



REVIEW

Julie Knight, John Lever and Andrew Thompson. 2017. *Labour, Mobility and Temporary Migration. A Comparative Study of Polish Migration to Wales*. Cardiff: University of Wales Press. 260 pages. ISBN: 978-1-78683-0807

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The accession of Poland to the European Union in 2004 resulted in the unprecedented number of Poles migrating in search of employment to western countries, predominantly to the UK and the Republic of Ireland as these two countries, together with Sweden, did not introduce any transitional restrictions on migration from A8 member states. Migration to the UK in particular attracted huge scholarly attention. Numerous studies from scholars working in both Poland and the UK have been published on a variety of its sociological aspects and economic impact on the two countries involved. As most of these seem to concentrate on England, it is very welcome to see a monograph devoted specifically to Wales, a bilingual country in the UK with Welsh, a minority language, having an official status.

Labour, Mobility and Temporary Migration. A Comparative Study of Polish Migration to Wales is a product of three separate studies carried out in three different locations in South Wales: urban (Cardiff), semi-urban (Merthyr Tydfil) and rural (Llanelli). In spite of different focus of each study, a number of common themes such as the experiences of migrants on the labour market, the development of their human capital and construction of social networks were distinguished in the book.

The book consists of three parts, each further divided into chapters. Part I briefly discusses the three studies discussed in the book. Chapter 1 sets the scene for the book by providing background information on post-2004 migration, including a brief overview of the history of the European Union, the conditions on which A8 migrants could enter the UK's job market and the way their numbers were estimated. The reader is also presented with the aims of the book and an overview of the contents of the following chapters. Chapter 2 discusses main theories on migration, including classification of migrants based on their characteristics and migration patterns, and a number of motivation theories. Thus, the authors discuss the terms 'circular migrant', 'country-hopping', 'chain migration', and Eade's et al (2006) classification of Polish

migrants in London as ‘storks’, ‘hamsters’, ‘searchers’ and ‘stayers’. Then, economic and non-economic motivations for migration are discussed, and the role of existing social networks and ethnic economy in facilitating migration are explained. The chapter is well-written and the theories are presented in an accessible way to a non-specialist in the field or a non-academic reader. It provides a good theoretical background to the analysis of the studies presented later in the book. Finally, Chapter 3 discusses the three locations (Cardiff, Merthyr Tydfil and Llanelli) and the methodology employed in the studies presented in the book. The authors set out by explaining the geographical location of the three study places and briefly mention the post-World War II Polish migrant/refugee communities in South Wales. They remark that they have found few social networks between the two groups of migrants but do not provide even the shortest explanation why this is the case. Then, all three study locations are meticulously described in terms of their local economies, social characteristics and previous experience with migrants. Using the Nomenclature of Territorial Units for Statistics (NUTS) levels indexes, the Authors show that the semi-urban (Merthyr Tydfil) and rural (Llanelli) study locations being one of the most deprived regions in Wales and offering labour-intensive low wage jobs are unlikely/surprising places to attract high numbers of economic migrants. As explained later in the book, Polish migrants were attracted to Merthyr and Llanelli by employment agencies offering jobs in food processing/meat factories. Finally, research methods and sampling in each of the three locations are described and explained. The authors provide general information about the age, gender and general education level of their participants. They also describe their levels of English in terms of ‘high’ (in the Cardiff sample) and ‘low’ (in Merthyr Tydfil and Llanelli). English language skills are mentioned in a number of places in the book as being extremely important to accessing services and moving up on the occupational ladder, hence, I would argue for the need for a more precise description of language abilities. Is ‘high’ level of English a C2, C1 or B2 level within the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEF or CEFR)? Similarly, how low is the ‘low’ level of English? No attention whatsoever is paid to the migrants’ knowledge of or skills in Welsh.

Part II concentrates specifically on Polish migrants to the three locations in Wales, their initial motivations and trajectories. Chapter 4 discusses the motivations behind Poles participating in the three studies to emigrate and the process of decision-making. The motivations are discussed within the ‘culture of migration’ framework. In trying to answer the question why so many Poles came to Britain, the authors look not only at the UK immigration policy around the time of the enlargement of the EU but also analyse the socio-economic situation in Poland prior to and at the time of accession in 2004. In addition, the

role of recruitment agencies in facilitating migration to rural and semi-rural locations in South Wales is discussed. Chapter 5 is devoted to Polish migrants living in Cardiff, the capital of Wales and its biggest city. The main focus here is on ethnic entrepreneurs and co-ethnic workers looked at from a longitudinal perspective. Thus, the reader learns that upon the arrival in Cardiff migrants used their co-ethnic social networks to find accommodation and secure any employment, mostly in the 3D sector, before developing their human capital and finding a job better matching their education and qualifications or setting up their own businesses. Using co-ethnic social networks, however, presupposes an existing group of co-ethnic migrants. Considering that the role of post WWII Polish migrants was insignificant in facilitating the new migration, as the authors claim, it would be interesting to learn what means the first wave of new migrants used to secure accommodation and employment. Chapter 6 focuses on research conducted in Merthyr Tydfil. Situated in the former South Wales Coalfield, Merthyr Tydfil has been one of the most impoverished and deprived areas in the UK since the closure of coal mines in 1980s. Yet, the town attracted quite a number of Polish migrants since 2004, predominantly due to recruitment agencies employing cheap workforce for the local meat and food processing factories. Most of the migrants, it seems, came with little English language skills, which proved to be an impediment not only to finding a better employment but also to integration with the local community. As jobs are scarce in the area, some migrants resorted to opening their own businesses, which in turn led to economic and social transformation of the town, demonstrating the positive aspects of in-migration. The last chapter of this section, Chapter 7, discusses findings from Llanelli, another unexpected hotspot of Central and Eastern Europe migration. The theme of recruitment agencies as facilitators of migration and mobility is further explored here. Similarly to the migrants in Merthyr Tydfil, Poles in Llanelli also experienced irregular working hours and harsh working conditions. Having poor or no English language skills, at least in the beginning, they had limited chances of finding jobs elsewhere. Irregular working hours and working almost exclusively with other speakers of Polish do not aid language learning, thus creating a vicious circle of sorts.

Part III again consists of three chapters. Chapter 8 analyses the reasons for a prolonged stay of migrants which sometimes leads to their non-temporary status. Having reviewed studies on Polish migrants in England, Ireland and other European countries, the authors, turn to their own research data collected in the three locations in South Wales. The results confirm findings of previous studies that the economic aspects have a crucial role in changing migrants' original plan from a short-term migration to a permanent one. However, cultural and social context behind making the decision to stay is of equal importance. As they improve their English, create new social networks and adapt to a new pace

of life, migrants commence the process of integration, which is the topic of Chapter 9. Here, four different aspects of integration are distinguished and discussed: legal, economic, social and cultural. Whereas legal integration was granted to Poles by the membership in the EU, the economic, social and cultural integration depend largely on the migrants' language skills. Lack of or poor knowledge of the local language (English and/or Welsh) by Poles in South Wales proved an impediment to upward occupational mobility and, thus, full economic integration. Although, social integration is based on social networks and acquiring contacts in the local native community, it is, again, knowing the local language that makes it possible to establish and maintain such contacts. Similarly, cultural integration involves sharing one's own culture, understanding the local (host society's) culture and values, and engaging with that community. Hence, the need for skills in the language(s) of the host community. Participants in Knight, Lever and Thompson's study showed different degrees of integration, which depended on their command of English. For this reason, further extensive research into the sociolinguistic aspects of migration to Wales, an officially bilingual country within the UK, is needed in order to better understand linguistic repertoires and language trajectories of migrants. Finally, Chapter 10 discusses implications of the research findings for policy makers. The chapter begins with the analysis of the value of migration to Welsh economy, its implications for education, health and housing in Wales, community cohesion and migrants' rights in the workplace, six recommendations are provided in the areas of language learning, integration, specialist advice and advocacy organisation, professional and vocational education of adult migrants, education of child migrants, and encouraging entrepreneurial potential of migrants.

The findings discussed in the book enhance our understanding of Polish migration to Wales significantly. Notwithstanding, it contains a number of shortcomings, such as the authors' claim on p. 69 that Silesia is situated in western Poland. In fact, it is in the south. Similarly, on p. 194 it is claimed that one is not required to register with a local GP in Poland, which is not the case. In the book, Wales seems to be presented as a largely monolingual country with English as its language. Welsh is mentioned only in passing and only with reference to education of children in schools despite the fact that the official stance of the Welsh Government is that Welsh language learning is important and should be encouraged not only among children and teenagers but also among adults (cf. *Cymraeg 2050. A Million Welsh Speakers*, 2017).

One of the most striking weaknesses of the book is its peculiar confusion of personal names and genders of the participants in the studies, which occasionally also concerns Polish scholars quoted. A number of personal and place names in the book have been misspelt or lack Polish letters/diacritics.

These include the names Lodz (Łódź), Zychlin (Żychlin), Agnieszka (Agnieszka), Gabriella (Gabriela), Katja (Kasia?), Jerz (Jerzy), Mieczysława (Mieczysława), Kamilla (Kamila), Marcely (Marceli), Stanislaw (Stanisław), Tamary (Tamara), Alexsy (Aleksy), Milosz (Miłosz). One person is referred to using two different diminutive forms (hypocoristics) of the name Wincenty, namely Wicus (Wicus, p. 75) and Wicek (p. 76). In many cases the misspellings led to the creation of non-existent names: Morela (p. 85, perhaps Maryla?), Masia (p. 103), Junya (p. 109), Jaceka (p. 112, marked as female, not an existing male name Jacek), Andreka (p. 116), Marbeta (p. 147), Natka (p. 153), Nelek (p. 153).

In most instances, the authors indicate gender of the participant, thus Agnieszka (Agnieszka) is correctly attributed F (female) gender. However, in another sentence on the same page (p. 74), she is referred to as 'he'. For a reader familiar with basic rules of Polish grammar this will be interpreted as a simple typo, as all Polish female names end in 'a'. The case of Marian, F. (p. 77) is more problematic as Marian is a male name in Polish (female in Welsh), and its female form is Marianna. Liwia (p. 158), is a rare female name, spelled and attributed here correctly. Yet, we learn about her experiencing "separation from his wife" (p. 159), while same-gender marriages are sadly still not legal in Poland. Similarly, when quoting prof. Marek Okólski of Warsaw University, the authors not only misspell his surname but also refer to him as 'she' (p. 142). It must be noted that nowhere in the book do the authors inform the reader whether the names of the participants have been changed to ensure anonymity. As this is a standard practice in ethnographic studies one can assume that each participant was given a new name. The choice of extremely rare names, such as Rachela, Mosze, Izaak, Melania, Lubomierz, Anatol, Lucjan, Natan, Justyn, Maurycy, Longin, Longina, of which the first three are biblical ones, is however unexpected. Admittedly, these misspellings may be viewed as a minor problem, albeit one that could have been easily avoided had the book been properly proofread by a speaker of Polish prior to publication.

The book under review discusses important aspects of Polish migration to Wales, an area largely underrepresented in the analyses of post-2004 migration to the UK. By doing that it fills the gap in research. Despite its slight shortcomings, it is a very good introduction to the discussion of various aspects of migration to Wales in the 21st century. It is hoped that the ideas explored in this publication will be studied further in other areas of Wales in the future.

REFERENCES

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