Unwanted People and Desired Citizens

Contemporary Attitudes, Challenges and Perceptions of Migration and Integration

Edited by
**Cezary Smuniewski, Andrea Zanini,
Cyprian Aleksander Kozera, Błażej Bado**

DOM WYDAWNICZY
ELIPSA

Unwanted People and Desired Citizens

Contemporary Attitudes, Challenges and Perceptions of Migration and Integration

Unwanted People and Desired Citizens

Contemporary Attitudes, Challenges and Perceptions of Migration and Integration

Edited by

Cezary Smuniewski, Andrea Zanini,
Cyprian Aleksander Kozera, Błażej Bado

DOM
WYDAWNICZY
ELIPSA
Warsaw 2024

The publication was financed by the Interdisciplinary Research Center of the University of Warsaw "Identity – Dialogue – Security"

The publication is the result of the international research project "Mikrogranty INOP – 2 Ed." carried out at the Institute of Political Science Foundation from 1st November 2020 to 31st October 2022. Research team: Cezary Smuniewski (principal investigator), Andrea Zanini (co-investigator 1), Cyprian Aleksander Kozera (co-investigator 2), Marcin Górnikiewicz (co-investigator 3)

Peer review
Prof. Radosław Bielawski
Prof. Bogusław Jagusiak

Translator/Language editor
Adam Petrėtis
Elżbieta Puławska

Cover design
Agnieszka Miłaszewicz

ISBN 978-83-8017-565-5

DOM WYDAWNICZY ELIPSA

Published by:
Dom Wydawniczy ELIPSA
ul. Inflancka 15/198, 00-189 Warszawa
tel. 22 635 03 01, e-mail: elipsa@elipsa.pl, www.elipsa.pl

Contents

DOI:10.33896/978-83-8017-565-5.8

Ewa Maria Marciniak

Ukrainians in Poland After the Outbreak of War. Possible Types of Social Presence

Abstract

This article is devoted to persons of Ukrainian nationality currently living in Poland. The purpose of the considerations is to identify and provide a basic, preliminary description of the types of presence of Ukrainians in Poland. The article is based on interviews (IDI) conducted in the summer and fall of 2023 with Ukrainian women and men residing in Warsaw. The completed survey specifically asked about the assessment of living conditions in Poland, the type and extent of state assistance for refugees, and their coping with the challenges of everyday life, including work, leisure activities, and future plans for themselves and their children. The article adopts an interpretive perspective, assuming that the social world is constructed through the totality of subjective experiences of individuals and groups.

Keywords: Ukrainians in Poland, migration, types of social presence, social integration

1. Introduction

In the literature and social research, one can find many texts describing and explaining the attitude of Poles towards Ukrainians residing in Poland as a result of the outbreak of war in Ukraine. For example, a survey by CBOS (Public Opinion Research Centre) (2023) shows a positive attitude of Poles towards accepting refugees and helping them. In April 2022, the percentage of respondents believing that Poland should take in Ukrainians from conflict areas was over 90%, but it gradually began to decline. By the fall of 2023, it stood at 65%. Thus, still two-thirds of Poles declared their willingness to accept refugees.

Slightly different results were obtained by Robert Staniszewski (2023: 207), who also pointed to the dynamics in attitudes towards Ukrainians residing in Poland. In 2023, 53% of respondents expressed a positive attitude towards

refugees from Ukraine, compared to 65% the previous year. This author also examined the perceived threats that respondents identified. 37% of them perceived a demanding attitude, 25% perceived a lack of acceptance of Polish culture, and 24% perceived a lack of assimilation (Staniszewski 2023: 213). These cited studies show the perspective of Poles. But what is the perspective of Ukrainians? How do they find themselves in Poland?

Thus, it should be emphasized that the situation of Ukrainians in Poland requires not only social actions (aid activities) but also research, even if only propaedeutic, aimed at identifying the mechanisms and manifestations of how they socially anchor themselves or, in general, find themselves in a new situation. Such research can be carried out from different perspectives and based on different categories. For example, Maciej Duszczyk and Paweł Kaczmarczyk analyze issues of migration, outlining the contextual conditions of the influx of war refugees and explaining why Poland became a destination country. The authors also emphasize that we are dealing with a highly mobile population that will return to their places of residence in Ukraine if possible (Duszczyk, Kaczmarczyk 2022: 1–14).

2. Research aims

The mobility suggested in Duszczyk and Kaczmarczyk's article does not exclude the fact that Ukrainians temporarily remain in Poland. In view of the above, the question arises: **how are Ukrainians present here**? Examining their situation from their perspective seems cognitively interesting and, in the future, valuable in a utilitarian sense. The purpose of the considerations undertaken is to identify and provide a basic, preliminary description of the **types of presence of Ukrainians in Poland**, assuming that these types are diverse and may not be pure types but complementary. Given the diverse socio-demographic structure of refugees, it can be expected that these types will vary depending on intellectual and cultural resources, as well as education (occupation in Ukraine) and age.

3. Research methodology

The research conducted is qualitative, based on individual in-depth interviews with Ukrainian women and, to a small extent, Ukrainian men residing in Warsaw. The interviews were conducted in the summer and fall of 2023.

The interview scenario was partially structured, meaning all respondents were asked the same questions, with additional questions based on the dynamics of the interview and the individual experiences of those being interviewed. The qualitative study conducted inquired about their overall assessment of their personal situation, how they live in Poland, their priorities, feelings, and desires. Specifically, it asked about their assessment of living conditions in Poland, the type and extent of state assistance for refugees, and their coping with the challenges of daily life, including work, leisure activities, and future plans for themselves and their children.

The research perspective adopted is the interpretive perspective, which assumes that the social world is constructed through the totality of subjective experiences of individuals and groups (Marciniak 2021: 50–70). Hence, this approach is appropriate for exploring personal ways of finding oneself in a new social environment and personal interpretations of everyday experiences.

The research method is individual in-depth interviews (IDI), conducted personally by the author.[1] It is through them that it can be cognitively interesting to diagnose how Ukrainians construct their new lives in various dimensions and what acculturation strategies they adopt. The category of acculturation has so far been most useful for studying migrants. For example, John Berry focuses on the acculturation process, categorizing individual acculturation strategies through the prism of answering two questions: Is it considered valuable to preserve one's own identity and characteristics? This refers to the so-called first dimension of behavior. The second dimension concerns the acceptance or rejection of the host culture: Is it considered worthwhile to maintain relations with the wider society (Berry 1992: 69–85)?

Four acculturation strategies emerge from these two questions:

- **Assimilation** occurs when individuals adopt the cultural norms of the dominant or host culture instead of their original culture.
- **Separation** occurs when individuals reject the dominant or host culture in favor of preserving their culture of origin.
- **Integration** occurs when individuals adopt the cultural norms of the dominant or host culture while retaining their culture of origin. Integration leads to biculturalism and is often equated with it.
- **Marginalization** occurs when individuals reject both the culture of origin and the dominant host culture (Berry 1992: 69–85).

[1] A sincere thank you to Vitaliy Kryvuts, a political science student originally from Ukraine, for his help with the interviews.

Further research, inspired by Berry's models, points to differences between private and public behaviors that make up acculturation strategies (Arends-Tóth, van de Vijver 2004: 19–35). For example, an individual may reject the values and norms of the host culture in their private life (separation) but may adapt to the host culture in the public areas of their life (i.e., integration or assimilation).

The categories used by Berry should be supplemented by the phenomenon of adaptation. Adaptation is one level of adjustment to the existing reality. It is a multi-level integration of immigrants into the new society. At the individual level, it requires recognition and then gradual internalization of the rules governing the new society. At the same time, this process of recognition requires the individual to figure out what is similar (e.g., in terms of customs or other dimensions of daily life) and what is completely different. On this similarity-difference continuum, the immigrant experience is located. It should be noted that the process of adaptation is long and multifaceted. It also requires anchoring in a friendly environment.

The concept presented by John Berry seems to be extremely useful for the study of migration, as migration processes are generally studied with acculturation theory in mind. Thus, Berry's model and its analytical and exploratory power should be appreciated in the context of studying migrants. However, in my opinion, the study of war refugees requires different analytical categories. Hence, it is proposed to adopt the category of ***human social presence***.

4. How to describe human social presence?

Presence is a broad enough concept to accommodate both adaptation and integration into new socio-cultural conditions. Human social presence is, on the one hand, a state and, on the other hand, a process, resembling in its nature the processes of socialization, integration into society, and learning the rules that govern it. Thus, it is a process of a social-psychological nature. The point is that a person's presence in a new community is shaped by their ability to communicate in a new language, their possibility of gainful activity, and the formation of new social ties based on recognized rules.

This presence can be authentic, through internalized rules of social life, or façade, resulting from public conformity that is not accompanied by personal acceptance of these rules. In other words, it is a pretended

or even forced presence. Pretended or forced presence resembles, in its essence, the separation that Berry wrote about, and can also be regarded as akin to a state of alienation. Presence can be active, dictated by one's own aspirations and the general ability to quickly adapt to new circumstances. It can also be passive. The social practices that emerge from the analyses of the completed interviews are situated within both types of activity. The level and depth of presence that can lead to multidimensional integration into a new society depend on a number of factors. These factors are related to prior social experience, including work experience, and socio-demographic variables. Indicating these relationships would require correlative studies, while this paper should be regarded as a prelude to expanded research. What follows are examples of social practices and illustrative profiles of the subjects. In addition, a systematization of the types of presence of Ukrainians in Poland is proposed.

5. Research results and their analysis

Based on the interviews, several types of Ukrainian presence in Poland can be distinguished. These patterns are diverse, and it is worth emphasizing that they are not pure patterns. This means that the same individuals can exhibit mixed behaviors, with a strong trait fitting essentially into one type – they manifest in the so-called central (main) traits. However, the interviews also reveal characteristics of other distinguished types, defined here as peripheral (side) traits. The interviews often provide heterogeneous conclusions, and the stories told by respondents are multifaceted. Nevertheless, it is possible to identify some similar features of the presence of Ukrainians in Poland. It can be said with certainty that these identified presences form a relatively clear typology.

Types of social presence

Economically active presence – this type of activity is manifested by people who, while protecting their material resources, invest in real estate and their own businesses. They leverage their material status built up in Ukraine, with Poland being their second or third choice. They have spent a month or two in Spain, some time in Italy, and returned to Poland because they recognized that cultural proximity would reduce the psychological and social costs of change. They describe themselves as Ukrainian patriots, with

patriotism defined as "earning here and investing there." Economically active attitudes are mostly exhibited by educated individuals, including IT specialists and programmers among those surveyed. However, it is worth noting that this is a heterogeneous group. Some of them live in Poland and work remotely in Ukraine. These are people who, due to their universal skills, have done well materially in other countries, just as they do now in Poland. Additionally, this group includes people taking jobs in the service sector or starting their own micro-businesses, mainly in cosmetic services and rehabilitation. The economically active presence is therefore oriented toward maintaining and developing material status. Those pursuing this pattern of behavior seem to prefer material values as the basis for overall well-being.

Profile:

– Victoria, 45 years old.

"I live well here. I have no family obligations. I only help my mother, who stayed in our city. Here I have two apartments, small, but my own," she continues. "I may return to Ukraine, invest in some business, but I will definitely leave one apartment here." Victoria, having some basics, learned the Polish language quite quickly and believes that every Ukrainian should do so and, for example, attend courses in Polish language and culture.

Profile:

– Katerina, 40 years old.

This attitude also includes the rivalry between the so-called "old" and "new" Ukrainians. "I had a hairdressing establishment for 10 years," says Katerina. "I had to close down because another, richer Ukrainian who has been in Poland for 4 months simply reported me. It's not right," continues the former owner of the establishment. Katerina does not explain what this denunciation was about, only that the owner of the service establishment ended his cooperation with her and rented the premises to another Ukrainian. Katerina is familiar with the conditions of running a business, so she thinks she will manage. Work is her top priority.

Active socio-cultural presence – this type of activity is manifested by those who care about their children's education, learning the Polish language, and developing their children's passions and talents (most often artistic gymnastics). These are extremely ambitious people who believe it is necessary to make the most positive use of their time in Poland. Maximally positive, that is, to develop their competencies and educate their children. They are proud to be Ukrainians and identify with Zelenskyy and his policies. They believe that Ukraine deserves world recognition

and, of course, multilateral assistance. They are cultural patriots, with a strong sense of national belonging but also open to learning about Polish culture. In this openness, they see their opportunity for development. They are interested in current politics and start their day with a review of information on what is happening in Ukraine, Poland, and the world. They are well-versed in military, economic, and cultural issues.

Profile:

– Irina, 49 years old.

She came from Bucha. She carries, as she puts it, a huge trauma. Conversation with her is somewhat difficult and proceeds in several languages simultaneously (Russian, English, and Ukrainian). She readily reveals her educational background; she is an accountant. She quickly established contact with other Ukrainian women. She goes on trips and learns about the history and culture of Warsaw. Her statement is a kind of reflection not only of her views but also of those of her female colleagues – something she makes clear in the interview.

"We read Shevchenko, but we also read what Poles read. I want my child to be as smart as a Polish child," she continues "Children have a chance to become European children. Their parents can and even should be here if possible, because children get an education and information about the current situation in Poland, Ukraine, and the world."

According to her, children inspire their parents to learn Polish and acquire Western cultural traits. In many conversations, not only with Irina, the European theme is prevalent. "Zelenskyy instilled hopes of Ukraine joining the EU. He gives hope that Ukraine will develop according to European models. Already MPs' incomes have begun to be transparent," my interviewee considers this a great achievement. She also emphasizes the destructive role of the oligarchs: "Now they are seen as destroying the state," and adds that currently the priority is "war and victory."

Profile:

– Maria, 59 years old.

She represents Ukrainian patriots, a group with a previously formed strong national identity. She sees her stay in Poland as an opportunity to acquire competencies that will later come in handy in Ukraine. Maria says, "I want to learn about the law in Poland and the EU, and with this knowledge, organize my work in Ukraine, because sooner or later Ukraine will be in the EU. We love Ukraine, we believe in Zelenskyy."

Maria is one of the older interviewees. The other people she mentions are of similar age and have adult children. They know each other from

courses, seminars, and trips around Warsaw. She met other Ukrainians only after she arrived; they talk at bazaars, come to stores, or meet in nearby parks. Maria says that support groups are forming. They don't close themselves off from contact with Poles; mostly they are neighbors.

Active demanding presence – this type of presence is dictated by a generalized victim syndrome of aggression and the belief that they need to receive help. People surveyed complain that it's hard for them and that they work below their qualifications. My interviewees are generally sales assistants in various stores or cleaners. They most often say that the Polish state should provide free housing. They believe that the Polish state's help is particularly due to those who cannot afford to rent an apartment on their own. None of the people could say whether they had solicited help and received a refusal. Complaining seems to be their dominant trait, accompanied by a "we deserve it" type of claim. Thus, this group includes people who are dissatisfied with their own situation and complain that it is hard for them.

Profile:

– Vera, 38 years old.

"We survived bombing; everyone should help us," this claim shines through in conversations. Claiming presence, however, has a different face. The activity component inherent in it refers not only to the current situation. In the future, these claimants would love to start their own businesses because they want to stay here. "They need help now. The Polish state should help in starting a business," says Vera.

Profile:

– Tatiana, 38 years old.

"I have arms and legs and can work a lot. I clean every day. But you have to remember that we are fighting for you, so some small apartments are due to us. I work, but I know elderly people who are sick and can't work. They should have help from the Polish state and even the EU."

Passive presence – it characterizes people who are oriented towards receiving social assistance. These individuals can be described as "Passive Recipients" (it is what it is). They have made the most of their time living in assistance points, where food and basic medical care were provided. They have spent more than a year in these points/stay centers. They feel no special concern for the future, treating Poland as a temporary residence. They are focused on meeting basic needs and are characterized by a pessimistic vision of the future, generally associated with the need to return to their place of residence. There is also a certain dualism in

their emotions: on one hand, there is fear of what they will find in their new place of residence, and on the other, there is noticeable nostalgia for the flavors of Ukraine (they recall the taste of tomatoes – "there are none like that here" – and mayonnaise).

Profile:

– Natasha, 35 years old.

She stayed for more than a year at one of the aid stations. Natasha says each of her days is similar to the next. She maintains contact only with Ukrainians from the residence center. She appears to be a person who has not undertaken any professional or social activities. When asked if she feels good in this center, she replies, "she doesn't know," "it's hard to say," immediately adding that she has heard that other Ukrainians are doing well, "because they have a lot of savings and don't have to work." This reveals jealousy arising from comparing herself with others. She seems to be an unconcerned person, although her sense of observation is well-developed. She is eager to talk about others and avoids describing her own situation. She says at the end, "I'm here because I have to."

Ambivalent presence – it is a mixture of feelings, both positive and negative at the same time. It is, on the one hand, joy of having escaped the war, and on the other hand, sadness at having to be away from home and family. In this ambiguous attitude towards one's own situation, an orientation towards survival seems to prevail, accompanied by partial resourcefulness, such as taking on occasional work.

Profile:

– Vasyl, 58 years old.

He lives in a basement in a small town near Warsaw. He works at a construction site, and when there is work, he is happy, buys a lot of cigarettes, and saves for a computer for his 16-year-old daughter. When there is no work, "I sit and smoke cigarettes and meditate." Vasyl says he didn't expect to have to run away.

– Anton (he did not reveal his age but appears to be around 30).

He is a driver at one of the cab corporations. While driving, he concentrates on talking on the phone. Driving seems to be a secondary activity; the conversation is more important. The tone indicates sadness and concern. However, when asked to talk, he agrees to tell about himself. "Once it's good, once it's bad," he says. "When there is money, it is ok," he continues. He has cut off contact with relatives in Ukraine.

Alienated (non)presence – this group creates their own environments, but they are not very numerous. Such individuals isolate themselves from

their new environment, so they have no bond with it. They find it difficult to accept the change in their life situation. They are cut off from the world of dynamic events and do not follow the war in Ukraine. They simply say that it is not their war.

Profile:

– Kyrill, approx. 50 years old.

"I don't know what's going on in Ukraine, and I don't want to know. I have no influence on anything anyway, and besides, it's all the same to me; it will be what it will be. It was bad for me in Ukraine, too. My wife left me," my interviewee laments. When asked where he lives, he says he has his own bed and that's enough for him. "I don't know anything, I don't see anything, I don't hear anything," says my caller.

It is clear that alienation is the result of negative experiences from before the war. To some extent, these negative experiences are related to the difficult material situation both there and here. Few social contacts make such people unmanageable; they do not know how to navigate the new reality or where to get help.

Table 1

Types of presence extracted from IDIs with Ukrainians residing in Poland (N 34)

Types of presence	Central/main features	Peripheral/side features
Active economic presence	Concern for material resources, **orientation towards the protection of material status**.	Resourcefulness, labor activity, and visible characteristics of active cultural presence.
Active socio-cultural presence	Concern for intellectual development, acquisition of "European" competencies. **Orientation towards development and progress**.	Exhibition of national pride and, to a small extent, visible features of active economic presence.
Active demanding presence	Victim syndrome. **Orientation toward receiving help**.	Ambition to raise material status in the future.
Passive presence	"It will be what it is supposed to be." **Survival orientation**.	Nostalgia, e.g. for flavors from Ukraine.
Ambivalent presence	An indeterminate attitude towards one's own situation, an **orientation to opportunity, a stroke of luck**, or an unexpected event that changes the situation.	A conglomeration of feelings: contentment and sadness.
Alienated (non) presence	Lack of acceptance of change, disaffection, lack of interest in social reality. **Orientation towards isolation**.	A kind of anomie, not understanding the situation in which one functions.

Source: own study.

6. Conclusions

The presented results of the completed interviews provide an overview and preliminary diagnosis of the situation of Ukrainians in Poland. Naturally, this situation relates to the personal experiences of the interviewed individuals. The 34 interviews conducted allowed for an attempt to systematize the social anchoring of Ukrainians in Poland. This anchoring is understood by the author as a social presence – a presence that can be regarded as a preliminary phase of the acculturation process. A slice of human experience has been studied, arranged in certain patterns, allowing for the construction of a preliminary typology of the social presence of Ukrainians in Poland. The types identified, along with their central and secondary characteristics, could be used for further quantitative research to gain a broader understanding of Ukrainians in Poland. This is based on the qualitative, diagnostic research presented in this text. The results also provide a good pretext for discussing the direction in which the social presence of Ukrainians in Poland can develop. This direction is marked by a dilemma: to what extent are we dealing with the process of Europeanization of Ukrainians, and what phenomena and processes can testify to this? On the other hand, to what extent are we dealing with the process of Polonization of Ukrainians, and what can testify to this? Moreover, perhaps we are witnessing the process of forming and consolidating a national identity as a result of strong identification with one's own nation, which is a victim of aggression. These three paths of development of the social presence of Ukrainians require a next phase of research.

References

Arends-Tóth, J., van de Vijver, F.J.R. (2004), *Domains and dimensions in acculturation: Implicit theories of Turkish–Dutch*, "International Journal of Intercultural Relations", 28 (1): 19–35, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijintrel.2003.09.001.

Berry, J. (1992), *Acculturation and Adaptation in a New Society*, "International Migration", 30 (s1): 69–85, https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2435.1992.tb00776.x.

CBOS, (2023), *O wojnie na Ukrainie i Ukraińcach w Polsce*, Research Communique No. 120, https://www.cbos.pl/SPISKOM.POL/2023/K_120_23.PDF, (02.10.2023).

Duszczyk, M., Kaczmarczyk, P. (2022), *Wojna i migracja: napływ uchodźców wojennych z Ukrainy i możliwe scenariusze na przyszłość*, CMR Spotlight, 4 (39): 1–14.

Marciniak, E.M. (2021), *Prolegomena do politologii jakościowej*, "Studia Politologiczne", 59: 50–70.

Staniszewski, R. (2023), *Społeczna percepcja uchodźców z Ukrainy oraz migrantów przed wyborami parlamentarnymi w Polsce w 2023 roku. Postawa Polaków względem zaangażowania w pomoc Ukrainie w trakcie wojny z Rosją*, in R. Staniszewski (ed.), *Pomiędzy wojną w Ukrainie a wyborami parlamentarnymi w Polsce w 2023 roku – diagnoza stanu polskiego społeczeństwa*, Warsaw: Dom Wydawniczy Elipsa: 191–230.

Ewa Maria Marciniak

Habilitated doctor in political sciences (2013), staff member of the Faculty of Political Sciences and International Studies of the University of Warsaw Her research interests focus on the areas of social communication research, anthropology of communication, qualitative research methodology. She is the director of the Public Opinion Research Centre. Her most recent publications are: Marciniak, E. (2022), *Health and society. Observations made when reading Mateusz J. Kuczabski's book entitled Health Security. Implications for National Security*, "Polish Journal of Political Science", 2022, Vol. 8, Issue 4: 62–73, https://doi.org/10.58183/pjps.04052022; Marciniak, E. (2022), *Postawy młodych wobec służby cywilnej*, "Studia Iuridica", 92: 50–67, https://doi.org/10.31338/2544-3135.si.2022-92.3.

E-mail: e.marciniak@uw.edu.pl, https://orcid.org/0000-0001-7686-8509.