. Even if I will live on the edge of the world, I would have to come to Ukraine anyway” (Taras, 21)

At the same time, females had a rather nostalgic vision of Ukraine. They characterised it as a place where they were born, and expressed patriotic sentiments towards it.

“I always think of events of 2014 and how they affected my and others' sense of belonging to Ukraine. In my opinion, it has woken up something that created this attachment to the country. [...] If I ever go back to Ukraine, only for a land, only for a country, not people.” (Nadezhda, 19)

“It is the place where I grew up. You know when I think of Ukraine, I mostly think of nature, it is the most beautiful and I miss it a lot” (Varvara, 25)

Again, it seems that level of attachment is rather a habitual concern. Participants tend to follow the news of their homeland because they associate themselves to some degree with it or they admit the fact that they have something left there that still attaches them to the country. However, almost all of them refused to confirm their belonging to Ukraine. However, it is important to note that this refusal was reflected in fears and the possible outcome of their relocation. As it was said in the previous section some of them do not feel that they still have anything in common with Ukraine. Some of the participants shared that considering their Polish education, they have fears that their skills and knowledge will not be appreciated in Ukraine. Participants felt uncomfortable dealing with people in Ukraine in some situations or experiencing a feeling of being unwelcome there. To some extent they were afraid of being judged by friends and family or, on the other hand, the differences in views diminish their willingness to keep in touch with close ones. In the participant's statement below, we again can see the emergence of “rejection transnationalism” (Beauchemin and Safi, 2020), this time addressed against fellow Ukrainians who stay in Ukraine.

“In Ukraine, there's a general stereotype about those who go to Poland. They call these people “Strawberry pickers” because they work in fields and get low salaries. People don't want to understand the real reason why people leave. [...] I mean, I don't know any of my friends and family who left for Poland to work but still people see me as a “Strawberry picker”. [...] In my first year here, I went to Ukraine quite often, like several times a year. Now I don't go there as often. [...] And I don't want

to go there very often to be honest. People are stubborn and I'm tired of arguing with them and proving my point of view". (Egor, 19)

Greater support for staying in Poland was evident among participants whose parents showed greatest interest in their child living abroad. As it was described in the "Reasons to move to Poland" section, some participants grew up having in mind the idea of relocation seeded by their parents. In this case, they do not abandon the idea of ever returning back to Ukraine. However, they also do not show a big interest in going back to their homeland.

"No, I don't reject the idea of going back, I actually quite like it. However, I'm not sure if my knowledge can be useful in Ukraine." (Valeriya, 21)

Supporting habits also helped young migrants to cope with the stress of relocation. These practices allowed them to stand out among peers and helped to build new friendships. Religion, for example, played a big role in the sense of belonging that participants developed. In some cases proximity to Orthodox or Catholic churches enhanced a sense of attachment.

"During the first months in Poland, the church helped a lot, to be honest. It was a very nice ritual to get up early every Sunday, put on my best clothes and go to the church and listen to a priest. It was an Ukrainian church, so he spoke Ukrainian, even though with such a funny accent! This helped to cope with stress and distance from my family [...] Now I live in Warsaw, and the closest church is way too far away from me." (Margarita, 24)

Participants like Margarita, tended to seek a reminder of home in church during difficult times, when it was extremely difficult for them to cope with issues on their own. Lishuang (2021) stated that religion is one of the indicators of ethnic identity. Margarita's answer echoed Lishuang's (2021) statement by implying that she actually identified herself as ethnic Ukrainian when she attended the church. Other participants stated that support of culinary or holiday traditions was a good reminder of times back home. Even though they don't do this intentionally, they cherish these practises a lot.

"We celebrate Catholic and Orthodox holidays, not always but when it is possible. But I think it's only because we like holidays in general. So we have two Christmases, two Easters, etc..." (Alexandra, 25)

“We make borscht almost every week. Ukrainian borscht, not Polish! It’s my favourite dish...” (Taras, 21)

When participants were asked how much their relationship with friends and family still in Ukraine has changed, answers varied. In some cases, interviewees said that the relationship got better while others said that they distanced a lot from family. Taking into account that relationships are supported using the Internet and social media, participants experience no problems with maintaining these relationships on the go. On the other hand, some stated that distance created a problem where they have nothing to speak about. Especially when it comes to friends, participants admit that it is harder to maintain friendship because now they have fewer common interests to share. Some participants return to the point when it is harder to cope with stubbornness of friends and they have chosen to maintain friendship by avoiding topics that may spark an argument.

“I had friends in Ukraine, like 5 of them. We are still in touch [...] I can say that we are now on different levels, we have different views on the world. They are very stubborn...” (Egor, 19)

“I love my friends and I think their IQ is above average for sure...However, sometimes they confuse me with their weird patriotism. For example, [...] they will refuse speaking in Russian to personnel in hotels in Turkey who only speak two languages: Turkish and Russian! [...] I don’t think this is how this should be done and whenever they tell such things, I am like: ‘Wait, what?!’” (Kseniya, 24)

A lot of participants were talking about *vision of the world* (мировоззрение) and *mentality* (менталитет) when they tried to explain differences in life and world visions between them and their friends and family members left in Ukraine.

“We have definitely changed [my friends and I] and sometimes I think that our friendship is based only on our past and nostalgia of good old school days. It is still nice to see them but I feel like we are not going anywhere, just supporting old memories”. (Nadezhda, 19)

The fact that participants have chosen to keep friendship with people with whom they no longer share anything in common is interesting. It suggests that friendship remains for them rather a habit than actual necessity. More than that, it suggests that old friends left behind in Ukraine are a reminder of their Ukrainian origin, something that keeps them attached to the country.

However, as Erdal and Oeppen (2013) suggested when speaking of how transnationalism affects integration into host society, this does not bring down their attachment to Poland. On the contrary, young migrants constantly negotiate their degree of attachments to both countries.

Another interesting observation is the general political sensitivity noted among all participants that ended up in apolitical expressions of their opinions. Bearing in mind the tough political situation in Ukraine, participants avoided speaking about politics and about the Ukrainian political crisis of 2014. It is hard to evaluate whether participants were generally avoiding politics or exclusively politics in Ukraine. As conversations were surrounded about their life in Ukraine only events of 2014 were discussed. It is possible that such sensitivity is conditioned by the fact that some of the participants have left Ukraine in the middle of a political crisis, when the attention of the international community was directed at their home country.

Some participants briefly described their feelings and points of view on certain events and actors involved in Euromaidan. However the majority preferred not to talk about it at all. In this case, they usually started their sentences with phrases like *“I am far from politics...”*, *“I am not taking anyone’s side but...”*. Participants avoided using the term “apolitical” to describe their position, they preferred to refer to it as having a “flexible opinion on certain things”.

In some cases, they said that their position caused significant deterioration in their relationships with friends and family. Analysis of the interviews suggests that participants have more flexibility in their views towards many topics, including politics. Some of them said that they are able to consider lots of factors when debating on a certain topic. At the same time, the sense of attachment to relatives and friends holds them back from starting an argument because they value these relations and they do not want to lose them because of the fight.

“...[my friends] now have this new ‘thing’ - they refuse to speak Russian to anyone. Because, you know [the military conflict in Ukraine]... If somebody addresses to us in Russian, they completely ignore the person. I understand their way of thinking but also... honestly, you cannot possibly expect everyone on this planet to speak English or Ukrainian. We will go to Turkey together and all locals are practically fluent in Russian not English! And we don’t speak Turkish as well! It’s ridiculous how they intentionally spoil themselves a holiday because of silly political beliefs! ” (Kseniya, 24)

Linked to political sensitivity, the majority of participants avoided labeling the political crisis in Ukraine. Instead they would use phrases like “You know what happened there...”, “I am not the one to tell you why I decided to go to Poland, it is pretty obvious...”. The fact that respondents are holding themselves back from entering into argument with friends regarding the political crisis in Ukraine may be a sign that while living for some time in transnational space, young migrants’ identity went through some changes. By putting differences that arise between fellow compatriots, the young migrants highlighted changes in their own identification, like Khanlou et al (2007) and Easthope (2009) pointed out.

During the interview, some participants veiled their political position, which suggests a traumatizing footprint left by the events. However, they confirmed that all of them had a strong opinion on it, even though they refused to share it during the interview.

“I moved there 1 or 2 years before all this...political and military situation... [...] I could speak for hours about the political situation and [country] budget being stolen all the time... ” (Margarita, 24)

This excessive sensitivity is not necessarily a negative outcome of the Ukrainian political crisis. It is possible that the crisis contributed to the remembrance and acknowledgement of Ukrainian identity and sense of patriotism, even if the respondent has already left Ukraine. This vivid political event, made them realise their origin. Young people started re-discovering Ukraine again against the backdrop of these events.

“ - This may sound weird but I am sort of happy about what has happened in Ukraine. It has shaken a country and people in a way that they have finally realised that the Soviet Union is over and we are now independent! I personally started re-discovering my culture. I listen to Ukrainian musicians, follow Ukrainian news and influencers on social media.

- What about Polish musicians and influencers? - interviewer.

- No, absolutely not. I am not even interested in what is happening here. Of course, I know things, because it is hard to avoid news completely but I am not passionate about anything that happens here.” (Varvara, 25)

In general, participants of these interviews have shown that since moving to Poland their perceptions and self-identification went through significant changes. By finding themselves in

a new environment, they had a chance to compare their previous experiences in Ukraine to the new ones in Poland. As a result young people were able to acknowledge their origin and accept it to some extent.

Perceptions of how migration is shaping Ukraine

During the course of the interviews, several participants shared an idea of how mass migration of people to neighboring countries shapes Ukraine and affects the identity of people living there. In particular, they said how the growing popularity of migration towards Europe changed the views of Ukrainians making them more tolerant to European values that 10 years ago were considered as “alien”. In this “identity constructing” process, migration does not play a main role as participants have admitted. Political crisis in Ukraine has contributed greatly to these shifts. And in the situation when Russia has become unattainable for Ukrainians, in terms of migration destination, they have turned their gaze towards Poland.

It is possible that people sharing their lives between Poland and Ukraine, turning into “knowledge pendulums” where they bring new knowledge and practices and share with people in their home country. At the same time, interview participants expressed a sense of pride and importance by bearing this role.

“When I come to Ukraine, I feel...I feel like an ambassador with ‘European education’.” (Varvara, 25)

“People are starting to realise now that we're an independent country, so we're now on our own and we don't need Russia to deal with our problems. At first it was me who told people about democracy, elections, how we can learn stuff from the EU, now it is them who explain to me the universal importance of being politically close to Europe and this is truly reassuring.” (Taras, 21)

These statements go against the revelation above, where participants have spoken of stubbornness and “weird patriotism”. However, it is possible that right now Ukraine is also going through a massive identity changing process where old values are being gradually replaced by new ones brought or acquired from the outside as an outcome of political crisis and mass migration. This complements Minesashvili's (2020) statement that Ukraine in fact still contests which identity to choose in the course of political discourse. The results of public polls suggest that more and more people in Ukraine accept the idea of Europeanness and favor the possibility

of free mobility within the Schengen zone. These also explain to some extent the drastic difference in imaginaries of Poland across Ukraine,

Conclusion

The conducted research was meant to contribute to the existing scholarship in the fields of belonging and transnationalism. Ideally, it would be good to conduct similar research with bigger sampling, taking into account respondents originating from different social classes, cities and life situations. Initially, this research was aiming to include children of migrants who moved to Poland with their parents alongside students enrolled in Polish education institutions. However, due to complications during the recruitment process, only students of Polish universities were interviewed.

By the end of field work, transcription and analysis of all interviews, the general image of young Ukrainian migrants in Poland emerges. Taking into account the limited interview sample, this image refers only to the group of research participants and cannot be applied to all young Ukrainian migrants. The analysis of the interviews allows us to draw some conclusions. First of all, parents of the respondents acted as ultimate decision makers in the family, those who initiate and support their child's migration to Poland. Second, partial alienation from accepting society (in this case - Poland), provokes the negotiating sense of belonging among interview participants. As they unintentionally become observers in a new society, they are able to re-think old and new values that lead to construction of new identity or even several of them. Third, transnational ties among young migrants carry the role of old habits and nostalgia. Young people tend to negotiate the value of these links, continuously trying to find a place for them in a framework of their new life in the migration.

Taking into account the role of family in Ukrainian society, it is certain that young people who participated in the research were pushed into migration under the influence of adult family members like their parents. In this situation, teenagers seem to be raised in the environment where parents nurture an idea of relocating to another country from a young age. From a parent point of view, this proxy decision-making is conditioned by the high level of care they seek to provide to their child. In the decision making process adults consider numerous factors in favor of their offspring's possible relocation, like bad economy, unstable political situation, etc. Whilst young people, whether due to young age or absence of the power of voice in the family,

are not able to assess situations critically and weigh all pros and cons adequately. The practical representation of the New Economics of Labor Migration Theory in the decision making process of young migrants shows how complex relations within Ukrainian households are. The decision to relocate affected mostly adult family members by external ‘push factors’ such as political instability and high unemployment rate. Parents are seen as the main decision making center while allowing their children to enjoy adolescence. Interviews suggest that decisions were made long before they were presented to children, therefore parents had time to think over all possible variations of how to establish the life of their offspring.

The time when young people migrate to Poland coincides with the period when they are entering their adulthood. At this time, they also start questioning their role and place in life as well as their identity. Interviews showed that young people have never thought of migration as a tool to fix exclusively their economic well-being. This intersects with Belmonte et al.’s (2020) suggestion that young people have a wider range of reasons to relocate, besides poor economic situation.

When it comes to the discussion of identities, results of the interview suggest that imaginaries of Poland and Ukraine they had before the migration process and ones they acquired after relocation affected their integration into new society. Diverging imaginaries cause cognitive dissonance in analysing all the information they receive, therefore complicating further integration. Easthope (2009) has discussed that all human beings have a spectrum of identities that tend to change under the influence of various factors. In the case of interview participants, they once again confirmed Easthope’s idea as they seemed to have multiplied identity. In the “Identifying the gaps...” section, it was suggested to study if Falicov’s theory that young migrants tend to develop hybrid identities was refuted during this research. The respondents have not shown the traits of fully developed or developing hybrid identity. However, they had some sort of spectrum of identities that allowed them to integrate comfortably in Poland and be accepted in Ukraine. Considering that identity is not a solid concept and tends to fluctuate, the fact that young people from a young age are exposed to two cultures starts off this multiplication process. Participants tend to take certain aspects of their Ukrainian identity and transform it into a new one. More than that, interviews have revealed that with several identities evolving in their mind, the "original" Ukrainian identity grew stronger as they reunited with compatriots and traditions abroad. Constant process of comparison of Polish and Ukrainian cultures have also added up to the formation of Easthope’s spectrum of identities. This serves

as a confirmation to Ni Laoire's (2020) statement, these young people as soon as they arrived in Poland surrounded themselves with people with whom they shared common interests.

At the same time some of the interviewees developed traits of the "rejection transnationalism" (Beauchemin and Safi, 2020). Interestingly the rejection process could go both ways: targeted against Poles and fellow Ukrainians. In the first case it served as a defence mechanism to the excessive attention of locals. In the case of interviewees - young Ukrainians felt high levels of attachment to their home country as a result of negative experiences or biases that locals manifested in relation to them. Being not fully included into social life in Poland and excluded from the Polish entourage, some of the interview participants found themselves in the position where they had to re-think their attitude towards the motherland. In the second case, young people knowing about the diversity of people from different regions of Ukraine tend to be very careful when choosing friends among compatriots. As they have admitted that some behavioral traits repelled from making friends with fellow Ukrainians.

Growing up in Ukraine, young people managed to form certain behavioral and social habits that give out their affiliation to Ukraine. However, when they moved to another country (Poland) at the teen ages, these affiliations were not able to transform into senses of attachment and belonging. This explains their habits of celebrating Ukrainian or Orthodox holidays and supporting relationships with friends left behind, even if they have almost nothing in common now.

Religion also played a big role in how these young people experienced migration and how it affected their views. Thus for some participants church has become a universal thing that united Ukraine and Poland. While in Ukraine, they could use church as a source of knowledge, and when in Poland they go there for nostalgic reasons as it reminds them of home.

It is possible to say that growing up in Ukraine and then entering adulthood in Ukraine contributes to the construction of a spectrum identity, where migrants drop off certain national traits of one nationality and acquire traits and habits of another nation. Considering that young people absorbed knowledge and traditions of Ukraine by growing up there and then moved to Poland, I can say that the transnational environment affects in a way that it prevents the total abandonment of Ukrainian identity. Transnational connections that teenagers have with their family members and friends, as well as their own nostalgic notions of Ukraine, serve as an anchor that holds a person close to Ukraine. In the same way, the social bubble that they created

in Poland will serve as a transnational bridge when they (hypothetically) move to another country. These relationships will nurture nostalgic notions towards Poland.

In addition to that, the acknowledgement of living and studying in Poland - an EU member-state - contributes to formation of European identity. Within the notion of transnationalism, young migrants adopt certain traits that they think make them closer to Europe and make them accepted by other European societies. Participants spoke a lot about their “Europeennes”, however as in the situation above, they were very cautious in identifying themselves as Europeans.

Within the context of this research, I can claim that when experiencing migration at a young age, migrants have a very vague understanding of national identity. Taking into account that human beings in general accumulate a spectrum of identities over the course of their life, in the case of these young migrants the notion of identity multiplies. Field researches have shown that migrants have confused feelings towards Ukraine, Poland and the world in general. At the same time they do not like to be associated with a certain country or nation. Interestingly, participants of the interviews exhibited polar perceptions of Ukraine. In some cases it was positive, in others - negative. However, how good or bad their thinking was, all participants never associated themselves with Ukraine or Poland. Fluctuating identities suggest that young people are in constant reflection and negotiation of their identity. They develop traits of flexibility and themselves admit that this allows them to live in any country without any problems. All of the participants have shown very little degree of emotional attachment to Poland and home country. When it comes to Ukraine, participants have ties limited to their nostalgia, parents or some practical aspects, like property. However, their attachment does not go beyond it, where they, for example, identify themselves strictly as Ukrainians and have solid plans on returning back home. They feel comfortable existing in the above countries, interacting with them only when they need it. At the same time some of them see countries as stages in their lives and to the majority of them - Poland is a starting point before heading to another country.

The results of interviews suggest that migrants have limited sense of belonging both to Ukraine and Poland as well as Ukrainians and Poles. In general, it seems that young people exist above both countries and do not favor the idea of being associated with any of them. They develop flexibility traits that, as they think, will help them to easily navigate in almost any country in the world.

Appendices

Appendix 1

Plain Language Statement

Identity construction in a transnational environment: the case of young Ukrainian migrants in Poland

Researcher: Alima Kassenova, MA candidate at Erasmus Mundus Joint Master Degree in Central, East European, Russian and Eurasian studies.

Supervisors: Dr. Karolina Czerska-Shaw, Jagiellonian University, Poland

Dr. Federica Prina, University of Glasgow, UK

You are being invited to take part in a research study. Before you decide it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. Ask us if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information. Take time to decide whether or not you wish to take part.

Thank you for reading this.

What is the purpose of the study?

The purpose of this study to identify what effect migration has on the formation of national identity of young Ukrainian migrants living in Poland and how they experience it. The study focuses on young migrants that share their lives in-between the two countries.

A total of 20 young people will participate in this research, to provide data on the experience of relocation from Ukraine to Poland.

Why have I been chosen?

You are invited to participate in the study because you moved to Poland from Ukraine between the age of 14-17 and have lived in Poland for at least 2 years.

Do I have to take part?

You do not need to take part in this study. If you decide to participate, this will be highly appreciated. If you decide at any point that you no longer wish to participate, I will not use any information you have provided.

What will happen to me if I take part?

You will be asked to participate in an interview over zoom. There will be a set of questions regarding your experience of moving to Poland as a teenager. The interview is divided into 5 sections following the introduction, each dedicated to a certain period of your migration cycle. First, you will be asked some information about you and your background, then about your life before relocation, coming to Poland, living in Poland, and views on your future location. You will not have to answer any questions that you do not want to answer,

A full interview will take approximately 1.5 hours, but may be ended earlier if needed.

To participate in the study you must be 18-25 years old Ukrainian national having lived in Poland for at least 2 years.

Will my taking part in this study be kept confidential?

Of course. Before the start of the interview, you will be asked to read and sign a consent form that explains the process that will be followed. All research participants will be given pseudonyms. I will keep all the information I collect in a password-protected computer. All digital data will be encrypted and stored on password protected server. All physical copies will be kept in secure cabinets. At the end of the research all data will be destroyed.

All interviews will be conducted online via Zoom platform. You will be given a choice to turn on / off your camera.

Please note that confidentiality may not be fully guaranteed, due to the limited size of the participant sample.

Assurances on confidentiality will be strictly adhered to unless evidence of wrongdoing or potential harm is uncovered. In such cases the University may be obliged to contact relevant statutory bodies/agencies.

What will happen to the results of the research study?

I will analyse the data I collect and present this in a dissertation I am writing for my Master Degree.

Who has reviewed the study?

This study has been reviewed and agreed by the School of Social and Political Sciences' Ethics Forum, University of Glasgow.

Contact for Further Information

In case you have questions, please contact Alima Kassenova by email 2400469K@student.gla.ac.uk. You may also contact my supervisor at the University of Glasgow, Dr Federica Prina, email: federica.prina@glasgow.ac.uk.

If you have any concerns regarding the conduct of this research project, you can contact the Ethics Officer for the for the School of Social and Political Sciences, Dr Susan Batchelor, email: susan.batchelor@glasgow.ac.uk

Appendix 2

Consent Form

Title of Project: **Identity construction in a transnational environment: the case of young Ukrainian migrants in Poland**

Researcher: Alima Kassenova, MA candidate at Erasmus Mundus Joint Master Degree in Central, East European, Russian and Eurasian studies.

Supervisors: Dr. Karolina Czerska-Shaw, Jagiellonian University, Poland

Dr. Federica Prina, University of Glasgow, UK

Please tick as appropriate

Yes ☐ No ☐

I confirm that I have read and understood the Plain Language Statement for the above study and have had the opportunity to ask questions.

Yes ☐ No ☐

I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time, without giving any reason.

Yes ☐ No ☐

I consent to interviews being audio-recorded via Zoom

Yes ☐ No ☐

I acknowledge that I will be referred to by pseudonym.

I agree that:

Yes ☐ No ☐

All names and other material likely to identify me will be anonymised.

Yes ☐ No ☐

The material will be treated as confidential and kept in secure storage at all times.

Yes ☐ No ☐

The material will be destroyed once the project is complete.

Yes ☐ No ☐

I acknowledge the provision of a Privacy Notice in relation to this research project.

I agree to take part in this research study ☐

I do not agree to take part in this research study ☐

Name of Participant Signature

Date

Name of ResearcherSignature

Date

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