
THE ROLE OF GREEK CATHOLIC CHURCH IN THE INTEGRATION PROCESS OF LABOUR MIGRANTS IN POLAND

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Abstract

The aim of the article is to examine the role of Greek Catholic Church in the integration process of labour migrants in Poland. The experiences and religious practices of immigrants are presented, based on in-depth interviews with Ukrainian citizens, members of Greek Catholic Church and priests. Authors analyse religiosity and religious practices of immigrants, their relationship with the Catholic Church in Poland and its members and describe Greek-Catholic parish as a social support organisation. This study contributes to the discussion on the role of ethnic Churches in immigrant integration processes. The findings of the article show that the Greek Catholic Church in Poland has an important function in maintaining national Ukrainian identity and an auxiliary function in the settlement and integration of economic immigrants.

Keywords: Greek Catholic Church, immigration, Ukraine, religion, integration

1. Introduction

The annual Message of the Holy Father, Pope Francis, on the 106th World Day of Migrants and Refugees is 'Forced like Jesus Christ to flee'. Although this year it relates primarily to internally displaced persons, it should be seen more broadly as a Christological call for the Christian action of empathy, understanding, hospitality and care for all migrants [Press Release of the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development - Section for Migrants and Refugees: Theme of the 106th World Day of Migrants and Refugees, 06.03.2020. https://press.vatican.va/content/salastampa/en/bollettino/pubbl_lico/2020/03/06/200306c.html, accessed on 1.04.2020]. In the spirit of this call, there is a noticeable alignment of research conducted so far in Poland, where labour immigrants undergo four levels integration to the host society: employee, resident, participant in public life and activist for their own identity [1]. In Poland, the profile of a migrant corresponds to the definition of labour migrants,

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the undisputed majority of whom are Ukrainians, especially young people, relatively well educated, whose aim is to take up employment, not requiring high qualifications, for a limited or seasonal period of time. Poles are open to labour migrants from countries with similar culture [2]. The specificity and profile of immigrants in Poland is different than in Western European countries, where there is a much larger share of refugees and Muslim migrants from African and Middle Eastern countries [3]. For the clarity it should be mentioned that that labour migration means movement of persons from one state to another, or within their own country of residence, for the purpose of employment [*Asylum and Migration Glossary 6.0*, European Commission. European Migration Network, 242, http://emn.ie/files/p_20180521043751interactive_glossary_6.0_final_version.pdf , accessed on 1.04.2020].

The aim of the article is to examine the role of religion and churches in the integration of migrants in the host country. Special attention will be paid to the Polish perspective, so we will focus on labour migrants. The issues considered here concern the following research questions: 1) what role in the integration of migrants in Poland plays the pastoral care of their native religious churches?, 2) what are the attitudes of faith communities to newly arrived labour immigrants?, 3) how do believing migrants of other faiths, relate to the dominant Catholic faith of Poles?

Consideration of the significance of churches and meaning of spiritual care in the experience of labour migrant is well established, at least when it comes to research on the experience of Polish migrants. In the context of the role of churches in the integration of labour migrants with the host country and society, one can see many similarities that Polish emigrants had to face almost a century ago.

2. Theoretical scope

Florian Znaniecki's methodological note, in his five-volume work titled 'The Polish Peasant in Europe and America', published together with William I. Thomas, says that the integration of immigrants is not based on a categorical rejection of attitudes and values from the country of origin in favour of those from the host country [4]. In his opinion, effective integration of immigrants required that previously socialised attitudes and values should be given a new meaning and be directed towards a synthesis with those of the host society. In the case of Polish peasant families in United States, this integration was to be motivated by the creation of opportunities to gain strength and economic resources for social advancement. In this context, the role of Church was to help immigrants in their integration, and to ensure that the attitudes and values of their country of origin are tolerated, but they need to be given a new meaning to be directed towards a synthesis with those of the host society.

Józef Chałasiński described an isolated Polish workers' colony on the southern side of what was then Chicago. It was founded in 1892 and was united around a large work facility and the Polish Saint Michael's Church. He

described the contradictions between two forces: one working for the assimilation, (the second generation of the Polish labour migrant society that grew up in the host country) and the force fighting it (the rural tradition of parents born in Poland). Cultural tensions were observed between Polish students studying in a private parish school and children of Polish origin studying in American public schools. The place which united Polish emigrants was one of the two neighbouring churches. The former was considered to be an ethnical (Polish) church and the latter a Roman Catholic parish. Gradually, at the forefront of the problems of the Polish American community was not the defence of national identity, but the winning of a social position and status importance in the host country [5].

The growing interest of labour migrants in Poland has fundamentally changed the orientation of today's public debate and scientific discourse in our country. Poland has joined not so much the mainstream thought on mobility and emigration, but the research on immigrants on its own territory. In a sense, the experiences of migrants are universal, as are their needs, barriers and expectations in the new country. The same applies to the role of the Church in the integration of migrants in the host society. For the newcomers, churches can play a role of protective cultural communities, a guide for understanding the daily habits of host society and its culture, or the centre of social networks, through which employment and housing can be found. The literature distinguishes at least five social functions performed by churches for labour immigrants: 1) the church as an emergency service, 2) the church as a guide in dealing with first public situations, 3) the church as an informal employment agency, 4) the church as a settlement supporter, 5) the church as a house of origin's culture [6].

The Church, and participation in the community of believers, helps to work through the migration crisis, by fostering a more detached view of one's attributes and position. The process of post-crisis reorientation will last a lifetime. Some deficits will cease to be important; others will have to be reworked and finally accepted. Ultimately, being an immigrant is conducive to 'looking for a person in another person' rather than categorising people by country of origin. This attitude is a key social competence to avoid cultural isolation and religious fanaticism. The Church can act as a guide on this way out of a migration shock and crisis [7].

In the context of the importance of the Churches in the integration of immigrants with the host society, it is also important to mention research that highlights their negative side. This usually applies to ethnic churches, which are any local congregation that indicates - whether by name, vision, or mission statement - an emphasis on ministering to a particular ethnic group [8]. By the ethnic group we understand a collectivity within a larger society, having real or putative common ancestry, memories of a shared historical past, some consciousness of kin among members of the group and a cultural focus on one or more symbolic elements, like: kinship patterns, physical contiguity, religious affiliation, language or dialect forms, tribal affiliation, nationality, phenotypical

features or any combination of these [9]. In the host country the immigrant verifies who he or she was in his or her origin country and adapts his or her self-image to how he or she is perceived by the hosting society. The loss of continuity of self, the status of a foreigner or an unwanted stranger, results in a lack of satisfaction from reflecting oneself in the eyes of important others. One of the ways to regain control over one's self image is to return to one's roots in a foreign country, which may mean searching for similar ones, also in the host religious community. That process is called as 'theologizing experience' - just as it had been when Abraham left the land of his fathers, when the people of the Exodus followed Moses into the wilderness, and when Jeremiah urged the exiles who wept by the rivers of Babylon to make the God of their past the hope of their future [10].

Migrants can use two ways to create social networks. The first one will be created within migrant groups and will be closed to the host society. The second will consist mainly of representatives of the host society. As one might expect, a higher concentration of co-religion's migrants from the country of origin in the place of destination increases the degree of religious participation among immigrants in ethnical Churches. Though overall at the same time it seems to depress integration with a host society [11]. Or just the opposite, the participation in a circle dominated by members of the receiving society may result in eagerly trying to arouse sympathy among the natives who know him (usually in the workplace), which often means accepting their social practices, including religious ones, as their own [12]. The role of Churches in integrating immigrants therefore depends on the attitude of the host society towards them. The church can be a refuge that enhances a sense of security, belonging and nurtures the traditions of the country of origin, or a centre of integration that supports adaptation to a new reality.

3. Labour immigration from Ukraine to Poland

Poland was perceived as relatively homogeneous state with one of the lowest percentages of people of non-native descent, both culturally and ethnically. In the National Census for 2011, only 1.55% of people declared national-ethnic affiliation other than Polish. Eurostat report indicates that this percentage is even lower: 0.6% of the non-national citizens are foreigners [*Non-national population by group of citizenship*, Eurostat, [http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=File:Non-national_population_by_group_of_citizenship,_1_January_2016_\(%C2%B9\).png&oldid=331045](http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=File:Non-national_population_by_group_of_citizenship,_1_January_2016_(%C2%B9).png&oldid=331045), accessed on 1.02.2020].

The term 'foreigner' is used in Polish regulations and strategic documents to describe permanent or temporary residents, refugees and asylum seekers, obeying also use of terms as: migrant or immigrant.

In the last six years, the image of an ethnically homogenous country has started to change, and Poland has seen a large increase in the number of foreigners with residence and work rights. Over the last decade, Poland has

gradually become a new destination country for global migration flows [13]. Moreover, Poland is the main destination country for short-term and seasonal migrants, ahead of the United States in 2018 [14]. According to the Central Statistical Office (GUS), there were 325 217 foreigners in Poland who had valid documents confirming their right of residence in our country (as of 1 January 2018). Among them, the most important were foreigners holding a temporary residence permit, who constituted 51% of all permits issued (166 907). On the other hand, 60 360 persons held a permanent residence permit (18.5%), and 11 964 foreigners held a long-term resident's EU residence permit (3.7%) [15]. In 2019, a total of 444 738 work permits were issued to foreigners, of which 330 495 to Ukrainian citizens.

Research on the structure of immigration to Poland indicates that the dominant stream are Ukrainian citizens, especially young people, relatively well educated, whose goal is to take up employment, not requiring high qualifications, for a definite or seasonal period. In the case of immigrants taking up employment in the agricultural sector, these are usually men from small towns and villages with a lower level of education and less experience in coming to Poland for work. This is different in the case of large cities. According to the National Bank of Poland, almost every third Ukrainian citizen who came to the Warsaw agglomeration had a master's degree (32.4%) and a bachelor's or engineer's degree (6.6%). In the case of the Lublin agglomeration, the rate of higher education was lower than in the capital city (19.0%), but higher in the undergraduate or engineering category (21.5%) [16]. Making the necessary simplifications, one can risk a thesis that immigrants from Ukraine have experiences of similar characteristics as Polish emigrants, i.e. they fall into the loop of a migration trap. In other words, young, well-educated Ukrainians are condemned to work below their qualifications [17].

On the other hand, their emigration is an opportunity for a more efficient allocation of their social capital, which has been trapped in peripheral, rural regions and without attractive employment prospects. If, in the case of Ukraine, the trend of short-term and seasonal migration is maintained, these migrating citizens will return to their country of origin. However, they will probably tend to settle in the main cities and domestic employment centres, investing the capital, knowledge, skills and competences earned abroad, with potentially better employment prospects [18]. It is also possible that the decision to return will result in disappointment and lack of perspectives. The consequence will be a decision to emigrate again, which will take away rather permanently the chance for a satisfactory job in their homeland, making them 'doubly marginalised' in exile, but not necessarily in Poland.

4. Methods

Qualitative interviews (IDI) with immigrants are particularly useful in mapping and analysing the importance of individual experiences of immigrants. This approach facilitates the process of reconstructing religious attitudes and

practices. The method of qualitative research is also recommended in this case due to the possibility of applying appropriate rigour resulting from data collection and analysis of the essence of understanding the labour migration phenomenon.

The research was conducted in Szczecin, the capital of the province, in 2019. The data were collected using the technique of qualitative interviews with Ukrainian citizens. Snowball sampling and respondent-driven sampling was used, the first interviews were conducted with respondents, who took part in other immigration research carried out by the team in early 2019. The recruitment criterion was a declaration of Greek Catholic faith. The respondents were people over 18 years old, working in Szczecin and staying in Poland at least 2 months. After establishing contacts with the respondents, the interviews were conducted in public spaces (cafés, shopping malls). In total, 23 persons participated in the research conducted in September and October 2019. Additionally, in February and March 2020, three CATI interviews were conducted with Greek Catholic parish priests: Father Robert Rosa (Szczecin), Father Mariusz Dmyterko (Biały Bór) and Father Arkadiusz Trochanowski, Dean of the Koszalin Decanate, which also includes the city of Szczecin.

In the qualitative interviews with immigrants the following issues were discussed, relating to the situation in the country of origin and the period of stay in Poland: attitude towards faith (self-declaration: whether the respondent is a believer and to what extent), religious practices (declaration of practices - participation in masses, services or religious meetings, frequency of prayer), sense of connection with one's own religious community, knowledge about the parish (faith) in the country/place of residence. The interviews with pastors concerned such issues as: changes in the functioning of the parish with the influx of immigrants from Ukraine, the forms of work of the parish with immigrants, the extent of immigrants' involvement in the work of the parish, the needs and problems that immigrants face, participation in religion lessons of immigrant children.

5. Results

5.1. Ukrainians and Ukrainian diaspora in Zachodniopomorskie Voievodeship

The area of our research was the Zachodniopomorskie Voievodeship, to which a significant increase in the number of migrants occurred in 2017. The first groups of economic migrants chose mainly such cities as: Warszawa, Kraków, Wrocław, Poznań or Gdańsk, i.e. large agglomerations. The Zachodniopomorskie Voievodeship is located in the north-western part of Poland, bordering on the Federal Republic of Germany; it is more than 1230 km from the border with Ukraine. The voievodeship covers an area of 22 892.48 km² (it is the fifth largest voievodeship in the country). In 2019 West Pomerania was inhabited by 1.7 million people. According to the 2011 National Census of Population and Housing, 4 482 residents of the voievodeship declared their

belong to the Ukrainian minority, out of 10 777 people declaring a nationality other than Polish. On the territory of the voivodeship there are organizations of the Ukrainian minority, which, in view of the intensive influx of migrants from Ukraine, actively engage in helping the arrivals. In the case of the Ukrainian minority, the Orthodox and Greek-Catholic churches played a special role in preserving national identity.

The Razumkov Sociological Center together with the Konrad Adenauer Foundation in Ukraine has been conducting research on the religiousness of Ukrainian society since 2000. The last study was carried out in 2018, in all regions of Ukraine, except for the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the occupied areas of Donetsk and Luhansk. In the light of the survey, 71.7% of Ukrainians declared themselves to be believers, of which 67.3% indicated an Orthodox Church, 9.4% a Greek Catholic, 7.7% described themselves as simply Christian. 2.2% indicated Protestantism, 11% of those surveyed did not attribute themselves to any religion, 7.5% described themselves as non-believers, atheists 4.5%, religious indifference 9.8%. Women (78.9%) and people over 60 (77%) were more likely to declare their religion. The study highlights the increase in the religiousness of Ukrainians after 2014, but also its geographical diversity. In western Ukraine, 90.7% of those surveyed declared themselves as believers, of which 39.7% were Greek Catholics, 45.6% indicated an Orthodox Church, 4.7% described themselves as 'simply Christian', 3.7% indicated no religion.

In the central part of Ukraine, 70% of the respondents defined themselves as believers, of which 78.7% declared belonging to the Orthodox Church, 0.1% to the Greek Catholic Church, 9.7% attributed to the category 'simply Christians', the lack of belonging to religion was indicated by 9.7% of the respondents. In the southern part of Ukraine, 58.5% declared themselves as believers, of which 61.6% indicated an Orthodox Church, none of the respondents indicated a Greek Catholic Church, 14.5% described themselves as 'simply Christians' and 20.2% indicated no religion. On the other hand, in the east of Ukraine 63.3% of respondents declared themselves as religious persons, of which 72.6% indicated an Orthodox Church belonging, 0.2% - Greek-Catholic, 4.9% described themselves as 'simply Christians', and 15.8% did not indicate any religion [Особливості Релігійного і Церковно-Релігійного Самовизначення Українських Громадян: Тенденції 2010-2018pp, http://razumkov.org.ua/uploads/article/2018_Religiya.pdf, 3-18, accessed on 1.04.2020].

The area of the province belongs to the Koszalin Decanate of the Wroclaw-Gdansk Eparchise of the Greek Catholic Church in Poland. Twelve parishes belong to the Decanate: Koszalin, Białogard, Ińsk, Kołobrzeg, Płoty, Sławno, Stargard, Szczecin, Świdwin, Trzebiatów and Wałcz [<http://www.cerkiew.net.pl/parafie-i-dekanaty/dekanat-koszalinski/>, accessed on 12.02.2020].

5.2. Religiosity and religious practices of immigrants - the case of Greek Catholic Church members in Zachodniopomorskie Voievodship

The immigrants were asked if during their stay in Poland the frequency of religious practices has changed in relation to participation in services in Ukraine. Some of our interviewees indicated that regular participation in masses is a sign of their religiousness. They often understood it as individual prayer, attending mass 'from time to time' and talking to God, asking for help in difficult life situations: „If you ask me if I regularly go to an Orthodox church, I will say no, because I don't think that God is only in an Orthodox church either. Maybe because in Ukraine when I was a child, we also had problems with our faith. Those times, when Ukraine was not free, were times when religion was forbidden. It was at home, in prayer. And that's how I stayed. Although, as Easter was, I went.” (Interview no. 6) „I believe why I shouldn't believe, but in my heart and in my mind. Like everyone else. We're closer to God how bad things are. Then we talk, I mean, I say, I'm sorry, or I ask God if He's the only one in the world who gives so much weight on His back. I don't go here very often. I've been here three times for two years. Twice for Easter, and once for myself.” (Interview no. 18)

Regular attendance at mass was more often taken care of by women. Interviewed immigrants emphasized that contact with the Orthodox Church, religion is important for them because of the tradition and the need for continuity with Ukraine. Moreover, women who were in relationships and had children claimed that in exile they have a duty to take care of religion for the next generation. The respondents indicated that they would be more willing to participate in religious practices if they were mobilized by relatives or friends. The situation of migration causes the breaking of traditional local ties, and the pressure for regular participation in religious practices on the part of the closest family or neighbours also weakens: „I came here to a friend. But after a month he left, and I was left alone. This is different from when all your relatives and friends go to the church. There is this kind of duty, tradition. And there's no one here to mobilize me. If somebody works Monday through Saturday for a dozen or so hours a day, and sometimes on Sundays too, they don't want to leave home.” (Interview no. 23)

The main reason for the unsystematic nature of religious practices was described as the limitations resulting from the specificity of employment, as the majority of the respondents worked in the service sector or provided shift work. For respondents who were in relationships or had families, the lack of regularity in the liturgy was explained by the limited time they could devote to their families during the week. One of the respondents explained this situation: „If I can go to the church, I go. But it's different, because fatigue wins. I have a good employer who understands that our holidays and your holidays are not celebrated at this time. I have time off, but there are only three of us in the plant and we work well. I think you know that if he wouldn't let me celebrate the

holidays, I wouldn't work at such a place either. Respect for the person is also respect for religion. But I say: I'm fine." (Interview no. 20)

Our respondents had not only different employment history in Poland, but also heterogeneous plans for their stay. Therefore, on the basis of the collected interviews, it is difficult to determine whether the stability of employment and the prospect of staying in Szczecin are linked to the frequency of religious practices. Studies on the religiousness of migrants indicate that in the first four years after their arrival, activity in religious groups increases [19]. In the case of interviewed Ukrainian immigrants, such regularity has not been observed. However, among the respondents, there were opinions that attending masses reduced the feeling of loneliness - thus practicing minority religions is something that paradoxically reduces the feeling of alienation.

5.3. Relationship with the Catholic Church in Poland and its members

The situation of immigration also brings with it the likelihood of religious conversion. In Poland, the Roman Catholic Church, like the Greek Catholic Church, is identified with the national community. Immigrants who came to Szczecin and had the Card of the Pole, in the opinion of the respondents more often chose to take part in Roman Catholic masses, although in Ukraine they identified themselves with a Greek Catholic or Orthodox Church: „I see such strange behaviour. My colleague from work in Ukraine was like me, a Greek Catholic, we went to an Orthodox church together. Her grandmother and grandfather from her mother's side were Polish, she was applying for the Polish Charter. Her documents were all there for that. And I understand that, but when we came here to Szczecin, I say to her, we'll go to the church mass on Sunday? One time she refused, the second. I didn't ask her again. She told me that if she's here and has a card, she won't go to the church anymore." (Interview no. 2) „Sometimes it is the parents and tradition that dictate that we go to the church. When you come to emigration, some people look for different changes. Some change God, my sister chose the Baptists because she says they are close." (Interview no. 10)

We asked the respondents if they felt any kind of pressure or reaction from the Polish community in relation to their religion or national origin. Some of the respondents answered that they did not encounter any negative behaviours towards religion, more often than not, the comments concerned the origin (nationality): „Oh, I heard that I'm supposed to go back to the Ukraine, or that I don't know what the Ukrainians did to the Poles. Well, I didn't know. But what do you Poles know about our wrongs, our history? What I can do, I can go and pray that people don't hurt with a word. That's how it is to be in exile." (Interview no. 2)

Some respondents were surprised by the number of churches in Szczecin, as well as by the low attendance of the faithful at masses: „I've heard so much that Poles are religious. But here in Szczecin it is not so visible. There are many churches, but probably not very full. Is it only here or in the whole of Poland?"

(Interview no. 1) „If it doesn't matter whether it's an Orthodox, a Roman Catholic, a Greek Catholic or any other Christian church. When you need to talk to God in a temple, you can go to any church. I think that there are not too many people in a Roman Catholic. Large, beautiful buildings, and not many [believers] inside.” (Interview no. 18)

5.4. Greek-Catholic parish as a social support organisation

The last issue concerned the immigrants' involvement in other social life forms, for example NGOs (founded by Poles or Ukrainians in Szczecin), or support groups. Usually economic immigrants are of the opinion that at the initial stage they had an unclear idea about what to do and where to get the necessary information from. The basic barrier is the deficit of social relations and bonds of a supportive nature. Basic issues such as getting a registration, insurance, or enrolling children in school are a challenge for immigrants. Some of the services offered by the Church and its network aim to help immigrants to gain access to daily basic services and to remove barriers to access them. For those who went to the church for mass, it was important to have direct contact with the Ukrainian language and culture. In the case of Szczecin, the Greek Catholic Church is located next to the headquarters of the branch of the Union of Ukrainians in Poland, and the actions taken for the benefit of the Ukrainian minority and economic immigrants are common. The immigrants spoke about the importance of this functions and location: „Here I have this all, this is an enclave in Polish Szczecin - there is an Orthodox church and next to it a centre of Ukrainian culture.” (Interview no. 23) „There is no big parish hall, but after the service you can go to the Ukrainian center and there is a meeting, a lot of space. For me it's better, because what for God's sake is in an Orthodox church, and so it's more relaxed. And what is important: here I met Polish women who have Ukrainian roots. The history of Ukrainians in Poland surprised me, I did not know much about it.” (Interview no. 14)

5.5. Migrants from Ukraine in the opinion of Greek Catholic Church priests

About 3,500 believers belong to the Deanery of Koszalin Eparchise of Wrocław-Gdańsk Greek Catholic Church in Poland. There are no statistics of people who have come to this region to emigrate. It is estimated that in 2019 there were about 55 thousand people from Ukraine living in the city of Szczecin. An important element of the survey were interviews with pastors of three Greek Catholic parishes and obtaining answers on how the life of the parish and pastoral duties have changed with the wave of economic immigrants. Father Robert Rosa is the parish priest of Szczecin, the parish with which our respondents identified themselves. Father Mariusz Dmyterko from Biały Bór (the parish does not belong to the Koszalin Deanate, only to Słupsk, but is located in the area of Zachodniopomorskie Province) was asked to speak because there is a primary school and a high school in Biały Bór where children

of economic immigrants from Ukraine study. Father Arkadiusz Trochanowski, as Dean of the Deanate, shared with the researchers the reflections from his parish and the Deanate.

According to the priests, the problems faced by economic immigrants are very diverse: „Please remember that some people wait for documents, the period of validity may end, and it turns out that during this time someone close to them dies in Ukraine, someone from their family (...) They often need us individually, because they got sick, they got robbed, they can't cope. The situations are so different that they cannot be classified. But in matters of life and death, you are in the front line.” (Interview with Priest no. 1) „Some of the parents of students still live in Ukraine, some in Poland, sometimes there are very difficult stories behind these children. Therefore, it is very important to involve the school and us priests and to be sensitive on our part, because this migration baggage, the separation that the students carry, requires special sensitivity and attention from us”. (Interview with Priest no. 2) „Each must be approached individually. After 2014, the people who remain with us enter our community, although it is not always easy for them to do so because they enter the existing structure, but they enter the parish life. People came for material help, but after receiving it, they were unlikely to stay in the community, those who came out of religious need did not expect help, most often they managed alone”. (Interview with Priest no. 3)

The priests emphasized that an important and new task in their work is to encourage newcomers to study religion. They emphasized the need for increased work on their religiousness. An important part of the priests' work is their catechetical work and encouraging the faithful through various forms to study the catechism on their own, to work with the gospel every day. We asked priests how they perceive the religiousness of migrants, as well as how new parishioners belong to the Greek Catholic faith: „If they are Greek Catholics, the church is important for them because of the Ukrainian language, but also because of the need to manifest their Ukrainian identity. If these are people who have come for a long time, they are indeed looking for contact. They take part in services, they say that they also have a different experience of the Greek Catholic Church in Poland, it is the same Church as in Ukraine, but it has a different face, systematized, priests are closer, they would like it to be so in Ukraine. We are happy about that.” (Interview with Priest no. 3) „Religiousness in Ukraine is unfortunately occasional, superficial, wakes up to the ordination of food, then there are crowds. I heard from someone that there is no such thing as Sunday masses in the Orthodox churches. This is explained by the fact that you have to visit the temple, not be at mass.” (Interview with Priest no. 2) „Those who regularly go to an Orthodox church in Ukraine, come to the church in Szczecin very quickly, I have also observed this ritualistic approach to the church. It's not prayer, religiousness, but rituals, which boils down to coming on one Christmas day, to coming to consecrate water, and that without attending the liturgy, to sacrifice food, and not to take part in the order of Easter services, or the feast of the Transfiguration of the Lord, where fruits and vegetables are

sacred. What is important is what is consecrated, the religious element, is already a little less important.” (Interview with Priest no. 3)

The parish priests noted that attendance at Mass and inclusion in the parish community is important for immigrants to maintain their national identity. The priests also pointed to the problem of division in the Orthodox Church in Ukraine and the resulting fears of the faithful about whether they can practice not in their church: „Sometimes it is so that they come to our church because someone told them that there is a Ukrainian church here. During the conversation, it turns out that they are faithful to the Orthodox Church of Ukraine and they should go to a church that does not exist in Szczecin, because there are no structures in Poland. Therefore, there is a new challenge for me to explain to them that by using the ministry of a priest of the Greek Catholic Church, they do not lose their membership in the Orthodox Church of Ukraine. They say that Poles pointed out to them as the Polish Autocephalous Orthodox Church, but it turned out that it is not their church. Then they ask about the Ukrainian one and say that they are to come to us.” (Interview with Priest no. 1) „Orthodox people from Ukraine came to us because the liturgy is celebrated in Ukrainian. I also observed that the assignment to an Orthodox church, to a rite in Ukraine is very fluid. Sometimes they didn’t differentiate whether it was an Orthodox church or an autocephalous church, whether it was the Kiev Patriarchate or the Moscow Patriarchate. The faithful of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church are not accepted by the Polish Autocephalous Orthodox Church, if they admit they are expelled from this Church, they have no right to practice in these churches. They are considered to be schismatic and are not given the sacraments of confession, the Eucharist, where in turn we are allowed to intercommunicate, confess and give communion, because they do not have their church here. We come out of one trunk, so we can respect each other, there are different ecclesiastical hierarchies, but we can participate in the services together.” (Interview with Priest no. 3)

6. Conclusions

Identity and culture are the features that distinguish an ethnic Church in the host country from other Churches in the countries of origin. Our study contributes to the discussion on the role of ethnic churches in immigrant integration processes. Our research shows that immigrants see the Greek Catholic Church as an institution responsible for an important part of their integration. Attendance at Mass and inclusion in the parish community is important for immigrants to maintain their national identity. However the situation of migration causes the breaking of traditional local ties, and the pressure for regular participation in religious practices decreases. Our findings show that the Greek Catholic Church in Poland also has a supporting function in the settlement and integration of economic immigrants.

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