



The Responses of Religious Communities to Migration and the Transformation of a Quasi-Monopolistic Religious Market¹

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Abstract

This article investigates links between religion and migration processes through a study of religious communities' approaches towards migrants. Drawing from the religious economy perspective, the paper explores the under-researched topic of the role of migration in the dynamics of a religious field in the context of Central and Eastern Europe. The qualitative research performed in 2020 in Krakow – one of the key destinations for migrants in Poland – confirms the claims of religious economy that monopolists and quasi-monopolists are usually more reluctant to adapt to social changes. On the other hand, less-privileged but entrepreneurial religious communities are more aware of migrants' situation, and respond to their needs in the following ways: 1) providing cosmopolitan “temporary homes”; 2) bridging cultures; 3) setting up ethno-cultural service hubs. We argue that these kinds of engagements have significant implications for the dynamics inside the religious market.

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Keywords: sociology of religion, religious market, migration, religious diversity, Poland
Słowa kluczowe: socjologia religii, rynek religijny, migracje, różnorodność religijna, Polska

In 2015, a non-profit Hindu association bought a piece of land on the outskirts of Krakow and began to build a temple and a yoga centre called “Radha Govind Bhakti Yog Mandir.” The shrine’s foundation-stone-laying ceremony was attended by the First Secretary of the Embassy of India in Poland, representatives of local authorities and the Indian community as well as guests from India, the United States and the United Kingdom. Its inauguration, postponed due to the COVID-19 restrictions, finally took place in 2022.² Another religious institution – the Muslim League – has opened its new mosque in Krakow on Groszkowa street, as the existing prayer room is no longer able to accommodate the growing community. Furthermore, the Orthodox church, which has its premises in the historical part of the city, is going to erect a larger church with a space for 600 worshippers, and in August 2022, a blessing ceremony at the venue of the new building was held.³ In the context of economic growth, Poland has been undergoing a demographic transition towards being an immigration country. Since 2016, net immigration has been higher than net emigration and metropolitan areas, such as Krakow, have become important destinations for migrants (in particular, highly skilled migrants) from a wide range of countries.⁴ Immigration fuels shifts in many spheres of social life, and religion is not an exception, as migrants bring distinctive traditions and religious practices, and search for a community which would cater for their needs. If they are not able to find one, they either leave the institutional religion, change affiliation, or establish their own.

Scholars of religion have called for forging more connections with other research fields, arguing that religion often enriches the understanding of seemingly non-religious phenomena.⁵ Importantly, religious identities not only remain salient but in many parts of the world, their importance is growing.⁶ One such understudied area is the intersection between religion and migration, in which most studies have focused

² Radha Govind Society of Poland (RGSP), *Historia*, <https://www.kripalu.pl/historia> [access: 30.06.2021].

³ Parafia Prawosławna pw. Zaśnięcia Najświętszej Marii Panny, *W Krakowie powstaje nowa cerkiew*, 29.08.2022 <https://krakow-cerkiew.pl/w-krakowie-powstaje-nowa-cerkiew/> [access: 3.09.2022].

⁴ In Krakow, the most numerous are Eastern Europeans, but there are also migrants from Western Europe, Asian countries and from South America. Smaller populations are from Africa and the United States, see: K. Pędziwiatr, M. Stonawski, J. Brzozowski, *Imigranci w Krakowie w 2020 roku*, Multiculturalism and Migration Observatory, Kraków 2019; K. Pędziwiatr, J. Brzozowski, D. Wiktor-Mach, M. Stonawski, P. Trzeczcyńska, K. Kaczorowski, *Migracje i COVID-19. Przemiany wielokulturowego Krakowa*, Kraków 2022.

⁵ G. Martí, *Present and Future Scholarship in the Sociology of Religion*, “Sociology of Religion” 2014, vol. 75, no. 4, pp. 503–510.

⁶ Pew Research Center, *A Changing World: Global Views On Diversity, Gender Equality, Family Life And The Importance of Religion*, 2019, <https://www.pewresearch.org/global/2019/04/22/achanging-world-global-views-on-diversity-gender-equality-family-life-and-the-importanceof-religion/>. Pew Research Center [access: 15.11.2021].

on the transformation of migrants' religious culture, religiosity or on the role of religious communities in supporting newcomers.⁷

Little attention has been paid to the ways in which international migration impacts religious landscapes.⁸ The religious economy paradigm claims that religious pluralism emerges from "the demise of religious monopolies and the deregulation of religious economies."⁹ However, as migration continues to be a global phenomenon, people move across the globe with their religious ideas and practices, which has implications for social change. In the paper, we extend the debates on religious markets to include migration as a factor contributing to religious pluralisation. We ask how religious communities respond to migration, what the main approaches to migrants and their expectations and needs are, and what the implications are of religious communities' varied engagement with migrants for a religious landscape.

Applying the theoretical lenses of the religious economy approach to the case of Krakow, we argue that migration is a chance for minority churches and religious communities to expand their scope of activities and enlarge membership. The engagement observed among them constitutes a challenge to the century-long quasi-monopoly of Roman Catholicism in Poland. The emergence of the significant non-Catholic migrant communities in Poland (in addition to the processes of secularisation) has important implications for the prospective redefinition of the frequently taken for granted strong relationship between Polish national identity and Roman Catholicism.¹⁰

In our study, we show how minority churches are more inclined to search for new members among migrants. Being more proactive than the quasi-monopolistic Roman Catholic Church, they try to respond to migrants' needs and offer them not only religious but also secular "goods" and "services." Mass immigration can thus be a vital element in the transformation of a religious field. This work also contributes to the discussion on the applicability of a Western-originated religious-market paradigm to the context of Central and Eastern Europe and post-communist societies by showing that the theoretical propositions have an explanatory potential beyond the West.

The article starts by providing an overview of theoretical ideas guiding our study, followed by a section on religious markets and migration. The research design and data that form the basis of this paper are then described. The following section presents key research results, describing the main responses to immigration identified in Krakow's religious market. The article ends with a discussion of the findings and suggestions for further research.

⁷ D. Ley, *The Migrant Church as an Urban Service Hub*, "Urban Studies" 2008, vol. 45, no. 10, pp. 2057–2074.

⁸ M. Frederiks, D. Nagy, *Religion, Migration and Identity: Methodological and Theological Explorations*, Leiden–Boston 2016, p. 181.

⁹ R. Finke, R. Stark, *The Dynamics of Religious Economies*, [in:] *Handbook of the Sociology of Religion*, M. Dillon (ed.), New York 2003, pp. 96–109.

¹⁰ G. Zubrzycki, *The Crosses of Auschwitz: Nationalism and Religion in Post-Communist Poland*, Chicago 2006.

Religion and Immigration from the Religious Economies Perspective

This paper draws upon the religious market perspective, or “the new paradigm,”¹¹ in religious research, which has been insightful in analysing religious dynamics and pluralism. One strand of this field, the “supply side” model, is focused on “church competition,” which postulates that in a pluralistic society, religious institutions resemble economic market actors, which are sensitive to the needs of customers. Religious leaders who respond to the changing environment, face the challenges of state support for some institutions, or react to legal regulations, can thus be regarded as managers who in a particular context devise client-oriented strategies.¹²

Several studies have argued that churches and sectarian groups offer different products of a religious and non-religious nature to their members. They also develop marketing strategies for targeting specific sets of believers and, whereas churches address the needs of the predominantly middle class, sects outreach to the lower social class.¹³ However, churches sometimes find it tough to compete due to their characteristics, for instance when they have historically relied on the state in enforcing their monopoly.¹⁴

Although most research conducted within this framework focused on the North American case, explorations of other contexts have the potential to widen theoretical insights.¹⁵ Recent research underlines the role of relations between the church, the state and society in influencing the religious market’s mechanisms. The making of a multireligious market is determined by power relations. In many parts of the world, there is state support for a particular religious tradition or a “national church.”¹⁶ Ideological motives, often rooted in history, make political actors offer some religious groups preferential access to resources. On the one hand, the level of social acceptance for religions differs between countries. Such factors often put minority religions or denominations in a disadvantageous position.¹⁷ On the other hand, even a certain degree of monopoly or state-sponsoring deprives churches of their vigour. Having

¹¹ L.R. Iannaccone, *Economy*, [in:] *Handbook of Religion and Social Institutions*, H.R. Ebaugh (ed.), New York 2006, pp. 21–39.

¹² P. Berger, *The Sacred Canopy: Elements of a Sociological Theory of Religion*, Garden City, NY 1967; R. Finke, R. Stark, *The Churched of America, 1776–1990: Winners and Losers in Our Religious Economy*, New Brunswick–New Jersey 1997.

¹³ R. Finke, R. Stark, *The Churched of America...*, *op. cit.*; R. Stark, W.S. Bainbridge, *The Future of Religion: Secularization, Revival and Cult Formation*, Berkeley, CA 1985.

¹⁴ P. Berger, *Orthodoxy and Pluralistic Challenge*, [in:] *The Orthodox Parish in America*, A. Vrame (ed.), Brookline 2003, pp. 33–43.

¹⁵ F.J. Lechner, *Rational Choice and Religious Economies*, [in:] *The SAGE Handbook of the Sociology of Religion*, J.A. Beckford, N.J. Demerath (eds.), London 2007, pp. 81–97.

¹⁶ P. Froese, S. Pfaff, *Replete and Desolate Markets: Poland, East Germany, and the New Religious Paradigm*, “Social Forces” 2001, vol. 80, no. 2, pp. 481–507.

¹⁷ A.R. Chesnut, *Competitive Spirits: Latin America’s New Religious Economy*, Oxford–New York 2003; G. Davie, *The Sociology of Religion: A Critical Agenda*, Los Angeles 2013; D. Wiktor-Mach, *Religious Revival and Secularism in Post-Soviet Azerbaijan*, Berlin–Boston 2017.

secured resources, such entities are not as eager to compete for new followers as those which depend upon voluntary contributions.

A debate on religious change in this perspective is usually narrowed down to the problem of (de)regulation of religious economies. Again, a lot of studies have analysed the experience of the United States which more than two centuries ago experienced liberalisation of the religious economy. Emerging pluralism opened a field for competition between religious actors which became more entrepreneurial in responding to their members' expectations. Supply-side advocates argue that it was the deregulation of religion which accounts for the differences between religious patterns in the US and Europe.¹⁸ Another stream of research underlines the activities of transnational churches and religious movements. Those works suggest that establishing the legal ground for pluralism does not guarantee shifts inside the religious markets. Alternatives to the dominant denominations must emerge, and those are often associated with global movements, such as charismatic Christianity.¹⁹

Rather than focusing on the role of regulations or transnational churches, here we follow the scholars who see migration as a significant factor in transforming religious markets.²⁰ When newcomers represent minority faith traditions, they contribute to the development of new religious institutions, ideas or practices. A well-researched example is the growth of Muslim communities in Western Europe after the Second World War. In other cases, people sharing the same religion with a receiving society but of different religious cultures may not fit into established institutions and search for an alternative. As Stark and Bainbridge have argued,²¹ emerging religious pluralism makes religious actors compete for people's allegiances. Congregations accommodating migrants are additionally confronted with pragmatic issues such as the choice of languages, practices or religious holiday calendars. The way in which religious communities respond to these challenges influences migrant choices.

Following the perspective of the market theory of religion, we can look at churches as institutions that analyse the heterogeneity of migrants and reflect on how to meet their expectations. Religious communities which succeed in attracting migrants strengthen their position in the market. A perspective which can complement the market approach is the view of migrant religious communities as urban service hubs, which underlines the importance of the secular dimension.²² This concept refers to goods and services provided by religious groups, such as counselling, aid, psychological support, the spread of information, advice, language training, and social and cultural capital, which are particularly sought by many migrants.

¹⁸ S.R. Warner, *Work in Progress Toward a New Paradigm for the Sociological Study of Religion in the United States*, "American Journal of Sociology" 1993, vol. 98, no. 5, pp. 1044–1093.

¹⁹ A.R. Chesnut, *op. cit.*

²⁰ E.g. N.T. Ammerman, *Pillars of Faith: American Congregations and Their Partners*, Berkeley, CA 2005.

²¹ R. Stark, W.S. Bainbridge, *A Theory of Religion*, New Brunswick 1996.

²² D. Ley, *op. cit.*

Religious Markets in Central and Eastern Europe

Responding to Martha Frederiks and Dorottya Nagy's claim²³ that "much of the research on migration, religion, and identity works with theoretical biases originating from North American contexts," and to calls of Stark and Finke²⁴ to extend the geographical scope of studies behind the West, our research engaged with the context of Central and Eastern Europe. Unlike the US, many European countries have "mixed" or quasi-monopolistic religious structures and distinct patterns of relations between states and churches. The functioning of European religious markets has attracted attention²⁵ and recently, there's been a discussion on church competition in Central and Eastern Europe following the demise of communism and the introduction of new laws safeguarding the freedom of religion.²⁶

On the one hand, critics say that this paradigm does not explain the complexities of religious landscapes in this region where religion is interwoven with culture, national identity, church-state relations, and politics. Results from the CEE's case studies arguably do not confirm the arguments about church competition. Moreover, at first glance, the lack of a fervent religious market like that in the US seems to make this theory irrelevant to the CEE.²⁷ On the other hand, some scholars stress that it is too early to disregard the supply-side perspective in relation to CEE countries and argue that the presumed deviations from the theory's predictions in post-communist Europe deserve closer attention.²⁸ Brik's²⁹ study of a religious market in Ukraine shows that once we take into account the heterogeneity of the Orthodox Church and the competition between different Orthodox jurisdictions, the theory does work.

The paper contributes to these debates by rethinking the religious economy in post-communist societies and discussing the role of migration in transformations of the religious field. It elaborates on the ways entrepreneurial churches take advantage of recent immigration. We argue that by effectively responding to the diverse needs of new worshippers, minority churches grow and adjust themselves to the changing reality, thus presenting a challenge to the spiritual quasi-monopoly of the Roman Catholic Church. In addition, our case adds new insights to the literature on religions in Central and Eastern European countries³⁰ by indicating changes brought by migration.

²³ M. Frederiks, D. Nagy, *op. cit.*, p. 2.

²⁴ R. Stark, R. Finke, *Acts of Faith: Explaining the Human Side of Religion*, Los Angeles–Berkeley 2000.

²⁵ E.g. G. Davie, *op. cit.*; G. Ganiel, *Transforming Post-Catholic Ireland: Religious Practice in Late Modernity*, Oxford 2016.

²⁶ T. Brik, *When Church Competition Matters? Intra-doctrinal Competition in Ukraine, 1992–2012*, "Sociology of Religion" 2019, vol. 80, no. 1, pp. 45–82; P. Froese, S. Pfaff, *op. cit.*, pp. 481–507.

²⁷ D. Pollack, *Modifications in the Religious Field of Central and Eastern Europe*, "European Societies" 2001, vol. 3, no. 2, pp. 135–165.

²⁸ P. Froese, S. Pfaff, *op. cit.*

²⁹ T. Brik, *op. cit.*

³⁰ A. Sarkissian, *Religious Reestablishment in Post-Communist Polities*, "Journal of Church and State" 2009, vol. 51, no. 3, pp. 472–501; *Religion, Politics and Nation-Building in Post-Communist Countries*, G. Simons, D. Westerlund (eds.), London–New York 2015.

Research Design and Methodology

The paper draws from a research project “Religious communities in Krakow and migration processes” conducted in 2020.³¹ The research focused on how religious communities in Poland respond to the presence of foreign-born worshippers. First, we mapped the city’s religious landscape to identify the most numerous religious groups and churches which experience development due to the presence of migrants. In accordance with this approach, we have included in the research the following faith communities: Roman Catholic, Greek Catholic, Orthodox and Protestant churches, Jehovah’s Witnesses, Muslim and Jewish communities, the Armenian Apostolic Church, and Buddhist and Hindu communities. Research sources included secondary data, such as statistical data, reports, websites of religious congregations and their social media, and press reviews, but the key data comes from semi-structured interviews with religious leaders and members of selected religious communities as well as participant observations.

Some of the key questions included in the interview scenario were: What kinds of approaches are used by religious actors in response to recent immigration? How do religious leaders and their communities perceive changes in the religious landscape? how do they address the needs of the newcomers? Applying the perspective of the economics of religion, we explored the following dimensions: churches’ perception of migrants (to what extent they distinguish foreign worshippers as a distinct group and how they do this); engagement with the mainstream Polish culture (what the community’s relations are with Polish society); the choice of language(s) used during religious ceremonies and other events (the degree of language diversity); the functions of services and offers directed towards migrants (to what degree they are focused on supporting migrants’ long or short-term adaptation to Polish society); the types of social capital provided by the community.

Altogether, forty-one interviews³² were conducted with migrants and twenty with non-migrants.³³ They were transcribed and analysed employing elements of substantive and theoretical coding³⁴ interviews. When possible, we took part in the religious services of selected religious groups. The fieldwork was conducted between May and November 2020, i.e. during the COVID-19 pandemic lockdowns, which affected research design and data collection, limiting the ethnographic approach. In spite of the pandemic limitations, the collected data constitutes a pioneering research effort that

³¹ The research was funded by the Cracow University of Economics and the Krakow City Hall.

³² We would like to thank each of the participants of the research for sharing their knowledge, opinions and perspectives. Special thanks also go to Jakub Juzwa, Joanna Dynamus and Michał Borkowski for conducting and transcribing all together four interviews.

³³ All interviews were conducted in confidentiality. We decided, however, not to anonymise the religious communities and Churches’ names as the priests agreed to take part in our research as their leaders and “spokesmen.” The interview data was coded in the following way: interview number/gender/being a migrant (IM) or not (nIM)/date of interview.

³⁴ U. Kelle, *Theorization from data*, [in:] *The SAGE Handbook of Qualitative Data Analysis*, U. Flick (ed.), London 2014, pp. 540–554.

sheds light on the complexities of transformations of religious markets in Central and Eastern Europe as a consequence of the processes of immigration.

The interviews were conducted in Polish, Ukrainian and English at cafes, religious institution venues and in some cases, remotely; they usually lasted between one and three hours. The interviewees were mostly in the age between 25–55, both women (n = 13) and men (n = 28), of different religions, social status, education, and cultural capital. We talked to clergy and laypeople, people involved in the life of the religious community or those who were less active. Amongst them, there were eleven Ukrainian migrants and fifteen leaders or engaged members of congregations with a varied degree of Ukrainian presence. The prevalence of men in our research stems from the fact that the leaders of all identified congregations are men. Due to the need to analyse the strategies of particular congregations regarding the arrival of migrants to the city, our sample is dominated by religious leaders. In order to counterbalance their perspectives, we tried to get a similar number of interviewees with non-leaders, specifically Ukrainian migrants, including people involved in activities for the benefit of a given community.

Interviews were based on two scenarios, one being a conversation with a clergyman, and the other being worshipper specific. These research methods were selected in order to bring us closer to the bottom-up ideas and experiences of the faithful and clergy. In this exploratory study, we wanted to capture the perspectives of the people attending religious institutions. Thematic analysis was used to analyse the data to identify and study the main patterns of themes and their relevance for the research questions.³⁵

In exploring the character of approaches towards migrants among Krakow's religious groups, we have found out a significant degree of reluctance on the side of the Roman Catholic Church to deal with immigration, and we have identified three predominant responses to immigration among various religious communities: 1) providing cosmopolitan "temporary homes," 2) engagement in "bridging" cultures, 3) setting up ethno-cultural service hubs. We conclude that if the inflow of migrants to Poland continues, then more changes are expected, including the development of a more "mixed" religious market.

Religious Quasi-Monopoly and Invisible Migrants

In accordance with the key postulate of religious economy, a monopolist actor does not have enough incentive to be responsive to the changing socio-cultural milieu. Similarly, in Poland, there are churches which have not responded to the growing multiculturalism, the most noticeable being the Roman Catholic Church. Although our research focused on those religious groups which engage with migrants, we could not exclude this major religious institution due to its significance.

³⁵ V. Braun, V. Clarke, *Reflecting on Reflexive Thematic Analysis: Qualitative Research in Sport, "Exercise and Health"* 2019, vol. 11, pp. 589–597.

The starting point for the analysis of religious competition in Poland is the quasi-monopoly of Roman Catholicism. According to the 2011 census, almost 88% of Poles (96% of the people that answered the religious question³⁶) belong to the Roman Catholic Church. In 2019, just before the COVID pandemic, 36.9% of Catholics regularly attended Sunday masses (in 2018, this figure was 38.2%).³⁷ These numbers may fall given the crisis of the church's authority as well as the fast secularisation of Polish society,³⁸ but for the moment, there is no religious "rival" in terms of numbers, symbolic or material resources among religious actors in the country. Although the Polish Constitution (articles 53 and 25) provides for freedom of religion and for relatively equal relations between the state and faith groups, the Catholic Church enjoys the privilege of being *primus inter pares*. It is the only religious institution that has relations with the state based on an international treaty, or a concordat.³⁹ Religious minorities, including the largest, i.e., the Orthodox Church, are hardly visible in the public sphere.

Regarding emigration, the Roman Catholic Church in Poland took a highly active stance a long time ago. Its leaders swiftly reacted to the post-2004 exodus of Polish citizens, and Polish parishes and Sunday schools were set up in popular destinations for migrants from Poland.⁴⁰

The outreach of the Catholic Church towards the Polish diaspora stands in contrast with its passivism towards immigrants in Poland. The Church does not engage directly with the religious life of migrant Catholics in Polish cities. Even though their number has increased in recent years, according to our informants, foreign-born Catholics are perceived by the Church's hierarchy as if they were tourists – the standard offer for them in Krakow is a weekly mass held in English, which has been organised since the 1970s by the Dominican Order at the Church of St. Giles. There are also irregular services in Italian and Spanish which are offered by the Franciscan Order.

According to the clergyman responsible for the English-speaking community of St. Giles, the regular number of participants before the pandemic was around 100–150 people, and actually most of them were not tourists, but migrants:

I came to Krakow only last year and saw that, in fact, this model of an ordinary Sunday mass did not work. This means that we are not dealing with tourists, we are dealing primarily with a huge number of corporate employees, academics, students from countries that are not English-speaking, although there are such as well, but with people from all over the world (Int25/m/nM/27.7.20).

³⁶ 7.1% of the respondents declined to answer this voluntary question and for 1.6% of the citizens (inter alia due to emigration), it was not possible to determine their religious belonging (GUS, Statistics Poland, *Struktura narodowo-etniczna, językowa i wyznaniowa ludności Polski – NSP 2011*, 2015).

³⁷ *Annuario Statisticum Ecclesiae in Polonia. Dane za rok 2020*, Warszawa 2021.

³⁸ Pew Research Center, *The Age Gap in Religion Around the World*, 2018, <https://www.pewresearch.org/religion/2018/06/13/the-age-gap-in-religion-around-the-world/> Pew Research Center [access: 15.11.2021].

³⁹ K. Wroczyński, *Konkordat*, Gorzów Wielkopolski 1996.

⁴⁰ K. Leszczyńska, S. Urbańska, K. Zielińska, *Poza granicami. Pleć społeczno-kulturowa w katolickich organizacjach migracyjnych*, Kraków 2020.

Having spent ten years in the United States, the priest is among the pioneers in the Polish Roman Catholic Church who can distinguish the needs of foreigners who settle from those of short-term visitors. However, as he argues, the Catholic hierarchy in the city does not consider migrants as an important group. There is no parish dedicated specifically to foreigners, and therefore no space for community life. St. Giles is too small for that purpose, and it is lacking the basic infrastructure for organising social life. There is neither religious education offered to English-speaking children, such as a Sunday school, which is a common institution in many countries, nor a religious program in English for international couples who intend to get married. There was an attempt to present the problem to the Archbishop of Krakow, but no solution appeared as a result, as the priest reflected:

Is the Archdiocese involved in this? I gave such a signal last fall that "Idzi" [St. Giles] is insufficient. It was met with such kindness. I spoke directly to the Archbishop [...] who hadn't been aware of such needs. Probably no one told him that there are so many Catholics or people who identify with the Catholic tradition, not necessarily the Roman one [...]. Unfortunately, nothing happened since the otherwise nice meeting in the fall. I wrote a little report that was filed somewhere in the diocese (Int25/m/nIM/27.7.20).

According to our interviewees, most of the clergy holding high positions in the Church seem to not distinguish between tourists and migrants settling in Krakow. Therefore, they have neither devised any strategy towards migrant Catholics nor conducted "market research" to identify new worshippers and their needs. Consequently, in the absence of a strategy towards Catholics from abroad, the only visible actions are of an ad-hoc, "guerrilla" character.

The Church leadership's attitude towards migrants can be partially explained by the fact that the majority of migrants are not Roman Catholics, but an important factor is also its spiritual quasi-monopolistic status. Having state support and multiple resources, a quasi-monopolist Church does not find enough incentives to offer attractive services or quality products apart from religious services in a couple of foreign languages. As the religious economy's proponents argue, the key principle of religious monopoly is that the monopolists lack entrepreneurial zeal.⁴¹ Our interlocutor from the Church commented on this fact: "The Catholic Church is always slow to make such changes. The Church does not run but walks." Nevertheless, although being largely monopolistic and passive, it allows for some autonomy at a lower level. This opens some space for pro-migrant initiatives among Catholic communities in Krakow to develop spontaneously.

Entrepreneurial Churches and Their Responses to Immigration

Minority religions which do not enjoy privileges compatible to those of the Roman Catholic Church are more proactive with regard to migrants' needs. We argue that

⁴¹ R. Stark, J.C. McCann, *Market Forces and Catholic Commitment: Exploring the New Paradigm*, "Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion" 1993, vol. 32, no. 2, pp. 111–124.

many smaller communities tend to be more engaged in their approaches to migrants as they see the new situation as a way to strengthen their position in the religious market. Two aspects have been observed. Firstly, entrepreneurial religious actors make “research” about their communities’ new and potential members, and as a result, they are often aware of the heterogeneity of migrants. Secondly, they reflect on how to meet the needs and expectations of their clients, which enables them to act as service hubs in addition to providing a religious service.

Robert Putnam⁴² has argued that “[f]aith communities... are arguably the single most important repository of social capital.” This claim is more than relevant with regard to migrants without strong social networks⁴³ in their new settlements, although, as recent studies stress, one cannot assume that networks directly translate into social or economic capital.⁴⁴ Churches open to foreign members have sought to respond to the hardships of migration, language and cultural barriers, the need for belonging and social capital in a variety of ways.

In our assessment of entrepreneurial churches and their responses to immigration, three key themes emerged. The first theme is to provide an experience of a temporary “home” for mobile international migrants who, while looking for opportunities across the globe, yearn for some anchors and rootedness. The next response consists of offering migrants two kinds of social capital simultaneously: bonding and bridging. This is directed mostly at those segments of foreigners who intend to stay in Poland for a longer time. Additionally, a number of religious communities in Krakow have formed ethno-cultural communities. This is not a complete catalogue of practices, but the most prevalent among the churches we have studied. Finally, we should stress that the communities continuously adapt to the changing social settings, experiment with approaches or choose more than one. The responses should be seen as dynamic, contextual and rooted in ongoing interactions with the migrant and non-migrant faithful. In the following section, we explore these themes to demonstrate how churches have responded to immigration in Poland.

Providing cosmopolitan temporary “homes”

Some religious communities have been providing temporary “homes” for migrants, especially for those who regard Poland as a stage in their migration trajectories. Religious leaders have noticed the growing number of expats, academics, diplomats, students and other categories of short-term migrants for whom English is a lingua franca. In many cases, they cannot communicate in Polish, as they stay in the country

⁴² R. Putnam, *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community*, New York 2000, p. 66.

⁴³ D.T. Gurak, F. Cases, *Migration Networks and the Shaping of Migration Systems*, [in:] *International Migration Systems*, M.M. Kritz, L.L. Lim, H. Zlotnik (eds.), Oxford 1992, pp. 150–176.

⁴⁴ L. Ryan, M. Eve, E. Keskiner, *Introduction: Revisiting Networks: Setting the Conceptual and Methodological Scene*, [in:] *Revisiting Migrant Networks: Migrants and their Descendants in Labour Markets*, E. Keskiner, M. Eve, L. Ryan (eds.), London 2022, pp. 1–22.

only for a short time. Even if they learn Polish, they still search for an international community in which they can feel comfortable.

The majority of those migrants are from Eastern Europe, but there are also newcomers from the Americas, Asia, and Africa. Despite cultural and religious differences, they share similar experiences of mobility, the challenges of living in a new country, the lack of knowledge of the Polish language, and a willingness to socialise. There are several churches in Krakow which have noticed a new presence of such international migrants.

Some religious communities have emerged precisely to fill the gap and provide English-speaking religious services. They expand their activities beyond religion and create platforms for meetings and socio-cultural events. The evangelical Church of the Nazarene in Krakow, established in 2019, for instance, functioned before the pandemic on a regular basis as a café under the name “Sweet Surrender”. As the community’s leader told us, a large group of Filipinos together with migrants from the US, India, Ukraine and Romania used to meet not only for prayer and Bible study, but also for informal meetings. These are highly skilled business workers who came to Krakow for contracts and consider moving to other destinations in the future.

Krakow’s emerging cosmopolitan communities search for anchors in the globalised and hypermobile world. As we have observed, they yearn for social life, but do not actively search for contact with Poles. What seems to be particularly important for this group is the need to be among people with similar migration backgrounds who speak a common language. In some cases, Polish worshippers also join those groups to practise English or to be in a multicultural milieu.

The religious leaders dealing with this group of migrants have often raised the issue of the temporality of expats’ migration projects. After a work contract ends, they can either prolong it, or move to another country, as a pastor at a Pentecostal community explained:

Another group of people when it comes to foreigners are families [...] who get a contract from their company, between 3–5 years, the so-called expats. [...] Poland is quite an attractive country for them because in most corporations Poland is on the list as a Third World country, therefore additional bonuses for accepting a contract in Poland are very high, and these people have a very good standard of living in Poland. Moreover, in Krakow a person is able to function reasonably well without the need to learn Polish (Int12/m/nIM/25.6.20).

As globalisation expands, expats try to adapt to the mobility requirements of modern capitalism and sustain the lifestyle of “dwelling-in-travelling.”⁴⁵ As the needs of this group are unique, the churches that engage with expats think of how to make their experiences easier and how to “give them a substitute for home” – a place they can find a sense of belonging.

The search for a temporary anchoring and a community centred around a shared identity can be observed among Muslims in Krakow. It is estimated that around 90% of Muslims living in the city are foreign-born. Along with the intensification of

⁴⁵ X. Cai, X. Su, *Dwelling-in-Travelling: Western Expats and the Making of Temporary Home in Guangzhou, China*, “Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies” 2020, vol. 47, no. 12, pp. 2815–2832.

migration, Islamic organisations have undertaken new activities. The Muslim Religious Association, the oldest Polish Islamic institution, has its representative who has served in Krakow as an imam since 2017, at first only during Ramadan, but later on a more permanent basis. The Muslim League is a major Islamic services provider in the city with a full-time imam looking after a prayer room on Sobieskiego Street and the newly-opened Muslim Cultural Center on Groszkowa Street.

Recent years have witnessed the arrival of Muslims from Asia. According to one interviewee, who is active in the community, the most numerous groups are Indians and Pakistanis, but there are also citizens of Indonesia and Malaysia, as well as migrants from Middle East/North Africa countries. The characteristic feature of this group is the high level of mobility. Many of its members have come to Poland either for a corporate job or to study. Among students there is a significant group of Erasmus participants. The community is aware of this trend:

The problem is that a lot of people who know they will not stay permanently start a project and then it ends just because someone is leaving, and this rotation is a very big problem [...]. People know that it will not be for the long term, they do not want to get involved (Int23/w/nIM/7.7.20).

Another cosmopolitan religious community in Krakow is the “Church for the City of Krakow” (KDM) affiliated with the Pentecostal movement. Since its beginning in 2009, the pastor has had a vision of building a modern and engaged community, “the Church of influence.” Observing the growing multiculturalism of Krakow, he decided to use it for the Church and to reach out to expats. The newcomers are invited to engage in the Church’s activities and to establish relations to feel that they belong to a community:

Let’s say that our form is such that we are not such a church-restaurant that you come, order, eat and leave. And if you tip, it’s nice, but we’ll survive. It is a community and, if you want to be a part of the community, you contribute to it. You are giving some input. I mean, you don’t have to, but you should, and we encourage you to do so. That is, they are as much involved in the English ones as possible, but also in the Polish ones (Int8/m/nIM/23.6.20).

The level of investment in relationships with other worshippers is a vital factor in migrants’ well-being. The COVID-19 pandemic was a test for the community. The lack of face-to-face contact was particularly tough for foreigners and the role of a congregation as a “temporary home” was crucial. This was stressed by one of the leaders, who himself is a migrant:

It [the online group] is both for the Polish and international community, because one thing we found is that the international community can feel lonely. What is interesting, because many of them are here for such a brief time, they do not always feel the need to invest in a commitment to not feel lonely (Int18/m/IM/6.7.20).

For this community, the presence of foreigners is an on-going process of learning how diverse groups function. They have invited a new pastor from the United States to cater for the international part of the community. One of the experiments the community made was to shift the English service from Sunday to Thursday – which is an

unorthodox step for Poland – as the leaders had noticed that for expats and students, the weekends are times for travelling.

The Churches' investment in community building should be seen as a rational choice and a pragmatic strategy, as the market theory of religion posits. Through developing quality relationships, they increase the faithful's overall religious and nonreligious satisfaction. This is often one of the key factors keeping people in the church and attracting new members.⁴⁶

Bridging cultures: religious communities as facilitators of integration with Polish society

Another response to immigration developed by faith communities is the offer of the facilitation of socio-cultural integration. Apart from a religious experience, some churches provide migrants with opportunities to develop bridging capital, which may be valuable in their adaptation to a new life. This includes language support and a platform for developing ties between migrants and Poles who share the same religious tradition.

The above strategy stems from the identification of migrant plans and expectations. Some religious leaders have noticed an increase in the number of newcomers who intend to settle down in Krakow. Many of them look for ways to delve into the mainstream culture and learn the language. While there are some cases of marriages with Poles, which makes it easier to grasp Polish, the majority of migrants need to learn the language on their own and church fellows can be of substantial help.

This approach to interactions with migrants as especially observed among evangelical and Pentecostal congregations. Among the most active in welcoming migrants is the Church of Jesus Christ (KJCH), which belongs to the transnational Protestant religious network – the Church of God (Cleveland), known for its missionary activities and educational, humanitarian and social work.⁴⁷ KJCH has around 40% foreign-born members, the majority being from Ukraine and other Eastern European countries, but also from Latin America. Altogether, there are fourteen nationalities represented in the community, and there is a significant group which plans to stay in Poland. The pastor himself is engaged in solving the problems of newcomers, especially at the beginning. The inclusion of migrants in the church is a challenge and involves a process of on-going learning about real needs. The dialogue in the community leads to developing and adjusting practices of dealing with the new groups, as the pastor admits.

Some of the pastor's discoveries were the diverse expectations of migrant members, which often depend on their status and migration plans. As he told us, there is a growing awareness among Protestant church leaders that Ukrainians in particular

⁴⁶ D.R. Hoge, *Converts, Dropouts, Returnees, a Study of Religious Change among Catholics*, New York 1981.

⁴⁷ *Kościół Boży w Polsce*, <https://www.kjch.pl/> [access: 15.11.2021].

are potential inhabitants of Krakow. Among them are highly skilled people working in business, often IT or outsourcing, or entrepreneurs who set up a company in Krakow. For them, integration with Polish society is a priority, and they look for a Polish community and Polish-language services to speed up the process:

They are aware that they want to stay here, they want to assimilate, their children catch the Polish language instantly, and enter the local tissue. These people come to Polish services, and they don't even want translation, although we offer translation (Int9/m/nIM/24.6.20).

The KJCH also has services in Russian and Ukrainian, but they are attended by the minority of Ukrainian worshippers. Many of them work in low-skilled professions, for example, in the construction sector.

The Ukrainian communities of the same denomination are not appealing to those who intend to stay in Poland. This group rather perceives the benefits of acquiring bridging capital which is more likely in the Polish-speaking communities. What is interesting is that these people also make their own efforts to facilitate anchoring in Poland. There are vloggers from Kyiv in the KJCH who run a YouTube channel "Live in Krakow" in Russian in which they discuss everyday life issues and give guidelines for newcomers. They also recorded an interview with the pastor, which popularised the church in the East.

There are more examples of churches whose leaders' engagement in socio-cultural integration issues creates an attractive offer. One of them is KDM, which has already been mentioned. Although this Church faced a challenge when a Ukrainian community opened vis-à-vis their venue and some migrants left to join a culturally familiar milieu, other worshippers remained and continued to attend Polish-speaking masses. "It is surely a kind of challenge for them," as the Polish pastor commented, but as he explained "these are people who see their future here." One of the Ukrainian members who came to Krakow at the age of twenty summarised her first year in Poland as a huge challenge in all aspects of life. Joining the church changed her perspective and, as the community began to invite her to some events, she quickly adapted to life in a new place.

The community offers migrants support groups where they can ask for any help from legalisation of stay to the education of their children. As in many Protestant churches, they focus on community building and encourage people to volunteer. One of their initiatives is a Sunday program, "Good morning at KDM," in which foreigners are encouraged to be active and to conduct interviews with people in the Polish language.

Integration efforts include offering language lessons. KJCH tried to organise this in a professional way and paid for those courses, and the interest was considerable. They employed two teachers who used to come every Sunday. Information spread among migrants and soon people from outside began to attend. This project was suspended for the COVID period, but the congregation planned to return to it.

Migrant churches as cultural enclaves and service hubs

Apart from their religious role, migrant churches function as service hubs and provide diverse support for co-ethnic community members. Moreover, they enable the cultivation of ethno-cultural traditions and transnational ties.⁴⁸ Studies on Korean and Chinese migrant churches in the US showed that socio-cultural characteristics can be even more important for some migrants than religious identity.⁴⁹

Migrant congregations are new in Krakow, and they are the most visible sign of migration's impact on religion. While Greek Catholic, Orthodox, Jewish, Protestant, or Armenian churches have a long history in the city, only recently migrant have clergy begun to establish congregations directed explicitly towards migrants. The most active are Protestants, mainly Pentecostal and Baptists, as well as Jehovah's Witnesses. Moreover, the arrival of migrants from the East has significantly influenced the Greek Catholic and Orthodox churches in many aspects.⁵⁰

Due to the novelty of migrant presence and the dynamics of current migration, the new churches in Krakow are not ethnically exclusive. Rather, they create a common cultural identity around language, a common region of origin, or a cultural background. For example, Nigerian-led communities in Poland usually have around one third of the membership comprised of around Nigerian members. Apart from Nigerians, they include Christian migrants from various African countries, according to the community's pastor. Jehovah's Witnesses, who are among the most pro-migrant religious actors, collect data on their foreign-born members and try to adjust to the changing reality. For example, they tend to establish new groups on the basis of various languages, even Mandarin or Hindi, as their representatives have told us. This community is skilled in reaching various populations, and in Krakow, apart from an English-speaking group (since 2008), they organise groups in Russian (since 2013), Spanish (since 2014) and Ukrainian (since 2018). Furthermore, Poles learning foreign languages sometimes join those communities.

Protestant communities established by Ukrainian pastors are, to some extent, ethnically mixed. A leader of the "Slavic Mission" had a vision of attracting Russian speakers from the former Soviet Union, as indicated in the following statement from one of their leaders:

Who is the Mission working for? We have three such points that connect. First of all, it was very important for us to unite people who came – and you know, there is no politics in it – from Ukraine, Russia, Belarus, well generally Russian-speaking people, those who understand this language, who have this communist mentality. And that is a great territory, because Georgia, and Armenia, and Azerbaijan and Uzbekistan, and Kazakhstan, everyone understands this

⁴⁸ D. Ley, *op. cit.*; *Religion and the New Migrants: Continuities and Adaptations in Migrant Congregations*, H.R. Ebaugh, J. Saltzman Chafetz (eds.), New York 2000.

⁴⁹ P.G. Min, *The Structure and Social Functions of Korean Migrant Churches in the United States*, "International Migration Review" 1992, vol. 26, no. 4, pp. 1370–1394.

⁵⁰ P. Trzeszczyńska, K. Pędziwiatr, D. Wiktor-Mach, *Between Needs, Goods and Services: Ukrainian Migrants on the Polish Religious Market*, "Social Compass", first published online March 9, 2023, <https://doi.org/10.1177/00377686231158556>.

language. Baltic countries, Lithuania, Latvia. Well, young people do not learn this language anymore, but the rest, over the age of 30 – they all know it [...]. This was the goal when they came to a foreign country, they don't know the mentality, they don't know the language, they are alone, they don't know many things. So, to unite (Int39/m/IM/30.9.20).

As migrant churches compete for members, they are inclusive, at least in the initial phase, and reach beyond national and even religious boundaries. This trend may change, as in other Polish cities where, for instance, Belarussian Churches appear, as one of our interlocutors noticed, or it may deepen, as it is in the US where some established migrant churches develop more openness.⁵¹

The target for those churches are migrants in need of a culturally comfortable zone, as one of the religious leaders suggested during our discussion. Once established, the congregation not only invites newcomers, but also members of other churches. A Protestant leader has observed this process in his own congregation when a group of African worshippers left his cosmopolitan community to join a Nigerian-originated migrant church:

We once had a group of a dozen or so people from Nigeria and when the church that the Pastor [...] [of the Redeemed Christian Church of God] opened, these people moved there after a year. It is understandable. When I spent some time with these people asking and trying to understand the Nigerian culture, I started to grasp why they are not quite comfortable among us (Int12/m/nIM/25.6.20).

The migrant church acts as a cultural enclave, offering a place where people could feel rooted in a community resembling those from their origin countries. Shared migration biographies help to establish relations of trust. The leaders encourage the cultivation of familiar traditions or rituals, navigating inside the diversity of native cultural expressions which resonate among migrants. The use of native languages provides a sense of belonging, comfort and a sign of cultural sensitivity in the context of alienation. Many migrants consider a migrant church as a space where cultural traditions are maintained.

An important part of the churches' offer is the help in creating bonding capital, i.e. opportunities to establish ties with fellow worshippers on the basis of perceived similarities. Social interactions in a familiar language turn out to be crucial for many migrants. The Greek Catholic Church, where migrants constitute the majority of members, is active in organising secular and religious events for Ukrainians in Krakow. They are attended mostly by young families with children and youth. The networks are key channels for circulating news, job offers, information on the practical aspects of living in Poland and sharing pragmatic advice.⁵² Even secular Jews take advantage of the synagogue and its activities for social purposes. This fact has been well documented in the US⁵³ and we have also observed it in Krakow's Jewish community. One member, Chabad Lubawicz, also organises secular events and welcomes

⁵¹ F. Yang, R.E. Ebaugh, *Transformations in New Migrant Religions and Their Global Implications*, "American Sociological Review" 2001, vol. 66, no. 2, pp. 269–288.

⁵² For more information on this topic, see Trzeszczyńska *et al.*, *op. cit.*

⁵³ P.G. Min, *op. cit.*

all Jews in the city regardless of their level of religiosity. It runs a shop with kosher food, and it is also active in an educational context.

Migrant churches' leaders are aware of the language difficulties as well as other migration-related problems, as they had to deal with similar challenges themselves. Therefore, their communities provide a wide range of services to newcomers according to one of the Jehovah Witnesses who is a member of a Russian-speaking group:

Someone who moves from Ukraine and either speaks poorly Polish, or does not speak Polish at all, me and my wife helped in such technical matters, how to find a flat, arrange a meeting with those who rent flats there, maybe with work [...], such kind of help, because we understand that when someone comes to a new country, new customs, some rules (Int30/m/IM/13.8.20).

Ukrainian communities are also active in social and humanitarian work. They reach out to people in need and provide them with material and non-material support. The coronavirus pandemics made those groups intensify these activities since migrants were among the first to lose jobs or get smaller salaries. Ukrainian Protestants from Krakow were even active in organising aid for their country of origin, where the economic situation was generally worse, as the pastor from the KJCH told us.

Conclusions

The paper shows how shifts in migration dynamics impact semi-monopolistic religious economies, using the example of Poland. Immigration has contributed to a growing religious diversity in the largest cities. New migrant religious communities have been set up and many older churches have become increasingly multicultural. This phenomenon confirms that religion indeed travels with migrants, and that the secularisation processes, especially in the migration context, are more nuanced than it seemed a decade ago.

Analysing Krakow's religious communities, which have attracted a considerable number of adherents from other countries, we confirm that religion is interwoven in migration processes and influences experiences of migration, social relations, and the future migration trajectory. Migrant churches also encourage their community to develop ties with homelands and become involved with transnational exchanges.

The market theory of religion has proved its usefulness in the understanding of mechanisms of religious dynamics in post-communist Europe. Based on empirical evidence, we have confirmed the claim of the religious economy that state-sanctioned quasi-monopolistic actors are not under pressure to adjust their strategies to the changing environment. The most powerful religious actor in Poland, the Roman Catholic Church, has not actively engaged with the emerging cultural pluralism. Its hierarchy continues to perceive foreign-born Catholics in Poland mainly as tourists. While some grassroots initiatives appear among the Catholic clergy, mostly with missionary experience, the topic of Catholic migrants is largely absent from the mainstream discourse and the practice of the Church.

In contrast to the Roman Catholic Church, we argue that the smaller and less privileged communities tend to be more entrepreneurial in their approaches to migrants. They are able to notice and understand the heterogeneity of foreigners and therefore, they can effectively tailor their offers in ways that best suit the newcomers. As we have shown, in some cases, religious groups relate to mobile migrants and try to offer them a substitute for home. While supporting their cosmopolitan identity, they encourage migrant fellows to form ties with natives and adapt to the new environment. Furthermore, migrants establish their own churches which function as ethno-cultural service hubs.

Poland is far from becoming a competitive religious market in the nearest future, but nevertheless, immigration has brought its diversification and a certain degree of pluralism. Churches and religious communities which have responded positively to the presence of the foreign faithful experience vitality and growth. They are active not only in promotion but mostly in the careful approach to the internal diversity of migrants. This information is spread inside migrants' networks, and even non-religious individuals find those communities attractive. Transnational connections also play a role in attracting newcomers. Thus, due to the entrepreneurial approach, the market share of non-Catholic churches may widen in the future.

Since our research has an exploratory character, many questions have emerged and await further research. The analysed cases represent the image of the status quo. It would be interesting to observe what would happen inside the faith communities with a significant participation of migrants, in which directions migrant churches would develop, and how their responses would shift. Additionally, it would be beneficial to go beyond the declarations of the leaders and activists and to identify potential divergent opinions. Another vital question relates to the role of religious communities in providing access to resources that may be valuable for migrants and the way this factor may influence plans and strategies regarding settling down or moving to other countries. In our research, the issue of internal competition was observed only in a few cases, but it was not a key topic. We may, nevertheless, expect that competitive attitudes will be on the rise between churches of similar denominations. Currently, they still tend to support each other and join forces in the context of quasi-monopolistic religious situations. Finally, there is an open question about the potential transformation of the Roman Catholic Church in the context of immigration or increasing competition from other Churches and religious groups.

Our fieldwork took place before the full-scale Russian invasion of Ukraine on 24th February 2022. Although we cannot yet predict the potential influence of the recent newcomers (war migrants) on the religious market in Krakow/Poland, the findings of our research bring us closer to understanding migration and religious dynamics and constitute an introduction to future research on this nexus.

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