

Co-creating Transnational Social Spaces: Researching Poles' Migrations across Time and Space

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Abstract. The article examines auto-ethnography (as a form of methodological nationalism), a conceptual tendency that is helpful in the process of the construction of a multi-sited research field, (multi-sited ethnography), at two levels: spatial and temporal. I maintain that this type of data, (researcher's migration experience and history of migration of the family and local community), allows a better understanding of the nature of migration, which is understood as a process of long duration. More importantly, today's migrants perceive the migration of a hundred years ago, as well as the present, precisely as transmigration, and not as emigration or immigration.

Keywords: *migration, Poles, methodological nationalism,*

Introduction

The method of ethnographic field study is often used by sociologists. In Poland, field studies were conducted in this way since the beginning of the institutionalization of sociology, but since the 1970's, surveys have begun to dominate, thereby marginalizing the importance of the direct and personal contact the researcher has with the research group. The popularity of the positivist paradigm in social science research stemmed, inter alia, the possibility of carrying out the procedures of statistical inference based on quantitative data. This procedure allowed the presentation of research in an "objective" way, without the distorting impact of the researcher. It minimized, (through standardization of situations, interviews and research tools), the impact of interviewers. The distance between the "researcher" and "researched group" was and is an advantage in quantitative methods. In the last decade the methods of ethnographic field studies have begun to compete with the quantitative paradigm. At the same time it is worth noting that sociologists who have based their research on the basis of

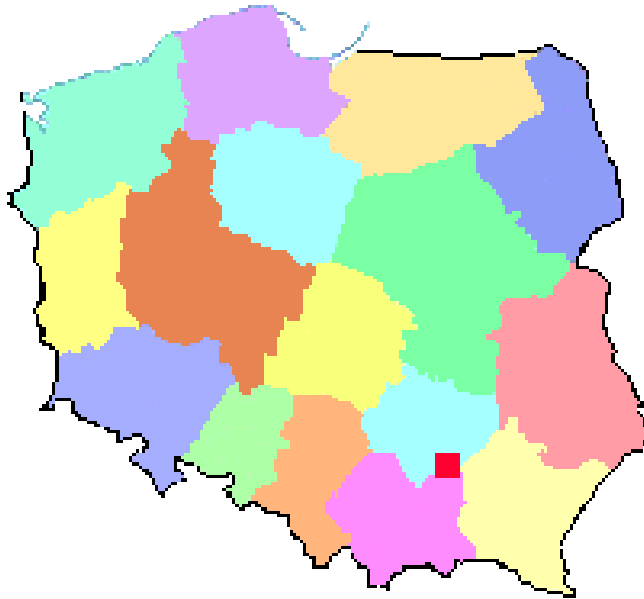
ethnographic methods, typically see benefits arising from the procedure of the triangulation of methods and research techniques, and a far from complete negation of quantitative methods. The methodology of ethnographic research itself is under too numerous transformations, and within ethnographic research there are many tensions and contradictions - in particular ethical tensions, which the "researcher" must face. The issue of the personal and intimate relationship of "the researcher" with "the research area" is certainly a source of such tensions, however, as Minnie Bruce Pratt writes: *"We are not able to translate theory into practice as long as we cannot find it to be the strange and chaotic path of our daily lives"* (Pratt, 1995: 22).

In this article I would like to focus on the personal relationship within the field studies of transmigration, and provide some methodological conclusions drawn from these studies. They relate to the possible use of autoethnographic investigator data in the process of the construction of a multi-sited research field, (multi-sited ethnography), at two levels: spatial and temporal (Foner, 2005). I maintain that this type of data, (migration researcher's experience and history of migration of the family and local community), allows a better understanding of the nature of migration, which is understood as a process of long duration.

This article is divided into five parts. In the first part I will make a brief characterization of the community of Radgoszcz. Then I will describe my methodology of research and analysis of contemporary transmigration processes. In the third part I will describe the history of migration of my family and local community and present the impact of this experience on the conceptualisation of problems research of interest to me. Part four, details the ethnographic characteristics of contemporary migration and gives a description of my experience of being a migrant. In part five, I will present the impact of autoethnographic experience in historical and spatial dimensions, on the process of construction of a multi-sited research field.

1. A short description of the Municipality of Radgoszcz

Radgoszcz lies in the county of Małopolska in the south-western part of the district of Dąbrowa Tarnowska (picture 1). In the picture the district of Dąbrowa Tarnowska is marked with a red dot. Historically the Municipality belongs to the area of the lands of Tarnów:



The eastern part of the municipality is located on the border with the Podkarpackie Province. The Municipality of Radgoszcz is typically of a rural character, located away from major urban centres. The distance from Tarnów to Radgoszcz is thirty-five kilometres.

According to the local government in 2007 in the community consisted of 1,921 households and the total population and was 7153. Most of the households consisted of five or more people. The main source of income for these households was to work (for 52%, of which 20% derived income solely from agriculture), however, almost the same number of households received their income from a pension or life annuity - 48%. In September 2007, unemployment in the Municipality of Radgoszcz was at the level of 495 people, including 248 women (Radgoszcz Municipal Office, 2007).

The study presented in this article concerns Radgoszcz community, but due to unexpected difficulties encountered during the test, I had to take into account the processes and phenomena of migration, which took place in the whole of the region of Tarnów. The problem related mainly to the area of historical research. It transpired that it is not possible to determine the size of migration in the early twentieth century in the area under consideration because of damage to archives during World War I and II. Therefore, the process of analysis takes account data from the community, but also from the region. An interesting source of data was

the Bishop's Consistory Poll, which shows the size of mass migration from the Diocese of Tarnów. The territory of the Diocese covers the most significant historic region of Tarnów. In this way data were estimated for Radgoszcz municipalities under general trends of migration in Western Galicia during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

2. The methodology of the project

Over five years, (from 2002-2007), I conducted research in the Municipality of Radgoszcz and in Vienna, (including research on migrants from Radgoszczy). Initial "observations", (2002-2005), on who was leading in the community of migrants should not be viewed in terms of implementation of a "typical" research process, but as the counterpart of processes and phenomena, which at a later period, (2005-2007), became the object of my scientific interests. I would like to stress that my research interest in transmigration derived both from the historical and contemporary experiences of migration of my family, and my region of origin, where I lived until 2002.

Almost all families in the villages of Radgoszcz have a rich history of migration, dating back to the early twentieth century. Today, members of the communities studied are also taking part in migratory practices, creating a very strong series of transnational networks, including both mobile and relatively immobile members of the community. These networks reach to the United States of America, as well as to Germany, Austria, Italy, Spain and France. This details the most intense lines of transnational mobility of local residents. A contemporary community mobility test is therefore on the one hand, a continuation of the tradition of migration¹, on the other representative of global trends. For five years² I was an active part of the network being *there*, in Radgoszcz and *there*, in Vienna - to paraphrase the title of the article Hannerz'a Ulf (2003) - renovating an apartment with friends, family members and neighbours. At this time I began I began my, initially "informal" research, which in 2005 was reformulated into a

¹ A very important fact is that Dąbrowa Tarnowska County/District, which also includes Radgoszcz, was the centre of migration from Western Galicia in the early twentieth century. Mass migration has left many traces in the mentality, history and genealogy of the modern inhabitants of the area (Caro, 1914).

² I omit here my experience before leaving the municipality/community Radgoszcz for sociological study in Krakow.

systematic research project on transnational social space created by migrants from the community of Radgoszcz. Participant observation complements the analysis of informal discussions, group interviews, questionnaires and archival data.

3. Auto-ethnography and migration - dimensions through history

Migration is an aspect which has been present for more than a hundred years in the life of my family. In the next section of article I wish focus on my autoethnography as a research method which provides data confirming the function of transnational social spaces from the beginning of the twentieth century. I refer here to the concept of autoethnography developed by Leo Anderson (2006) – analytic autoethnography. Anderson suggests five key features of autoethnographical analysis. First, the researcher should be a member of the test community. Full participation in the life "researched" may result from membership of the primary group, with the inclusion of the researcher in the researched group during the research process (ibid.: 378-379). In the situation in which a researcher is a member of the group in which he was a child, as he proceeds to study phenomena and processes this may lead to many schizophrenic tensions. In my case these were due to continuous orientation attempts in "systematic" documentation and analysis on the one side, and genuine engagement in the life of immediate family on the other. Involvement in the social life of the tested community has provided me with understanding of what is transmitted by folklore, as well as access to important types of data, (memories, stories of migration of family members, photographs, souvenirs), but the use of this information has for a long time been thought to be unreliable. The second feature of autoethnography, according to Anderson, is an analytical reflectance of the researcher. During my study, that directive was associated with attempts to carry out the tasks of research, including my social location as a researcher, as a member of the family and the wider local community. The third feature of analytical autoethnography is a narrative visibility of the "I" of the researcher reflected mainly by a description of his own experiences as an investigator and member of the researched group. Dialogue with informants from outside the "I" is the fourth feature of research approach which interests me here. During field studies I have repeatedly consulted the current results and insights with members of my family. When, after the "end" of the test, I arranged for them a meeting summarizing the results of my previous

work, they gathered, only to claim: *“So what? We all know this.”* The final feature, within the directive relating to autoethnography is to use theory as a tool to assist in the analysis of empirical material (Anderson, 2006: 378). The latter aspect was very important in my research concerning personal and group experiences, and migration. I analyzed migration practice through the prism of the theory of transnational social space.

According to the theory of Thomas Faist (2000), social capital generates transnational social spaces. It plays a key role in creating, sustaining and developing links between the sending community and receiving community. According Faist we can distinguish four functions of social capital associated with migration processes. Firstly, you can point to the selective function of social capital, which determines who will migrate. Family, community and friendship connections are the gateway to the world of migration. Secondly, function – diffusion - function - affect the emergence, (or not), under the influence of positive experiences with migration, of a migration chain. Thirdly, the function of bridging social capital allows for the supportive communication of mobile units with their country of origin. The fourth feature of social capital: adaptability, determines the speed of assistance and the possibility of faster adaptation of new members of a migrant network to the institutional environment in the host society.

These features of social capital create transnational social space. Transnational social space is, according to Faist, the combination of ties, bonds and positions in networks and organizations, which operate across national borders. Cultural, political and economic processes associated with transnationality, include the accumulation of various types of capital: economic, human and social. The reality of transnational social space shows, first, that migration and re-emigration cannot be regarded as certain, irrevocable decisions. Moreover, transnational networks include in the analysis of migration relatively non-roaming individuals and communities. Secondly, even those migrants and refugees who had settled for a longer duration outside their country of origin, often remain involved with it through trans-national communication. Thirdly, those links are - according to theorists of transnational communities - more informal, or can be institutionalized as political parties (Faist, 2000a: 191-192). Analysing migration from the community of Radgoszcz in a transnational perspective we can assume that daily lives depend on variable transnational connections over transnational borders and that their identification is the result of being in simultaneous relation to two or

more "points" to create a kind of "space". They were not guests of the host country, because they settled there and were enrolled in economic and political institutions, the daily life of the community and the patterns of everyday functioning in the country, but also because of their loyalty to other places, remaining in contact with their home country. The migrants set up institutions and have an impact on local and national events in the country from which migrated (Glick Schiller, Basch and Blanc, 1995).

How did the migration of my family members in the light of the background previously presented appear in a theoretical context? The migratory history of my family was begun by my great-grandparents, who met in the United States in the early twentieth century. Although they were "permanently" settled in the village from which my great-grandmother originated, their migration abroad was for about ten years, (from 1905-1915). During their "absence", the upbringing of children was organized by family members. My great grandparents had been in communication with their family by writing letters, sending gifts and financial support. All of those aspects, as well as emotional support, were transmitted by sending community members who temporarily returned to Radgoszcz from the United States. Social networks in those days were very dense. The entire local community consisted of more or less unrelated persons, each of which thought of themselves as one community member. Socio-cultural practices associated with agriculture, (such as harvesting and haymaking), construction of houses, expeditions, fairs held in the nearby villages, (Radomyśl, Szczucin, recreation: Mielec Tarnow), were carried out jointly. Numerous socio-cultural practices had been organized around the institution of the Catholic Church. The church played a key role in creating and sustaining transnational connections - I will return to this issue later in the article. These dense social networks, social proximity - strong social capital - and the tremendous role of the Catholic Church were responsible for maintaining contacts, amongst mobile and relatively non-mobile members of the local community by extrapolation of local social control in the migrants' lives, (permanently or temporarily), abroad.

The first period of migration, (World War I), was remembered in my family through small souvenirs – however, most were destroyed during the Second World War when the entire village was evacuated and the material from the demolished houses was used to reinforce the trenches. There remained only a wooden chest, which my great-grandmother bought during her first stay in the United States. On

the chest walls were glued pictures depicting Japanese women dressed in kimonos. They constituted an object of interest throughout the community. The trunk accompanied my great-grandparents throughout all their travels in the United States and became a symbol of transnational communication and the migratory history of my family. World War I halted the practice of migration, closing the trunk of my family for almost fifty years³.

What is the migration pattern which emerges from the transnational activities of members of my family? Looking at the history of migration, I can point to examples that illustrate the migration through all four functions of social capital, (of which Faist wrote), in transnational processes. For example, analyzing the Ellis Island web archives, I found that a large number of migrants from Malec, (part of the municipality Radgoszcz), are my ancestors, members of two related families: Gmyr and Mroczek. As I wrote, the selective function of social capital that makes the experience of migration is possible within a specific network of kinship. A positive experience of migration, (a diffusion function of social capital), that is experienced by mobile units has increased migratory aspirations among family members. My grandparents' chest was in a sense a symbol of prosperity, which was achieved by migration. The relatively frequent, repeated, occasional travel back and forth of my family members is the best example of bridging the social capital aspect. Other factors such as the transmission of funds are very important in creating bridges between migrants and their sending community. The adaptive function of social capital was, (and is), seen by, for example, assistance in registering with the Immigration Office, being offered a place to sleep at the beginning of your stay, advice given to the newly arrived family members about work and help in the early days through illegal activity on the labour market.

The migration of my family was not a separate case of transnational activity. The results of my archival research clearly indicate that migration was a widespread practice in the Municipality of Radgoszcz during the early twentieth century. Empirical data on the historical period of my research comes from - apart from my family's history of migration - the Diocesan Archives in Tarnów. Radgoszcz was the centre of emigration from Galicia in the early twentieth century. A 15% decline in population due to migration occurred in 1890, (Caro 1914: 22); despite such important social phenomena the administration has absolutely no interest in

³ During World War I, my grandfather was drafted into the Austro-Hungarian army. During the fighting he was captured and was exiled to Siberia from where he returned around 1920.

them, but the Catholic Church records changes in major social indicators. In 1907 the Consistory Bishops sent a questionnaire to all the seminarians in the Diocese of Tarnow. The table below presents the results of a survey for each Deanery in the Diocese.

Table 1: The volume of migration from Diocese of Tarnów in 1907

Deanery	Number of migrants in 1907		
	USA	Austro-Hungary	Total
Bobowski	632	245	877
Bocheński	245	2639	2884
Brzeski	338	1783	2121
Czchowski	397	303	700
Dąbrowski	4863	1885	6748
Kolbuszowski	1131	1824	2955
Limanowski	1932	434	2366
Łacki	1959	1010	2969
Mielecki	5952	853	6805
Nowosądecki	1043	30	1073
Pilzneński	425	6	431
Radłowski	215	3017	3232
Radomyski	600	100	700
Ropczycki	1866	134	2000
Tarnowski	500	231	731
Tuchowski	523	174	697
Tymbarski	335	1002	1337
Starosądecki	439	7	446
Wielopolski	1330	3	1333
Wojnicki	599	3607	4206
Total	25324	19287	44611

Source: Diocesan Archives in Tarnów.

Migration from Dąbrowa, Tarnowska and surrounding area, (Mielec), were an important social process. Unfortunately, there is not data from Radgoszcz. Despite the absence of this information, we can estimate the size of migration from Radgoszcz using data from the parish located in the neighbouring villages, (Szczucin, Dąbrowa, Luszowice). According to a survey from 1907, approximately 15% of the population migrated from Szczucin and 10% in both Dabrowa and Luszowice.

Table 2: The size of migration from the particular parishes in the Diocese of Dabrowa in 1907

Parishes in Deanery Dąbrowa Tarnowska	Number of migrants		
	USA	Austro-Hungary	Total
Bolesław	1500	15	1515
Dąbrowa	600	400	1000
Gręboszów	210	95	305
Luszowice	30	150	180
Odporyszów	200	105	305
Olesno	1000	380	1380
Otfinów	-	500	500
Radgoszcz	No data	No data	No data
Szczucin	1300	160	1460
Żabno	23	80	103
Total	4863	1885	6748

Source: Diocesan Archives in Tarnów.

The clergy played an important role in maintaining a close relationship between migrants and the sending community. Religion organised the transnational life of migrants, (Levitt 2004). According to archival data, migrants from Radgoszcz, especially those which travelled to the U.S.A., would order masses for the deceased, regardless of where they were buried, and people not migrating ordered masses for migrants in the intention of conferring good luck during the travels of others. There were also spontaneous collections of cash for church renovations. In the Diocesan Archives in Tarnów is evidence of the contribution of migrants to the renovation of the church in Luszowice, (Municipality of Radgoszcz):

"On the honourable request of the Reverend Bishops Consistory of the 15th March this year, I, signed below, have the honour to convey the joyful message of the Reverend Arch Bishop during a visit to the Canonical Parish in Luszowice, referring to America, where the resident parishioners of Luszowice collected a premium and sent an initial 1555 Crowns. With it citizens of Luszowice been encouraged to give 2214 Crowns." (Letter from the parish priest, Father John Suwady, the Consistory of Bishops of 28/03/1905).

These informal practices of creating and maintaining transnational social space were supported institutionally. In 1912, in Radgoszcz and Luszowice, migrants founded an organization called "Friends of the Parish of Luszowice." The main objective of this association was to give help to the sending community. Migrants financially supported

these religious groups, gathered resources to support their business, assured the hospitality of visiting pastors, sought among them support and guidance, and additionally participated in their religious services and cultural events of a religious nature.

In making a summary of this part of the article it should be noted that the tradition of migration is very strong in the researched community. The local social memory still functions regarding migrants from the past, their travel back and forth, their gifts from the U.S.A. and the stories associated with transatlantic travel. More importantly, today's migrants perceive the migration of a hundred years ago, as well as the present, precisely as transmigration, and not as emigration or immigration. One of my interlocutors said:

“Take me, for example ... my situation was that I wanted to emigrate, but failed, so now I live in Poland. I work abroad [Germany, Austria, Italy - ŁK], but I am not an emigrant. I'm just working and earning. I spend ten days in Poland and twenty abroad, where I work. Rather than leave for Gdansk, I am leaving to go to Vienna. In the worst situation ever I can go back permanently to Radgoszcz, but I am not an emigrant”. (Male, 35 years old, manual worker).

A similar position emerged during one of the group interviews:

“M.2: Emigration in Europe, that's not emigration;

M.8: Now it is not; before there were problems, before the Union, so it was difficult to return home to Poland;

K.9: No if you did not have papers, it was frightening;

M.1: In general I was worried that if they withdraw those ...

K.9: Now it's a laugh;

M.2: It's like in the United States, people transiting from one state to the second; it's the same in the Union;

K.9: A lot of people are planning to return to Poland, but the difference is that some will have to work in Krakow ...

M.2 In Gdansk ...

K.9: ...and not close to home, in Radgoszcz;

M.2: I will go to work for a week in Krakow or in Gdansk and at the weekend will return to home. It's better to go abroad. It seems to me that, as it is now, it is so normal, it is not emigration;

M.1: Well, it is so natural;

M.2: We were in Galicia and we are in Galicia” [emphasis - ŁK].

4. Autoethnography and migration - the contemporary spatial dimension

A return to my family's tradition of migration occurred in the mid-eighties. During this time my aunt went to France. A little later, (but still before 1989), a large part of my family went to the United States on the basis of the discovery of the birth certificate of my grandfather. This document confirmed that my great-grandfather was born in the United States, which greatly facilitated the procedure for applying for a visa. Apart from relatively frequent travel between Poland, France and the United States, the migration of members of my immediate family and the entire local community is now primarily associated with Austria and Germany.

In the mid-nineties my sister moved to Austria. She lives and works in Vienna to this day. A few years later, my brother tied his life to migration. I, while studying sociology have spent almost every summer in Vienna. I have worked with my brother and friends from Poland as a decorator, painter, lumberjack, bricklayer, helper in removals and repairman. Most of these activities I learned on the spot. I remember my first concern about the "work on the side" and lack of specific skills. All my friends consoled me as saying that as a migrant from that I am able to work "on the side", and as a Pole quickly learn that "profession". "Apprenticeship" concerned not only the "work" to which I was as a migrant, (albeit temporary), "predestined", but also appropriate behaviour. This was a kind of study of "being a migrant" in terms of what I must do and what not. First of all, my contact with the employer was limited to a minimum. In fact, I never talked with the family members for whom I worked, even though I saw them every day throughout the summer. The "bad tone" was the manifestation of fatigue caused by hard, physical work. "Work" has to be done in an "aesthetic" clean manner. I wondered then, whether such directives from migrant communities, actually derives from their previous experiences with employers. On the one hand, some of my interlocutors mentioned that at the beginning of their stay in Austria they had to learn a pedantic approach to the "dirty work". On the other hand, in informal discussions that took place during working hours there appeared a stereotypical, "organized German". How often it was emphasized: "There must be order!" Exceptions to this rule occurred during the absence of the employer. Such situations were the opportunity to rest, have loud conversations, naps, or to go shopping at the nearby supermarket. The least dusty worker was sent to the store, (which was not a

problem) and spoke German, (which was always a problem). All these strategies were applied so as not to arouse suspicion of Austrians, who could call the police.

The situation of living with migrants and being a migrant has provided me with interesting data. I watched with amazement the changing habits and attitudes of my friends and family in the context of transmigration between Vienna and Radgoszcz. Arrival to Poland was treated in terms of the instantaneous return to loved ones who currently do not wish to migrate. From Vienna we mainly brought toys for children, alcohol purchased in promotions, and electronic equipment purchased at a flea market, (*Fhlomarkt*). Migrants who built houses also imported building materials. In the area of Radgoszcz were many houses which were largely built from Austrian building materials. From Vienna we also imported architectural solutions, construction materials and decoration novelties. The flats of migrants in Vienna, where I lived did not differ significantly from typical flats in the sending communities. An interesting phenomenon I observed during the travel between Radgoszcz and Vienna was the change to maintain order and to work. In Vienna, everyone segregated garbage and maintained order in the area of employment and housing, (so that it is not too prominently viewed). They did not duplicate the stereotype of a typical Pole. This also applied to work. Each order was performed with high accuracy and commitment. In Poland, nobody sorts garbage. Migrants who built houses in Poland mainly did not participate in the work at home. With the money they earned in Vienna could not afford to hire workers "on the side."

Interesting, from a sociological point of view, were journeys to and from Vienna. Minibuses⁴ driving between Radgoszcz and Vienna enliven transnational social spaces, making them more "visible." They have fixed departure times and places. The trip takes about eight hours and is the best opportunity to exchange information about living, work, pubs, opportunities to benefit from social welfare and schools. During the trip from Vienna to Radgoszcz our theme was mainly on the experience of migration, relations with employers (it was a permanent feature of ridicule), purchasing and promotion. However, travels from Radgoszcz to Vienna were an opportunity for making an appointment, gossiping about relatively non-mobile friends, and planning time to the next return journey, which is usually every two weeks. In the summer months, minibuses filled with children. Minibuses are therefore a very important element of supportive ties, a sort of bridge between the sending and receiving communities.

⁴ Of course, in addition to minibuses, a great number of trans-migrants use their own cars.

As in the historical case, migration of members of my closer and extended family is not accidental, but rather the activity of transnational migration results from the migrant culture of the local community. It is very difficult to assess quantitatively the size of the migration from the community Radgoszcz. A decline in population due to migration was particularly evident after 1 May 2004, when Poland joined the European Union. Due to the lack of institutional arrangements for the migration processes, in a certain period of my field research I decided to carry out an auditorium questionnaire between third-grade students in two middle schools located in the Municipality Radgoszcz. The survey concerned the migration of their families. I collected one hundred questionnaires. The results of this survey are not surprising in the face of the tradition of migration. Young people do not only see migration from Radgoszcz positively, but also place it in their plans for life. The majority of respondents are planning to migrate in the future - just like their parents and grandparents. Almost all students surveyed have at least one close relative who has migrated. In the experience of the migrant families surveyed, students, informal conversations in different spaces, observation and group interviews that I conducted with known trans-migrants, in the final phase of field research, I have created the perfect - and it is very simple - categories of trans-migrants from Radgoszcz and their migratory patterns.

The first category is distinguished as "traditional" migrants. In this group there are people who have lived abroad for at least 10 years. Their placements are determined mostly by a migratory tradition in their families. The families of the surveyed students of this type were represented by their grandparents and their uncles and aunts. The history of migration of these people began during the communist times. In keeping with the tradition of migration from the Municipality of Radgoszcz, a major destination has always been the United States. Students, in whose families migrants were "traditional" confirmed that their forefathers also migrated. The second category of migrants from the community of Radgoszcz is "creative" migrants. By creativity I mean other than the traditional choice of target countries such as Spain, Italy, (particularly a destination of female migrants for employment in the care sector), rather than Britain, which is an interesting development, given the current trends of migration from other Polish regions. These countries were not the objectives of the migration of a hundred years ago. 'Creative' migrants use wide kinship networks in place of the traditional patterns of migration. The main distinguishing characteristic of this group are occasional visits home.

The final category of migrants is "proper" trans-migrants. With such members I worked, lived, drove, and had many discussions and interviews. There are several key patterns of migration in this group: a) the traditional lines of migration (Austria, Germany) with the exception of the United States (today) because of distance, b) frequent movement between two or more countries, c) enhanced network migration, d) having two homes – one in the host country, as well as in sending country e) increased consumption in the country of origin. Like the ancestors of a hundred years ago, today's migrants also live according to the calendar of religious obligations in the local community.

5. Autoethnography in the process of construction of multi-site research

Since the concept of globalization began to play a key role in sociology and anthropology, the ethnographic monograph unilateral model has been criticized. For example, weaknesses such as the limitations of the field, able to carry out field surveys in only one place (position) and the unhistorical nature of research in the field (Comaroff and Comaroff, 1992; Gille, 2001) are constantly subjected to criticism. These demands seem to be fairly obvious in the study of transnational migration, so in order to conduct research I had to construct various academic perspectives in a flexible manner and examine ethnography in different spaces and places, as well as take into account the history of migration of the test community, my own family's experience of migration, and my own experiences in this field.

During preparations to conduct a study on migration from Radgoszcz, I began with participant observation carried out in two places: in the Radgoszcz and Xth district of Vienna (where it is possible to find the most likely number of households of the highest percentage of Polish migrants in the city) and in Polish churches and shops. As I mentioned, I worked and lived with other migrants every summer from 2002-2007. This experience of migration and growing up in the community has helped me in the process of conceptualization⁵. It was clear to me that so-called traditional concepts of migration are inadequate to describe functioning patterns of migration. Migration processes from Radgoszcz and socio-cultural practices of mobile community members, (past and today), led me to the concept of transnationalism and transnational social space developed primarily by

⁵ Such as the migration model described as Push-Pull.

Faist Thomas (1998; 2000), Alejandro Portes (1999) , Nina Glick Schiller (Glick Schiller, Basch and Blanc, 1995), Steven Vertovec (2007) and Ewa Morawska (2003; 2004). Using this framework/ it seems natural that multi-sited ethnography is the best methodology to study socio-cultural practices across borders.

Using multi-sited ethnography it is clear, in my view, that when examining contemporary global migration processes there are also other relevant fields of research, not related to an area of study in a geographical sense, but in a more academic context. As I showed at the beginning of this article, there is a strong and lengthy tradition of migration in the studied communities. During my research I discovered that most of today's immigrants have a family history associated with migration in the early twentieth century. Based on the proposals of George Marcus (1995), I have extended my research field into various perspectives, as this was the best way to study local processes, not in isolation but in conjunction with the wider global context. I defined my position (a) as two contemporary views of the community of Radgoszcz (and surrounding district) and Vienna (District X), and (b) two places from the past: the Municipality of Radgoszcz, (Diocese of Tarnow, Galicia), and the United States. In this way my multi-site ethnography covers space and time. All these positions are linked through social networks on the one hand, and social memories of the other. Field research is created by social relationships between mobile and relatively mobile community members who work in different areas, (Austria, Germany, France, but also Italy and Spain) and by the memory of the social mobility of ancestors, mainly migrating to the USA (so-called migration fever in the early twentieth century). By undertaking ethnography through rather flexibly defined positions, (connected in space and time), it is possible to examine what kind of socio-cultural practice takes place within multi-site research. These define the area of research as made possible through the use of my own experience as a member of a family and a migrant.

Summary

Migration from Radgoszcz and nearby areas played a significant role in the lives of their inhabitants for the last hundred years. Transnational mobility has become a habit, which structured contemporary patterns of migration, adjusted for global trends. Both a hundred years ago, and today, the area was and is dominated by transnational mobility. A sustainable design is created for migration through the

ages. This concept is understood here as a relatively stable pattern of various transnational socio-cultural practices and traditions of migration, which involve certain objective facts. The culture of migration can be described either in terms of nation-states with traditions of migration, (for example, Poland, Ireland, Italy), and from the perspective of local communities in which migration is affecting the process of long duration, for example: family history, kinship networks and friendship, intergeneration relationship, patterns/models of economic activity, public institutions, aspirations and future plans. Cultural migration in my local community is expressed not only through the practice of transmigration, but also by "their" institutions such as the two companies, which operate in the United States, (including the one was founded in 1912), and take an active part in the social life of the Radgoszcz community.

Based on research into migrants, regardless of their abode, we can form the image of Radgoszcz as a space in which individuals create various kinds of transnational links. They may take the form more institutionalized, such as the association of Polish-Americans, or less institutionalized, as socio-cultural transnational practices. Radgoszcz is a space which is not limited to a specific location on the Polish map. This is a set of values, symbols, patterns of interaction and socio-cultural practices, including those for migration models. My experience as a member of the test in a migrant community has allowed me to make a thorough analysis of the phenomenon of transmigration.

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