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Practicing Belonging Through Religious Institutions: Ukrainian Migrants in Warsaw

Abstract: The article foregrounds Ukrainian migrants' perception of their social situation as followers of various Christian denominations—Roman Catholicism, Eastern Catholicism, and Eastern Orthodox—who live in Warsaw. I analyze their narratives through theories of belonging and anchoring. Based on interviews with Ukrainian religious activists I analyze the Ukrainian migrants' challenges regarding their religious and national loyalties. The article shows how religious divisions in Ukrainian society entered Poland along with the migrants and how Ukrainian national identity and place in Polish society are negotiated at the intersection of the three Christian denominations' activities, which thus creates a triangle of religious-national-political relations, in which Ukrainian migrants constantly negotiate belonging to the Polish society, the Ukrainian nation, and the religious communities.

Keywords: Poland, migration, religion, Ukraine, anchoring, belonging

Introduction

Research on religious practices in the context of migration and in migrant diasporas has a long tradition. They are concerned with many aspects of migrants' religious life: constructing religious spaces, practicing identity, searching for one's place in the host society, facing changes in religious orthodoxy and heterodoxy in the migration situation, along with the role of religion in maintaining own identity, group ties in migrant communities, and ties with the country of origin (Becci et al. 2017; Leszczyńska et al. 2020; Vasquez and Knott 2014). Below, I will reflect on how Warsaw-based Ukrainian migrants who are followers of various Christian denominations—Roman Catholicism, Greek Catholicism,[1] and Orthodoxy—consider their social situation as Warsaw residents with different national and religious backgrounds. In this regard, I posit that religious practices and contact with church institutions are a way for Ukrainian migrants to fulfill various needs—economic, social, and spiritual—but also a challenge for their religious and national loyalties, as the migrants become increasingly entangled in the networks of social religious relations in Poland and Ukraine. This article will verify this claim by analyzing narratives of the Ukrainian migrants active in their religious life and their social situation through theories of belonging and anchoring.

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[1] This Church is called in Poland "Greek Catholic Church" and I use this name in my article. It is also called the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church or Catholic Church of Byzantine-Ukrainian Rite.

The "spatial regime" (Vasquez and Knott 2014) of Warsaw in the context of religion is dominated by Roman Catholic spaces and places, albeit the city hosts religious and cultural objects and places of many denominations and religions. Some are quite new—such as mosques or Vietnamese pagodas—but others have functioned in Warsaw for centuries, such as Orthodox and Greek Catholic churches. Therefore, the Orthodox or Greek Catholic Ukrainians may rely on the existing religious infrastructure, which affects the process of Ukrainian migrants' negotiated belonging to the space of Warsaw and the host society. While Roman Catholic Ukrainian migrants can also find an extensive network of religious places in Warsaw—however, dominated by Polish culture and language—the Greek and Roman Catholic churches are entangled in various ways in Warsaw, which raises interesting questions on how Ukrainian migrants belong to the Polish society and maintain and transform their Ukrainian national identities.

Economic Ukrainian migrants appeared in Poland already after the start of the political transformation in Poland and the collapse of the Soviet Union. However, this migration significantly intensified after the events of 2014: the Euromaidan and Russia's annexation of Crimea, as well as after the change in Polish law regarding the employment of foreigners and the liberalization of visa regulations for Ukrainian citizens in 2017 (Szaban and Michalak 2021). Moreover, educational migrations are intensifying, as are the family reunification processes, which significantly increase the number of Ukrainian children and adolescents living in Poland (Jawor et al. 2020).

The situation changed radically after the full-scale Russian invasion of Ukraine on February 24, 2022. According to the data of the Polish Border Guard, by early September 2022, over six million refugees from Ukraine crossed the Polish border. Poland has about two million Ukrainian war refugees, although these numbers are constantly changing due to their migration to other countries or returns to Ukraine (see EWL 2022). There are almost 120,000 Ukrainian migrants in Warsaw, out of which about 60% are children. According to the Ministry of Labor, in 2018 1.1 million people from Ukraine came to Poland[2] based on declarations of employment, while according to a study of mobile phones by Selectivv, Poland was inhabited by 1.27 million Ukrainians in 2019 (Selectivv 2019). Thus, the Russian aggression significantly increased the number of Ukrainians who reside in Poland and impacted their demographic characteristics, as mainly women and children flee the war, mostly from eastern and central parts of Ukraine. I conducted the study presented in this article before the Russian invasion. However, I believe that although the situation has changed, it is still extremely important to analyze Ukrainian migrants' ways of belonging to Warsaw society, as this will form the basis for a further comparative study that will trace the changes caused by the wave of refugees in the social life of Warsaw Ukrainians and how they practice their national and religious belonging.

Ukrainians are seen by Polish society primarily through the prism of their country of origin and language, not religious affiliation. Moreover, Ukraine is a rather secularized country, which stems from the Soviet era. However, belonging to a denomination holds an

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[2] The vast majority of Ukrainians living in Poland in 2019 were people of working age from 21 to 50 (75.1%; Selectivv 2019). In 2020, among Ukrainian migrants working in Poland women predominated (53%) and people who declared completed tertiary education (51%), although 56% of them were employed in bottom occupations while only 8% as managers and specialists (Strzelecki et al. 2020: 22–23).

identity dimension and is regionally diversified. According to research by the Razumkov Center in Kyiv, 64.9% of Ukraine's inhabitants consider themselves Orthodox while 9,5%—are Greek Catholics (RISU 2019). However, Greek Catholics dominate in Western Ukraine, from which come most of the Ukrainian migrants who live in large Polish cities, including Warsaw. Polish research on migrant religiosity shows that 10.7% of Ukrainians in Poland go to church in their free time (EWL 2019), while the celebration of religious holidays is "planned in Poland by almost three-fourths of Ukrainian workers" (EWL 2018: 13).

Studies on Ukrainian migrants in Poland from before the Russian invasion of Ukraine show that they are generally satisfied with living and working in Poland, but they simultaneously face institutional problems (long and incomprehensible procedures, lack of legal aid), financial difficulties (very low wages and unequal treatment compared to Polish workers), and socio-psychological issues, such as the feeling of alienation and experience of distance from Poles, which has increased in recent years, mainly due to the perception of migrants as an economic threat (Konieczna-Sałamatin 2016). There even appear discriminatory behaviors (Szaban and Michalak 2021), as according to public opinion polls of 2019, about one-third of respondents in Poland held a positive attitude toward Ukrainians (31%) while 41% expressed dislike toward them (CBOS 2019). However, this changed in the following years so that, in the poll of 2022, 41% of respondents expressed a positive attitude and only 25%—antipathy (CBOS 2022).[3]

Belonging and Anchoring in Migrants' Experiences

In recent years, the concept of belonging has become the key notion used to describe the processes of inclusion and exclusion from social and cultural spaces (Grzymała-Kazłowska and Phillimore 2018; Eckersley 2017). Some argue the shift toward research on "belonging" results from the crisis related to the concept of "identity," which too often entails the essentialization of group belonging and the perception of social groups as stable structures with which an individual can identify (Pfaff-Czarnecka 2011). The turn to research on "belonging" emphasized the multiplicity and variability of human belonging by including in its scope not only the group aspect but also other contexts in which people function. According to Pfaff-Czarnecka, the main advantage of this perspective is that belonging highlights "the multiplicity of parameters forging commonality, mutuality, and attachments" (2011: 4).

Generally, the notion of "belonging" offers three main dimensions, which involve belonging to groups or communities, to time and change, and a place (Eckersley 2022: 2). Some perceive belonging as processual relations between social actors and contexts to which they attempt to adhere (Probyn 1996; Skrbis et al. 2007) and as as a continual unstable process of interrelations between two different processes of being and becoming (Fortier 2000; Baak 2016). This perspective perceives belonging through the prism of social interactions "as an ongoing project achieved through everyday practices"

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[3] The poll was made before the Russian invasion of Ukraine in February 2022.

(Garbutt 2009: 84). For Anthias (2020: 24), belonging means having access to, part in, and feeling of security and results from the boundaries and hierarchies among people. People belong together when they share values, relations, and practices (Anthias 2002: 21).

Although some theories of belonging concern the political, which employs narratives about belonging for political mobilization (Yuval-Davis 2006), others relate to the sphere of individual feelings, in which emotions play the most important role (Antonsich 2010; Guibernau 2013). As Hendriks puts this,

[*b*]*elonging* denotes a psychological sense of community, boundaries to distinguish membership, and commitment and *emotional bonding*, though arguably a subset of belonging, refers in particular to affect-laden relationships characterized by a subjective emotional connection, integration, and fulfillment of needs, usually among familiar social arrangements, which are marked by mutual respect (Hendriks 2020: 86).

Although researchers who use the term "belonging" emphasize its psychological aspect and multidimensionality, another concept emerged about the life of migrants: anchoring (Grzymała-Kazłowska 2020): "The theory of anchoring focuses on the processes whereby individuals establish major footholds in life, which allows for the identification of sources and mechanisms of recovering stability and security" (Grzymała-Kazłowska 2020: 30). The sense of stability and security is crucial to the migrants' experience and how they structure their lives in host countries. Like in theories foregrounding belonging, the theory of anchoring emphasizes the importance of psychological mechanisms. However, the multidimensionality and flexibility of anchoring also "underlines human agency in seeking for life footholds to recover the feeling of safety and stability while taking into account the existing structures of opportunities and constraints impacting this activity" (Grzymała-Kazłowska 2020: 21). In her research, Grzymała-Kazłowska (2020: 70) draws attention to the many anchors of Ukrainians migrants in Poland and foregrounds four of them as the most important ones: work (current and future opportunities), Polish language and culture, family and ethnic identity, Ukrainian language and culture. Religion and spirituality are also mentioned but not as important. Nevertheless, for people attending religious festivals and rituals of Orthodox or Greek Catholic denominations, these two are significant because of the feeling of belonging to their homeland, family, and the past (Grzymała-Kazłowska 2020: 67).

Research on belonging and anchoring among religious Ukrainians supplements the research conducted so far on this group of migrants in Poland. According to Hendriks (2020: 87), in the study of "religious belonging," we deal with "all sorts of engagement with religious traditions"—not with a strong bond and identification—which is especially important in the case of practicing religion in the changing contexts of similarity and difference. After all, Ukrainians are Christians and Slavs—like the Poles—but they have different languages, cultures, and denominations, which define their otherness.

Although activists involved in the life of church institutions and priests constitute a definite minority in this community, the study of their sense of belonging to places, communities, and modern times defined by mobility and transnationality—but also by insecurity (especially war)—will contribute to the reflection on the multidimensionality of the anchoring processes.

Methodology of the Research

The study was divided into two stages. In the first stage, four Facebook groups were selected, out of 10 that were dedicated to posting information for Ukrainian migrants, especially in Warsaw, which were the most active and posted information on the religious activities of Ukrainians in Warsaw.[4] Our research covered entries from June to December 2019, which concerned both everyday problems and requests for advice or help (as well as answers to these requests), along with entries about specific religious practices, especially various kinds of holidays. In every case, the information on religious practices constituted a minority of all information, but these nevertheless allowed the study to find the people active in the sphere of religion and contact them for interviews. This article will only consider the interviews and not Facebook posts from the above groups. The groups were used mainly to identify the people who could be important sources of information and help regarding the religious aspect of migrants' life in Warsaw.

Based on posts from the Facebook groups, an interview scenario was created, and the interviewees were selected. The basic criterion for selecting the interviewees was their activity in religious institutions that gathered Ukrainians, which frequently happened through social media. The interviewees were people who actively participated in a group as organizers of various types of events or as people who help others, or as those presented by other Ukrainians as activists in the religious sphere, including the clergy, or people somehow connected to the religious sphere, even if they were not religious. In the case of Ukrainian migrants, 10 interviews were conducted: six in Polish and four in Ukrainian. The interlocutors decided about the conversation language themselves. Four interviewees were women—only one of them was interviewed in Ukrainian—and six were men. Most of the interviewees were middle-aged (over 50 years old) and only two women were younger.[5] Two more interviews were arranged besides the mentioned 10, but these were canceled due to the serious illnesses of both interviewees. All interviews were conducted by the same person, who is also a Ukrainian living in Poland and who introduced herself and was perceived as a Ukrainian; this sometimes resulted in questions about her place of origin or participation in the life of Ukrainian migrants in Warsaw. She was perceived as having similar experiences to the interviewees (e.g. dealings with the Polish bureaucracy) and individual references to these assumptions appeared sometimes in interviews, but most of the interviewees talked in detail about the differences between their lives in Ukraine and Poland and about the problems they encounter in Warsaw.

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[4] Українці в Польщі Ukraińcy w Polsce https://www.facebook.com/ukraincywpolsce/; „Українці у Варша-ві Ukraińcy w Warszawie" https://www.facebook.com/groups/1562419947408902/?ref=direct; Варшава оголо-шення (житло, робота, послуги) https://www.facebook.com/groups/21783487 95781943/; Українці в Варшаві https://www.facebook.com/groups/1021755154535261/about/. All these groups were public: "Українці в Поль-щі Ukraińcy w Polsce" had 29,945 members in the studied period; "Українці у Варшаві Ukraińcy w Warsza-wie" had 10,723 members; "Варшава оголошення (житло, робота, послуги)" had 25,440 members; "Українці в Варшаві" had 5906 members.

[5] Quotations from the interview are marked with the following numbers: 1—a middle-aged woman, interview in Ukrainian; 2—a young woman, interview in Polish, 3—a young woman, interview in Polish; 4—a middle-aged man, interview in Polish; 5—a middle-aged man, interview in Polish; 6—a middle-aged woman, interview in Polish; 7—a middle-aged man, interview in Polish; 8—a middle-aged man, interview in Ukrainian; 9—a middle-aged man, interview in Ukrainian; 10—a middle-aged man, interview in Ukrainian.

The interview scenario was divided into three parts. The first concerned the Ukrainian migrants' life in Warsaw: beginning with how they arrived in Warsaw through their current situation to the perception of Warsaw as their place of life in social, cultural, and spatial dimensions. The second part concerned religious life and the functioning of religious institutions, meaning both churches and parishes, along with religious communities and initiatives in which the interviewees participated. The third part concerned relations with the majority community: both on the institutional level (municipal institutions, church organizations) and a daily social basis. All interviewees agreed to record the interviews. As the interviews happened during the COVID-19 pandemic, they were conducted remotely via Internet platforms, then transcribed and analyzed.

The analysis were conducted in two ways. First, each interviewee was characterized based on what they said about themselves in the interview. This description included life situation (sex, age, professional and family issues), place of origin in Ukraine, role in the religious community, the type of this community, and the type of their social activities. These characteristics were later used to better understand and interpret the statements regarding specific themes. Second, the most often discussed topics were distinguished, such as the perception of certain places in Warsaw as "Ukrainian" ones, the religious life of Ukrainians both in Church institutions and the community of believers, and the issue of the relationship between religious practices and the Ukrainian language. The latter topic never appeared directly in the interview script, but it emerged as extremely important for all interviewees. I conducted a qualitative text analysis of the interviews, which allowed me to define the main threads of the interlocutors' narratives and opinions, along with grasping how they think about their own and their communities' religious lives.

Ukrainians in the City Space of Warsaw

Warsaw is one of the leading Polish cities regarding the number of Ukrainian immigrants, also because of the large number of Ukrainian employees in Warsaw, so the city residents meet Ukrainians constantly during everyday activities—such as shopping or commuting—and almost every school hosts pupils with a Ukrainian background. However, Ukrainian migrants do not create spatial enclaves. Research on the participation of young Ukrainians living in Warsaw shows the image of the city as a modern, dynamic, and multicultural city. At the same time, Warsaw is a city where Ukrainians can organize their places, the most important and most often mentioned one being the Ukrainian House. Researchers indicate that participation in the Polish culture is primarily cognitive (and it is participation in high culture, such as visiting museums), while participation in the Ukrainian culture is affective and mainly concerns popular culture, namely concerts, cabarets, and film screenings (Jawor et al. 2020: 122).

The interviewees indicated several places that could be considered "Ukrainian places in Warsaw." The most frequently mentioned one was the Greek Catholic church in the vicinity of the Old Town, but also all the places related to the everyday life of each migrant, such as dealing with bureaucratic matters or traveling between Poland and Ukraine. However, for one of the women who has lived in Warsaw for several years, the most important place was the place that most closely resembled the historic center of Lviv:

I am from Tarnopol, but I love Lviv very much … these houses, the atmosphere that prevails there, especially in summer, I remembered what I really love, and my thoughts somehow always feel very good there when I go, even when I'm walking with friends or with some acquaintances who come there, I say, "Oh, this is a small piece of Lviv" (Int. 1).

However, such an opinion appeared only once, and other interlocutors mentioned mostly the places where the life of migrants moving between countries occurs: offices, workplaces, bus, and train stations. One of the interviewees said:

A Ukrainian place is the Warszawa Zachodnia railroad station. There, you hear no Polish language at all. I do not know how those Poles who work there manage without the Ukrainian language (Int. 2).

Other mentioned meeting places included shopping malls, useful spaces for people who live in difficult conditions and have little income because the low-paid migrants can use the local free Internet connection and find a place to meet with friends, which is impossible in the small rooms they rent.

All interviews indicated connections between the perception of urban space and the migrants' socioeconomic status. The characteristic features of this situation force more frequent stays in certain places; the features include frequent travels, the need to legalize one's stay, and the necessity to maintain contact with other Ukrainians for both psychological and socioeconomic reasons, namely to find a job or accommodation. The Internet sphere appeared as an equally frequently visited "space," such as the many Facebook groups in which Ukrainians may find advice and help from other migrants, not to mention obtain both in their mother tongue.

The interlocutors said that Ukrainians generally live well in Warsaw, as one of the younger women said: "We are better off here than in our country. And that's the truth" (Int. 2). Another middle-aged woman indicated that the way of life in Poland and the functioning of the state are different than in Ukraine, which has a great impact on the Ukrainians who live in Warsaw:

We are changed here by the environment, the system, and our earnings. Such cleanliness, transparency, the possibility of getting a salary, paying for an apartment, buying food—everything you want. … What's missing in Ukraine? You go to work, and you have nothing. And this injustice at every step. Everything is fair here (Int. 1).

The feeling of stability and anchoring connected with the functioning of public institutions and values generally associated with democracy appears in other Ukrainian migrants in Poland (see Brzozowska 2018). Moreover, one of the clergymen stated that Warsaw had the opinion of a tolerant city, as there is no deeply rooted community with a common identity there, as people from different places in Poland live in Warsaw: "a mixture from all over Poland …. That is why in Warsaw there is such great tolerance" (Int. 4). However, another priest with much experience from visiting different countries, stated that tolerance toward migration is a trait that is acquired along with one's own migration experiences:

Poles who have lived only in Poland are much more closed. And as soon as they were somewhere abroad, and have left the country, they also felt like migrants, then they perceive it completely differently and react completely differently. This is also an important point. I think the situation is similar in Ukraine: whoever went

abroad looks at migrants differently than people that never left home. That is why I think there is a moment when we simply learn how to find ourselves in this reality, and Poles also learn to accept this reality somehow (Int. 10).

In general, the interviewees believed that Ukrainians face no hostility or aversion, only one person mentioned that he sometimes heard comments about Polish-Ukrainian conflicts in the past.

Notably, there is one more element in the sense of belonging, which appeared in many interviews but was most fully expressed in a statement by one of the Ukrainian religious activists: "Why is Warsaw good for me? Because I am very much embedded in the group of Ukrainians" (Int. 1). The emergence of a group of Ukrainians living together close to the Church—but also close to other institutions, such as the Ukrainian House—who support each other and work together makes a new place appear more homely. Belonging to a group also creates a sense of belonging to the space and belonging to the city. We may interpret such places as anchors both in spatial and social dimensions. Finding such a community anchor increases the feeling of stability and security.

Ukrainian Migrants' Religious Life

All interviewees agreed that many Ukrainians in Warsaw are not very religious and rarely or never participate in religious practices. However, for other Ukrainian migrants, religion becomes a way of combining various certain needs: spiritual, psychological, and identity. Together, these needs form the mosaic of belonging in which migrants lead their lives, which reveals three aspects of negotiating social belonging: searching for a place in the social reality of Poland (esp. Warsaw), practicing belonging to the Ukrainian nation, and practicing belonging to one of the religious denominations present in Ukraine.

The religious community of Greek Catholic Ukrainians has its place in Warsaw, which for years has been the Greek Catholic Church on Miodowa Street in the Old Town. However, the increasing number of Ukrainian migrants created the need to create new parishes, so four such places were gradually organized. They were established at Roman Catholic parishes as local parish priests lent temples and other infrastructure (like prayer and meeting rooms) to Greek Catholic Ukrainians and their priests. Moreover, the Roman Catholic Church created a "language island" in itself: it organizes masses and meetings in the Ukrainian language in one of the churches in the Old Town. However, some Ukrainians participate in the Roman Catholic liturgy in Polish, because one place with masses in Ukrainian cannot meet the needs of everyone.

The above reveals the creation of a belonging relationship on two levels. First, it means building belonging to a place through activities that exceed religious practice and respond to a wide range of migrants' needs. Second, the situation is a bundle of relations regarding belonging to the Catholic religion in two rites and the interrelationships between the Roman and Greek rites, each immersed in a separate linguistic reality with a strong identity and national aspect: the Roman Catholic Church is primarily a Polish church with the Polish

language,[6] while the Greek Catholic Church—is a Ukrainian one with the Ukrainian language.[7]

Due to the extensive activity of the Greek Catholic Church in Warsaw, its parishes are perceived as "Ukrainian places." When speaking about the most important places for Ukrainians in Warsaw, one of the church activists said: "Our parishes are the most important places. They are cultural centers where many people gather. We connect during all holidays and various events" (Int. 1). This person mentioned other places, such as the Embassy of Ukraine, the Ukrainian House, or Ukrainian schools, but from her personal experience, it appeared that the Church became almost a "natural" place where Ukrainian migrants came to meet:

In Warsaw, when I was alone, the church was the first place where I went. I mean, someone helped me find a job and a flat. … we are probably not looking for God there. We are looking for support. We are looking for work and some financing. … After all, we need the basics: first, we seek to not be hungry, have a place to stay, and then everything else will happen. And then there's the Church. Because I see it many times, I can see with my own eyes that if someone wants something, we do elementary things. And they do it in the church regularly: feed people and help them with moral and psychological support (Int. 1).

Other interviewees shared the same understanding of the relationship between their belonging to the Ukrainian community (also understood as a language community) and belonging to a religious community. One of the middle-aged women put it in the following manner: "it is related to the need to be in contact with the community. And that's a bit hard to separate. … the Church becomes just such a place where—besides the religious element—there is a community. You meet there, you are looking for a job, you are looking for a place to live, you are looking for friends" (Int. 6). Church meetings are primarily of a social dimension, regardless of the religious motivation. Even if the temple is important, it is equally important to finding a milieu of people speaking the same language and with a similar experience. This is not only the opinion of the laity associated with the Church but also of one of the priests; one who considered his care for the community of Ukrainian migrants to be one of his most important tasks, which he embedded not only in a sociopsychological but also spiritual dimensions:

more and more children sign up for catechesis. When the children are in catechesis, we can talk to the parents, when they are waiting for their children. We have a separate room in the parish house. … an interesting thing came up as soon as everyone started gathering: they all live close to each other and nobody knows anyone. This means that they weren't friends. And now we have a family-like community. I can't find a better name for it, because everyone knows each other, they know their problems, if there are any difficulties, they call each other and talk. … a very family-like atmosphere. And the children know each other, they play and meet, although they did not know each other before. I am glad that the Church unites people so much. I mean, I believe this is our destiny (Int. 10).

The Greek Catholic Church on Miodowa Street and other Greek Catholic parishes offer various types of assistance, not only pastoral but also legal and material assistance, meetings, and psychological consultations. They also go beyond the territory of Warsaw

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[6] Although the Archdiocese of Warsaw also offers liturgy in other languages: https://archwwa.pl/ (Accessed 30.10.2021).

[7] Although in the church on Miodowa Street, there is also a liturgy in Belarusian. However, Ukrainian is dominant.

and Poland with their activities, when they become a place of action for the benefit of soldiers who fight in the Donbas region and their families, but also a place to promote knowledge in the Polish society about what happens in Ukraine. One such initiative is the Christian Rescue Service, established in 2014, in which representatives of different faiths work together. One of the interlocutors, an active church activist, was strongly involved in this initiative and emphasized many times that it played an important role in making Poles (in this case, the inhabitants of Warsaw) aware that there is still a war happening in Ukraine so the fighters and their families—especially children—need support.[8] Such activities make the religiously active migrants agents of change not only in their local Polish communities but also in local social environments in Ukraine (cf. Grabowska et al. 2017; Grabowska 2018).

The Roman Catholic Church in Poland has an extensive structure thanks to its material and human resources, so it can organize pastoral ministry for migrants as well. Some people from Ukraine are Roman Catholic or have accepted such religion after marrying a Polish citizen. For such people, the Dominican Order organizes masses in Ukrainian once a month in the Old Town of Warsaw, which can sometimes attract about one hundred people. One interviewed priest noted that the Roman Catholic Church was becoming a choice for those who abandoned their faith (or at least the institutional Church) and seek to return after a time:

I think that some people who were once attached to the Church at home have lost that contact with the Church, at least with the Churches of the eastern denominations, meaning both the Greek Catholic and the Orthodox Churches. And if they lose this contact, they intentionally go to a Latin-oriented community, to the Roman Catholic Church (Int. 9).

The priest did not give reasons for this but other conversations allowed me to conclude that it is most often influenced by the Polish environment, namely if one has close Polish friends or gets married to a Pole. In this case, anchoring and belonging are based on the fulfillment of spiritual needs, not those related to national identity.

In reaction to the influx of Ukrainians, the Roman Catholic Church opened its churches to newly established Greek Catholic parishes for migrants; in the last few years, three such new parishes appeared in Warsaw. After finding a place in a parish hosting relatively many Ukrainian migrants—people seek to arrange this place (usually a room in a parish house or a chapel) to make it sacred. As one of the priests recalled:

We agreed that we would come here to a Roman Catholic priest for a talk, and he welcomed us so willingly and immediately showed us this place, the chapel …. In the beginning, there was almost nothing here. We just placed a table, there was such a small table and an icon. … In the beginning, there were a few people involved in this work. And then the first icons appeared. And then we tried step by step to make it look like a temple (Int. 10).

The interviewee presented the place as one of the most important anchors for Ukrainians, albeit one religious activist—while appreciating such places—was not convinced that

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[8] The study was conducted even before the Russian invasion of Ukraine on February 24, 2022. Currently, awareness about the situation in Ukraine and the threat that Russia poses are radically different in Polish society. However, at the time of the study, many interviewees emphasized their role as people informing Poles that there is an ongoing war in Ukraine since 2014 and considered it an important element of their activities for the benefit of the Ukrainian community.

the temples are permanent places for Ukrainian gatherings. She believed that Ukrainians were guests in these parishes, and it was unknown whether they felt truly rooted in them, because as she said, "we are here on "bird rights" (int. 1), by which she meant: temporarily. The only truly rooted and stable place for her was the old Greek Catholic church on Miodowa Street, and she was likely to believe that only building new, independent churches would give a sense of stability and religious security to Ukrainians in Warsaw.

Some interviewees reflected on the role of religion in Polish society. According to them, religious people in Poland are quite common, which is important for religious Ukrainian migrants. Only one of the clergymen had a separate opinion, believing that many people in Warsaw have a negative attitude toward the Church, which was a surprise for religious people from Ukraine because many Ukrainians were to perceive Poland as a very religious society. The problem was also that most Polish citizens belong (at least formally) to the Roman Catholic Church and have little knowledge of other Christian denominations. It was a surprise to one of the Greek Catholic clergymen:

It surprised me because we are part of the Catholic Church. And Ukraine is a close neighbor. So ignorance about the Greek Catholic Church appeared to me as a bit strange. Moreover, the Greek Catholic Church is also present in Poland. As it turns out, its presence was a revelation for them. They knew about the Orthodox Church, about the Protestants, yet almost nothing about the Greek Catholics. It was difficult for them to understand what is happening in the Catholic Church with the Greek rite and the priests being married; they asked: How could this be? This means that it somehow did not suit them. However, now that reality has been accepted and we are very well received (Int. 10).

Similar motives appeared in other statements: the interviewees talked about a very superficial knowledge of Ukrainian culture among Poles—which sometimes was boiled down to the statement that Ukrainians speak a different language and use a different alphabet—and a gradual increase in the awareness of difference, mainly in the religious dimension. The interviews were conducted before the Russian invasion in February 2022, after which it was not just the number of Ukrainians in Poland that significantly increased. What also increased was the amount of information on what Ukraine looks like today and the challenges it faces, as well as how its culture looks today, also thanks to various cultural initiatives. It is difficult to tell now how all this will influence attitudes toward Ukrainian cultural otherness—including the religious ones—in the following months and years but, undoubtedly, even before the Russian invasion in 2022, Warsaw residents could notice the influx of Ukrainian migrants and "Ukrainian places" emerging in the city, including religious ones.

Ukrainian Language and Church Belonging

The relationship between language and religious denomination in Ukraine is complicated and regionally diversified, which precludes a precise determination of which language is dominant as the language of religious practice, although the current situation related to the Russian invasion will probably affect how Ukrainian inhabitants perceive the Russian language. The available sociolinguistic research shows that there are regions in Ukraine where the Ukrainian language is the language of praying for 52.8% of people, Russian

for 31%, both languages for 10.3%, and Polish for just 0.4%. Among the Ukrainians who live in Poland, these shares are very similar: 48.1% pray in Ukrainian, 33.4% in Russian, 4.2% in both languages, and 2.6% in Polish, which probably captures Roman Catholics (Levchuk 2020: 186). In studies of the emotional relationship to individual languages among trilingual people who speak Ukrainian, Russian, and Polish, studies notice a positive attitude to the Ukrainian language defined as the ancestral language, and toward Polish as a foreign language worth learning. The attitude to the Russian language is rather utilitarian: one needs to know Russian to communicate with others, but the respondents did not declare they are willing to use it, as was the case with Ukrainian and Polish. Some respondents showed that this attitude to the Russian language was influenced by the Russian invasion, which made them perceive the language as that of an occupier (Levchuk 2020: 146–150).

The Ukrainian language plays a fundamental role in the practices of belonging to both Greek and Roman Catholic Churches. The interlocutors emphasized that the opportunity to participate in a religious community praying in Ukrainian was the most important to them, and sometimes they were unable to fulfill their religious duties in Polish, even if they knew it a bit. As one of the interviewees recalled:

On Freta Street in the church of Saint Hyacinth, there is a mass in Ukrainian once a month. Then there is confession. And after the Holy Mass, we meet with everyone who wants it, who can, to have tea, and cookies. … It was difficult for me [to participate in masses] in Polish, and I just cried often because I didn't fully understand anything. And now I have started to experience these Holy Masses so spiritually (Int. 2).

Other interviewees also spoke about masses in the Ukrainian language as being very important to them. According to one of the clergymen who celebrates service in Ukrainian, this language is very important for intimate religious practices. Although, religious Ukrainians generally find their place in Polish parishes, which is where they should stay, said the priest:

If you consider the number of Ukrainians who are in and around Warsaw at the moment, and the eighty people who come here; well, this is a drop in the ocean, it is very little … we also assumed that many people who come to us, Roman Catholics, are involved in various groups, communities in Polish operating in various parishes or churches, in university chaplaincy, so we did not create here such a copy of what is happening in parishes in Poland but prepared something in the Ukrainian language. It was just that one mass, the possibility of holy confession, a meeting from time to time. So as not to tear these people away from those places where they pray in Polish (Int. 5).

In other words, from the priest's perspective, the desired model of Ukrainian religious belonging to the Catholic Church consisted in including them in the structures of the Polish Roman Catholic Church, but also providing them with the necessary minimum contact with religion through the Ukrainian language. In this case, belonging to a religious community and religious practices were the most important issue, and the Ukrainian language became a tool for these practices.

The religious diversity was also reflected in the political diversity of contemporary Ukraine, which is linked to the narratives of Ukrainian national identity. Most of the country's inhabitants are people who feel connected with the Orthodox Church, mainly through family traditions. Two Orthodox Churches are operating in Ukraine now: the Orthodox Church of Ukraine,[9] which is autocephalous, and the Ukrainian Orthodox

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[9] The Orthodox Church of Ukraine was established in 2018 after the unification council of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church: the Kyiv Patriarchate, the Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church, and part of the Ukrainian

Church of the Moscow Patriarchate, which is an autonomous part of the Russian Orthodox Church. The first one forms the biggest religious community in Ukraine and is considered "Ukrainian," whereas the second one is perceived as strictly connected to Russia. However, especially in Western Ukraine, it is the Greek Catholic Church that is considered to be the "national Ukrainian Church." Most of its followers in Ukraine and Poland are people of Ukrainian identity. The distinction between Orthodox and Greek Catholic Ukrainians assumes a special dimension during the stay of Ukrainian migrants in Poland. Orthodox Ukrainians may practice their religion in six churches in Warsaw. However, the Polish Orthodox Church is linked to the Russian Orthodox Church and opposes the creation of an autocephalous Ukrainian Orthodox Church. As one interviewee stated: "The Orthodox Church in Poland uses Polish or Russian language" (Int. 9). For some religious Ukrainians, this is a problem:

There is no room for those Ukrainians who are not Catholics because they have a problem, a moral dissonance because the Polish Orthodox Church says that it does not support or recognize the Ukrainian Orthodox Church. On the one hand, this is my religion, and on the other hand, I do not identify with the authorities of the Polish Orthodox Church, with their decisions or opinions. This is a problem, and I know people for whom this is a problem (Int. 6).

Thus, the religious and national functions of the Orthodox Church are separated. To participate in services and receive sacraments, Orthodox Ukrainians attend the Orthodox Church. However, they simultaneously go to the Greek Catholic Church to take part in the life of the Ukrainian community and meet, even pray in Ukrainian: "I know people who go both there and there, although they are Orthodox because, on the one hand, they do not like the Polish Orthodox Church ideologically, but they are Orthodox, so they go because they can take the sacraments there, and then they go to the Greek Catholic Church because they find the Ukrainian language there" (Int. 6). Many such opinions can also be found on the Facebook groups concerning religious practices of Ukrainians in Poland. Commentators advise against going to the Polish Orthodox Church during religious holidays and claim that the real church for Ukrainians is the Greek Catholic one. From the viewpoint of Christian theology, Greek Catholics can participate in Roman Catholic masses and receive the sacraments during them, but this is not possible between followers of Orthodoxy and Greek Catholicism. Therefore, Orthodox Ukrainians, who deeply care for their national identity and the independence of their country (understood primarily as independence from Russia), lead a "double life:" the religious one in the Orthodox Church and the national one in the Greek Catholic Church. Notably, the Ukrainian Orthodox Church cannot operate on the territory of Poland because of the opposition of the Polish Orthodox Church.

Churches of various Christian denominations can become Ukrainian migrants' anchors in their life in Warsaw. However, the feeling of being anchored in these places has two dimensions that do not always agree with each other: the religious and the linguistic-national. As Grzymała-Kazłowska (2020) highlights, what comes to the fore here is migrants' human agency, which allows them to maneuver between existing structures of constraints and opportunities to fulfill their needs, including the sense of spiritual safety and national community belonging.

Orthodox Church of the Moscow Patriarchate. The Orthodox Church of Ukraine is recognized by the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople, the Patriarchate of Alexandria, the Church of Greece, and the Church of Cyprus but it is not recognized by other Orthodox Churches, among them the Polish Orthodox Church.

Conclusion

Ukrainians were the largest migrant group in Warsaw before the Russian invasion of Ukraine in February 2022; afterward, the group is almost ten times bigger. Hence, Ukrainian migrants may form larger groups—both in virtual and "traditional" spaces—where they can meet and exchange experiences, but also help each other. Therefore, how do Warsaw-based Ukrainian migrants who are followers of various Christian denominations consider their social situation? I can say that both physical and virtual places—and the groups that exist there—can give them a feeling of being anchored by building a sense of stability in everyday life as well as in the dimensions of religious and national identities.

Moreover, I posited that religious practices are not only a way for Ukrainian migrants to meet various needs but also a challenge for their religious and national loyalties. The above analysis of interviews with Warsaw-based Ukrainians showed that religious divisions in Ukrainian society move to Poland with the migrating people. Moreover, Ukrainian national identity and place in Polish society are negotiated at the intersection of the activities of three religious institutions: the Roman Catholic Church operating in Polish, the Greek Catholic Church cooperating with it—for which Ukrainian-ness is the identity basis—and the Polish Orthodox Church, whose religious ties are with Russia and social ties with Poland (for research of Orthodox complex identities in a situation of migration see Hämmerli and Mayer 2014). This creates a triangle of religious-national-political relations in which Ukrainian migrants constantly negotiate their belonging to the Polish society, the Ukrainian nation, and the religious communities.

Both the concepts of belonging and anchoring allow us to go beyond the essentialist understanding of human identities and the one-dimensional understanding of creating one's place in the world, which is present in the concepts of adaptation or integration (see Grzymała-Kazłowska 2020). These concepts focus on the understanding of a personal relationship with various elements of reality: from space through relationships with other people to tradition and spirituality. In my view, we should consider adding to the developing research on anchoring a category taken from studies on belonging: the category of time. In all the interviews appeared the topic of the specific time in which Ukrainians live today, time determined by the war in their country. This time conveys not just the sociopolitical situation that always affects human life but also the belonging to a certain temporal sequence determined by the past, the present, and the future. Both personal memories and participation in the narratives of collective memory create a sense of belonging to a community and place, but they also set a framework for the interpretation of the current situation. In turn, the ideas about one's future—or the future of one's closest family members—and the future of one's group may constitute an intangible anchor for migrants. One of the religious activists defined all her activity and commitments in terms of the current challenges facing Ukraine, which formed her credo:

For seven years we have been fighting the enemy, we have given our lives to it, and we cannot boast about it, because it is very difficult to be proud of tears. Yet, it is precious. Despite everything, we are going in the right direction, and thanks to these heroes we can be proud of our country. Moreover, you should always cherish your traditions, your customs, and not run away from your roots. To celebrate Easter, and Christmas when Ukraine is celebrating there (Int. 1).

She had no intention to leave Poland and visited Ukraine regularly, cherishing her tradition and paying special attention to the Ukrainian language, which she emphasized several times during the interview. She felt Ukrainian. At the same time, her sense of being anchored in Warsaw was closely related to her activity for the sake of Ukraine, which she also treated as a specific requirement of the time in which she was living. After all, for religious people, time also has a spiritual dimension.

For religious Ukrainians, church institutions, places, and communities are the structural, spatial, and social anchors thanks to which they make Warsaw their new home and find stability. This stabilization has several dimensions related to the sense of belonging to time, place, and community. In turn, these communities are defined by two main categories: religion and nation. The current situation means that the combination of belonging to these two categories can be complicated on the spiritual and identity levels. At the same time, the situation reveals the importance of religious communities for the lives of migrants and raises questions about how their lives will develop in the dynamically changing sociopolitical reality.

Funding

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