The Experience of Citizenship and Acculturation Among Slavic Migrants in Poland[1]

JAN BAZYLI KLAKLA[2]
ORCID: 0000-0003-1141-4527
Jagiellonian University in Cracow
CASE – Centrum Analiz Społeczno-Ekonomicznych w Warszawie

Abstract

This paper presents an excerpt from the results of research on the relationship between the experience of the legal and institutional environment by long-term Slavic migrants living in Poland and their acculturation process. It concentrates on the experience of citizenship and its connection to acculturation processes. Template analysis (TA) was conducted on data from (A) five in-depth expert interviews with migration professionals, (B) 20 biographical and narrative interviews with migrants from European Slavic countries who came to Poland between 1989 and 2010, and (C) legal and policy documents. The findings provide information about (A) migrants' perceived irrelevance of citizenship, (B) their perceived importance of citizenship, (C) the presence of formal and informal barriers to accessing citizenship status, and (D) the sense of obligation that citizenship evokes. The research argues that it is unjustified to treat citizenship uncritically as the main indicator of the effects of the acculturation process or only as an instrument that inevitably supports this process.

Keywords: citizenship, acculturation, Slavic migrants

I. Introduction

This paper contains an excerpt from the findings of a study on the relationship between long-term Slavic migrants' experiences with the legal and institutional environments in Poland and their acculturation process and it focuses on the experience of citizenship. Its purpose is to show how migrants in the study group experience citizenship, and how this experience is related to the occurring acculturation process.

In it, I seek to deepen our understanding of what migrants themselves think about the institution of citizenship. That's why I'm taking a bottom-up approach, focused on their perspective rather than imposed theoretical categories. Hence, it is their experience that frames my analysis and provides the context for what it means to be a citizen.

Drawing from the experience of the respondents, this paper discusses the perceived importance and unimportance of the institution of citizenship, barriers to accessing citizenship status, and the sense of obligation that citizenship evokes.

Since this is a purely qualitative study, I am not providing a quantitative answer for the question of how this relationship between citizenship and the acculturation process most often looks like. I am rather focused on showing – through the experiences of those who participated in my study – how it may look like in particular contexts and situations.

For this I use a wide catalog of theoretical approaches to citizenship, but also to acculturation. This sometimes includes works written at a distant time, as they have been selected from the rich body of acculturation research for their relevance to the experiences of the subjects cited in the text. In this way, I aim to demonstrate the usefulness of some older theoretical concepts to qualitatively explain phenomena occurring today.

As a result, I present a thematically organized selection of the respondents' experiences, along with its theoretical interpretation from both citizenship theory and acculturation theory. In this way, I show how the relationship that is the main subject of this paper may look like and I lay the beginnings for a catalog of possible relations of experiencing citizenship with the process of acculturation.

This paper also considers the role of citizenship in the acculturation process in the context of two different public policies – treating citizenship as a reward and using citizenship as a path to integration.

II. Theoretical Approach

Legal science does not provide sufficient tools to fully understand the impact of citizenship on the acculturation process. The definitions of citizenship produced in the legal sciences often emphasize the existence of a permanent link in time and space, at both the socio-political and legal levels, between an individual citizen and the state (Seniuta 1974). However, to say more about the nature of this relationship, a broader understanding of citizenship originating from other social sciences is necessary.

I do not use a single definition of citizenship in this text, as it is more useful to consider as many aspects of this institution as possible when attempting to understand its role in the acculturation process. Research on citizenship most often focuses on three such aspects (Isin 2008: 37): its scope (rules and norms of exclusion and inclusion), its content (rights and obligations), and the so-called depth of belonging.

These aspects are also reflected in the present paper and in the statements of the interviewees cited within.

Currently, there has been a gradual disentanglement of the institutions of the state and citizenship, with the latter being conceptualized outside the state or across the borders of nation states (Bloemraad et al. 2008; Lucka 2017: 22). This is due to the ongoing processes of globalization, including migration, communication, transportation, and cultural exchange. This is reflected in the concepts of post-national citizenship (Soysal, Soyland 1994), wherein the basic rights of an individual are connected to their *personhood* and humanity rather than to their formal status as a citizen (Joppke 2006: 63), and transnational citizenship, which is associated with dual citizenship.

In this text, I focus not on citizenship status itself but on the practices of its realization and actualization; namely the routines, rituals, customs, norms, and habits of both everyday life and extraordinary situations through which subjects become citizens (Isin 2008: 17). This becoming is not always an easy process. Citizenship is shaped by identity, social location, cultural assumptions, institutional practices, and a sense of belonging (Werbner Yuval-Davis 1999: 4). Most importantly, in discussing this topic, I am guided primarily by the phenomenological motto that no institution can be fully understood without understanding its meaning for the individuals who direct their behavior in relation to its existence (Schutz 1996).

It is worth noting, however, that the meanings and experiences I describe in this paper are those of a particular group of migrants from Slavic countries living in Poland and do not necessarily reflect the experiences of other, racialized or colonized migrants who have settled in other countries. I point out in my analyses that citizenship, as a tool of politics of movement (see Sheller 2018), is an institution of differentiation, and I show that this differentiation only sometimes has anything to do with fair and transparent criteria. At every stage of reading this text, it is important to keep in mind that the approach I represent and the research methodology I explain below allows only to show a certain fragment of possible paths of experiencing citizenship in the context of acculturation, and does not claim to present them all.

III. Methodology

This paper presents an excerpt from the results of research conducted within a broader project concerning the relationship between the experience of a legal and institutional environment by Slavic migrants living in Poland and their acculturation process. The empirical research conducted in the aforementioned project was based on three data sources:

- five in-depth expert interviews with migration professionals
- 20 biographical and narrative interviews with migrants from European Slavic countries who came to Poland between 1989 and 2010
- laws and policy documents

I used the snowball method and purposive selection to recruit subjects through social media sites and individual contacts. This allowed the sample to be diverse in terms of basic demographics, social variables, and life history and allowed me to access as many viewpoints as possible. The duration of the empirical research phase was long; I conducted the first interviews in 2018 and the final interviews in 2020.

To analyze the data, I used template analysis (TA), which is a variation of interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA). The main difference between the two is that IPA is purely inductive, with themes only being derived from the data, whereas in TA, the data is analyzed in terms of pre-prepared themes derived from specific theories and with the use of a template created a priori (Langdridge 2007: 125). This allows for an exploration of aspects of experiences that are deemed to be particularly important from a theoretical perspective while also allowing for new meanings to emerge (Langdridge 2007: 56).

My starting point in the template analysis was the Relative Acculturation Extended Model (RAEM), which I used to approach acculturation as a process of psychological and behavioral changes that both individuals and groups undergo as a consequence of prolonged contact with another culture, as well as distinguishing four acculturative orientations: integration, assimilation, separation, and marginalization (Berry, 1980; Berry and Sam, 1997; Navas et al. 2005). Although the understanding of acculturation in this article is based on this modern theoretical foundation, where possible I also refer to older literature to emphasize the continuity of thought present in acculturation studies.

In my analysis I identified seven topics that the respondents considered important from the point of view of their contact with law and institutions and the process of acculturation: citizenship, the labor market, street-level bureaucracy, education, discrimination, health care, and Polish origin. In this text, I only present the results concerning citizenship.

IV. Results

Within the citizenship theme, I identified four sub-themes: (A) migrants' perceived irrelevance of citizenship, (B) their perceived importance of citizenship, (C) barriers to accessing citizenship status, and (D) the sense of obligation that citizenship evokes.

A. *Irrelevance of citizenship*

The respondents often raised doubts about the significance of acquiring Polish citizenship. Respondents indicated that they obtain most of their rights with the permanent residence card and that obtaining this document plays a decisive role in their formal status of residence in Poland.

In fact, I would say that it wasn't even citizenship that interested me, but I think that a permanent residency card was very helpful (...), it makes things easier. (...) I applied for a temporary residence card as soon as it appeared, then, because of my marriage. I applied for a permanent residence card because you have to wait a long time for citizenship. But then you applied, and those documents had been lying there for a few years, and you knew that one day they would be issued, but you don't need to, you don't have to run every now and then to the office to confirm that you are here legally, honestly, and so on. (Natallia)

In most democracies today, a significant range of civil and social rights are extended to almost all workers and legal residents, even if they are not citizens. Thus, it can be said that obtaining full political rights is no longer a prerequisite for obtaining social rights (Howard 2009: 5). In Poland, it is the residence card, not citizenship, that provides security and stability. Migrants are fully aware of this.

Just as we came here, he had Belarusian citizenship and I had Belarusian citizenship. Having a permanent residency card did not interfere in any way with our ability to work, live, or use, I don't know, medical facilities or offices. The only thing we could not do was vote, but somehow this did not bother me much. (MD)

This situation is largely an effect of globalization and, in the case of Europe, integration within the EU. The EU promotes the concept of so-called *civic citizenship*, which assumes the gradual equalization of the rights and obligations of legal immigrants with those of EU citizens without the need for naturalization with the intention of strengthening the involvement of immigrants in life in the host society and thus supporting integration processes in various dimensions and preventing the discrimination of minorities (Szymanska 2013: 231–232). The result of these efforts is the so-called European citizenship, which, under Article 20 of the TFEU, belongs to anyone who is a citizen of an EU member state. This status comes with many privileges and makes it significantly easier to function in the EU labor and education markets (Andrejuk 2015: 152–153).

Therefore, when some of the countries of origin of my interviewees also joined the EU (Czech Republic, Slovakia, Croatia, Slovenia, Bulgaria), the lack of Polish citizenship became less important for many of them. However, even before this, the permanent residence card often provided opportunities comparable to Polish citizenship, particularly in terms of international travel:

Fortunately, because this changed also for Bulgaria, that there was a moment when Poland had visa-free entry for some countries, and Bulgaria had it. Sometimes it was worthwhile for me to juggle a bit with the residence card, whether I would enter with a Bulgarian passport or with a Polish one, but later, when Bulgaria also joined the EU, basically these things became very equal, we became an equal part of Europe, an equal part. (Emilia)

It is difficult to assess the real impact of the institution of EU citizenship and the related social and political changes on the situation of migrants in EU countries. On the one hand, it strengthens the integration processes of citizens of member states who have decided to settle in another EU country (Szymańska 2013: 227–228) by granting them electoral rights in local government elections and elections to the European Parliament (Szymańska 2013: 228). Notable from this point of view is the ruling of the Polish Constitutional Tribunal of 11 May 2005, which stated that this extension of political rights to citizens of other EU countries does not threaten the Republic of Poland as a common good of all citizens, due to the constitutionally defined character of self-governed local communities (Constitutional Tribunal, K 18/04). With this in mind, however, why not grant these rights to foreigners from third countries as well? After all, their relationship with a self-governed local community cannot be described as qualitatively different.

On the other side of the coin is the institution of European citizenship. It should be noted that the positive integration effects of establishing EU citizenship refer only to migrants from the member states, as this status does not play a similar role for other immigrants (Szymańska 2013: 230). On the contrary, it contributes to a clear distinction between EU citizens and non-EU citizens (insiders and outsiders), deepening the disparities in the rights of both groups.

At the same time, reforms were carried out in many European countries to make it easier to obtain citizenship and to allow a significant portion of citizenship rights to be exercised without the process of naturalization. These reforms also set out to deepen the separation between Europeans and non-Europeans by tightening migration and refugee policies (Łodzinski, Grzymała-Kazłowska 2011: 17–19).

It is clear from the interviewees' statements that citizenship is by no means the "holy grail" of their adaptation and acculturation in Poland, nor is it a necessary step in the process of securing a safe and stable life. Moreover, the possession of a citizenship of country of origin and a Polish residence card may be the most advantageous configuration, given the privileges and requirements needed to obtain them. As Andrejuk (2015: 153) rightly notes, the legal framework through which immigrants define their situation and determine their plans for citizenship goes beyond nation-state borders; it is transnational in nature. Seeking the most convenient status for themselves, migrants refer to the legal orders of different countries and see in them additional rights and privileges.

Therefore, some of my respondents have chosen to not undergo the naturalization process and remain denizens – long-term residents in a country who have lived in its territory for years – rather than being citizens. They are therefore located in the sphere of rights between citizens and non-citizens (Andrejuk 2015: 147–148). Research indicates that cultural competence and duration of residence in a country are factors that shape one's identity and attachment to the sending or receiving country (Andrejuk 2015: 146).

However, it is worth noting that Hammar (1990), who popularized the notion of denizens in migration studies, noted that the existence of a large group of immigrants – long-term residents with access to the labor market and social and welfare benefits but without political rights or the ability to decide on the shape of policy – can be detrimental to democracy (Piekutowska 2016: 183).

B. *The meaning of citizenship*

Not all of my respondents consider citizenship to be insignificant. The status is special in some ways, and it carries the broadest catalog of privileges compared to other statuses (Pudzianowska 2015: 16). Citizenship reinforces a sense of security and stability, even for holders of permanent residence cards. The provision of security by the state is considered a kind of condition for citizenship (Teune 2008: 235). When respondents assess the current socio-political situation as being insecure, the need for such reinforcement increases.

> More and more often my husband and I think about the fact that the situation there [Ukraine] is unstable and maybe it would be better for me to have Polish citizenship so that all of us, all three of us, would have the same citizenship, so that in case of some separation, something, we wouldn't have problems. (Olena)

However, the most important benefits indicated by the respondents involves the relation between the citizen and the third country. The possibility of free movement, international travel, and employment abroad with a Polish passport were the greatest motivations to obtaining Polish citizenship.

> I also didn't realize that having Polish citizenship at some stage would allow me to go to London for two years and work there (...). I mean, if I had been Indian or Russian, my company would not have given me a job for two years that allowed me to come back to Poland for an even superior position, on even better conditions. (Sergey)

Such an approach to citizenship is, according to some researchers, a manifestation of the reduction of citizens to the role of consumers, individuals seeking to secure goods of the highest value at the lowest cost (Kivisto, Faist 207: 66). The experts who participated in my study also see this as a factor that should influence the design and implementation of migration and integration policy in Poland, which should be complex and far-sighted.

> I also hope that they will see that the world does not end with Ukraine and that migration from Ukraine, although it is very valuable now, is short-term and short-sighted and that in a while, the number of Ukrainians who are willing to come to Poland will run out and some of them, who are in Poland, will be willing to go further to the West, (...) maybe with Polish citizenship, if they manage to obtain it. (Witold Klaus)

As Szymańska (2013: 222) writes, such an unclear state policy towards naturalization is related to the lack of an unambiguous perception of migration itself. Analyses (Niessen, Peiro, Schibel 2005) suggest that many member states have not yet decided whether to treat immigration as a temporary or long-term phenomenon. My respondents indicated that in their case, their decisions related to Polish citizenship have not been motivated by a desire to go further abroad. Instead, it is the treatment they have experienced abroad as citizens of their country of origin that has made them consider naturalization.

> I won't say that it was my dream goal, but I just decided that, okay, I've been living here for years and everything suits me, so I don't see why I should move out. If everything suits me, then it is rather a natural next step, in my opinion. I remember, for example, that during my studies I really wanted to try to go to an international organization for some internship, and I still remember that when I applied to NATO and all the conditions were perfect, everything was just so right that I thought I already had it. But at the last stage, you had to click on the citizenship of the country you're from, and I clicked it just like it was, Ukraine, and immediately, automatically, I got a notification that "I'm sorry, your application can't be accepted," something like that and God, I was just so disappointed. And already then, I realized that since I'm here and in the EU in general, if I want to try something more, anything, even in Warsaw (...) it would be nice to have citizenship. (Ludmila)

Such single events, even when seemingly insignificant, were frequent catalysts for the naturalization process for my respondents. They confronted barriers that they perceived to be unjust, and accepting Polish citizenship was a way to overcome them. If the reason for a lack of interest in naturalization is devaluation of citizenship (Schuck 1989) (i.e., the increasing attractiveness of intermediate statuses), then the motivation to obtain citizenship may be provided by situations in which the specific "added value" of holding a Polish passport in relation to a residence card is clearly visible.

> I went straight to a Polish school. Up to a certain point, I didn't even feel (…) that I came from another country. When I played soccer, we used to go to different international tournaments as a kid. I remember we were going to Austria. And there was a bus, about 20 of us, all with Polish passports, of course; I think it was before Schengen (...). I had a Belorussian passport, and the customs officer didn't want to let us through (…). I was about 14 years old (...), and that was the moment when I thought to myself, I am different from the rest. (Damian)

The literature draws attention to the specificity of citizenship-based exclusion – by remaining in the territory of a foreign country, we lose the rights that belong to citizens and the moral right to claim them, but we still remain subordinate to the state and are often subject to very extensive obligations (Rubin 2008: 290–291). Therefore, this imbalance can be perceived as legitimized but still as oppression by the state (Ciprut 2008: 22). The aspiration to get out from under this oppression

may be a factor that prompts the naturalization process. However, it is worth noting that the natural response to oppression is not to bind oneself more closely to the oppressor, and therefore state actions in the context of migration policy should be characterized by far-reaching caution. It is likely that there is a degree of oppression (understood as the deprivation of rights) that will push migrants to leave the state rather than strengthen their ties with it.

Another limitation identified by the respondents is the right to participate fully in the public sphere, particularly in the political life of the country, which creates the structure of double participation in the state, wherein citizens have full rights to act in the public and political sphere, while denizens have limited rights (Brubaker 1989: 160–162). Additionally, because citizenship, immigration, and asylum policies are generally created at the national level, this means that non-citizens are excluded from decisions that may directly affect their lives (Howard 2009: 6–7). Awareness of this exclusion often motivates people to begin the naturalization process.

> I still don't have citizenship, which I regret, because then I could vote. I participate in local elections, but I don't have the possibility to vote in national. Well, I'm going to change that, because I guess every vote counts now. (Emilia)

Here, the influence of the current socio-political situation in Poland is again manifested. Citizenship is not only a way to protect oneself from the uncertainty this situation generates; it can also be seen as a tool to actively try to change the situation.

While embarking on the process of naturalization, migrants often have certain expectations about its outcome. If the concept of citizenship divides the world into "us" and "them," then the transition from one category to the other must imply a change, even if this only relates to the fact that the state's moral obligation to its citizens is perceived to be stronger (Rubin 2008: 298).

Thus, it is worth noting that the post-naturalization situation did not always meet the expectations of my respondents. In the case of an assimilationist attitude in a minority group, the segregation and exclusion favored by the dominant group may be caused by a conflicting intergroup relationship. If the minority group has an inclusive attitude, the segregation preferred by the dominant group creates a problematic situation at the contact level, while the exclusion creates a conflictual situation. A compatible relationship is built only by an adequate response to mutual orientations (see such acculturation models as RAEM [Navas et al. 2005] or CMA [Piontkowski, Rohmann, Florack 2002]). An empirical example of disappointed expectations may be the following situation described by one of my respondents:

> I didn't get my Polish passport until later, in the 80s or even 90s, I think. And I came to Poland for the first time with this new passport, where the stamp was from the Embassy in Belgrade, not the Polish authorities (…). And I'm on this train, and at the Czech-Polish border, this border guard comes and says "Why are you coming to Poland?" And I show

my passport and say, "After all, I'm coming to my country." Because he saw that the stamp was foreign, that it was a Polish passport, but I was not a Pole from Poland, that is (…) how Poles from abroad were treated back then. (Dragan)

The literature emphasizes that for many of the migrants, formal nationality reflects neither national identity nor actual cultural competence (Andrejuk 2015: 160). Nevertheless, a number of formal tools are used in many countries to measure the integration of a candidate for citizenship, including knowledge tests, language and civic orientation courses, and social role-playing modules, and this applies to obtaining both citizenship and permanent residence permits (Goodman 2012: 660). In recent years, the use of these tools has become extremely widespread (Pulinx, Van Avermaet 2015: 335), including in Poland, where it has been a requirement for foreigners to pass a language proficiency exam at the B1 level since February 2018. Language proficiency may sometimes be the only formal requirement for citizenship related to an assessment of a person's degree of integration, but this assessment is also social in nature and applies to many more areas of life.

Hence, another example was given by another of my respondents, who made it clear that obtaining citizenship in his case does not coincide with full adaptation and acculturation, especially in the context of "getting it" in contact with the state administration:

I am a Polish citizen; let me give you an example. I was two years in the UK, came back from the UK, during those two years I was checked out. I wanted to be a good citizen. I moved permanently, so I checked out so the tax office would know I wasn't here. I come back to Poland (…) and suddenly I check, oh, my passport expires in two months, that they might not let me out, or they might not let me in. I go to the office and say that I want to exchange my passport, and they say that you can't exchange your passport because you are not registered in Poland. I say, "But (…) it's not obligatory." And I hear, "Yes, it's not obligatory, but if you don't have it, you don't get a passport, it's a matter of how our IT system is set up." If you don't have the data about the address of permanent residence in Poland uploaded, then there is no possibility to apply for a passport. Eh, I'm still kind of not getting it. (Sergey)

Thus, it can be seen that citizenship does not solve all of a migrant's problems, despite a hope that these problems will disappear once naturalization occurs. Even though this situation affects a Polish citizen whose passport would expire while abroad in the same way, a migrant for whom the administrative system is still somewhat foreign may be more likely to see it as evidence of his or her own cultural incompetence.

C. *Barriers to access to citizenship*

While citizenship may be a way to bypass obstacles and break down barriers for some, the process of obtaining citizenship itself can be problematic, and those willing to apply face various difficulties. For my respondents, the main barrier is and was time – both the time spent staying in Poland, which is required to obtain citizenship, and the time of the procedure itself.

> I submitted it (…) in 2004. So I waited for a few years because I remember that I was already divorced when I got the decision that granted me citizenship. Because of the fact that for so many years, unfortunately, the period of studies, I don't know why, is not included in the number of years you lived here, although I think it should be because you also live here non-stop. (Natallia)

Of course, it cannot be said that the requirements for naturalization are completely unreasonable. Individual assessment is not an easy matter and depends on many factors. This is well explained by Bellamy (2008: 76–77), who states that perception of the demands placed on migrants during the naturalization process depends on the context and the ways in which they are imposed. They may be acceptable to immigrant communities, or at least not controversial, when the country is seen as open to immigrants from all countries, when it does not favor ethnically and culturally similar groups, when the language skills required for naturalization are basic, and when questions about policy or culture could be answered by most current citizens. However, when these requirements seek to induce migrants to renounce pre-existing identities and affiliations and treat them in a hostile and suspicious manner, they may face objections. This type of approach has long been present in acculturation theory. Borrie (1959) wrote that the integration of migrants into society, and above all the process of assimilation, is often accompanied by coercion and oppression, which manifests in racist or discriminatory inclusion criteria, allowing in only those deemed worthy to become citizens (the so-called "assimilable types"). As current research shows, it is difficult for migrants from Slavic countries moving to a country that is already symbolically perceived as part of the global 'West' to fit into these inclusion criteria (Krivonos 2019).

Problems related to the calculation of the legally required periods of residence were also mentioned by one respondent, who also noted problems related to direct contact with the state administration.

> So we had to arrange repatriation papers for Olga and the children. They came in 2002, and when they crossed the border, that's how it looked like then, they got citizenship. I applied for citizenship when my wife got it. (...) They looked at it very unfavorably in the Mazovian office. "Hey," this clerk said, "but you have to be married to a Polish woman for five years." I said, "Well, I have been for 25." She said, "What do you mean 25? It is three months now." Finally, she said, "Okay, if you insist, I'll accept the papers." And the

procedure took about a year and a half because that's when the president Kwaśniewski granted us citizenship. I called there a couple of times, and there was this lady, the head of the chancellery, Jaruga-Nowacka, but she talked as if she was an English queen, and I was, I don't know, so small, so petty, (...) she made me understand that I had no right to ask anything at all. (Artiom)

Additionally, contacts at the level of the so-called street-level bureaucracy were mentioned by my respondents as one of the most serious barriers faced in the procedure of obtaining Polish citizenship. These results are consistent with those obtained by Andrejuk (2015: 156–157). She aptly explains that because naturalization is primarily a symbolic act, it is required to not entail further complexities and costs (primarily translation and document authentication costs).

Just there, I didn't go to those offices too much. But I remember my mom coming out of them and throwing up on all those clerks. (Damian)

The issue of dual citizenship and the loss of the passport of the country of origin upon naturalization was the topic most frequently raised by my respondents. Among the respondents' countries of origin, dual citizenship is currently allowed by almost all countries, except Slovakia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Ukraine (the prohibition expressed in the constitution is not sanctioned, but research indicates [Andrejuk 2015: 154] that it nevertheless influences migrants' decisions to not naturalize in Poland). Currently, the Act of the 2nd of April 2009 on Polish citizenship allows for dual citizenship. However, the earlier Act of the 15th of February 1962 (Dz. U. 1962 No. 10, item 49) included the principle of exclusive Polish citizenship in Art. 2.

A majority of the migrants participating in my research applied for citizenship or recognition as a Polish citizen many years ago, and on many occasions, they were required to renounce citizenship of their country of origin, either by the Polish administration or by their home country. Additionally, the country of origin sometimes put obstacles in the way of those who were willing to renounce their citizenship to obtain a Polish passport.

There was a problem to renounce Belarusian citizenship. (...) I explained that it was not me who wanted to renounce my citizenship, but it was not pleasant. It turned out that when I was leaving the country, Polish border guards saw me and said that "you have documents only one way" because I could not return on the basis of these documents. I was even afraid to go there because I had renounced my citizenship there, and I hadn't yet acquired it here.

– For a while, virtually no citizenship. [JBK]

For a while, yes, because I had to provide all the documents to acquire a Polish one because only when they received these documents was the citizenship procedure initiated. That's why I'm saying it was not a pleasant time then. (MD)

The necessity of renouncing citizenship in one's country of origin was mentioned by the respondents as authoritative. My respondents pointed out that the motives behind this necessity were not explained to them, that they could not express their opinion on the matter, and that contact with the responsible persons was difficult. By making Polish citizenship conditional on the renunciation of citizenship in one's country of origin, both states enter the role of oppressor and attempt to force contradictory acculturation orientations on migrants, with the country of origin in a separative orientation and the receiving country in an assimilation orientation. The refusal to recognize membership in a state is the modern equivalent of outlawing a person or declaring them a heretic (Rubin 2009: 293), with the convenience of not harming the majority of the citizens who hold citizenship status. As such, there is little chance that the person deprived of this membership will receive broad social support (Rubin 2009: 294).

> At that time, Kwasniewski was still president, I think Deresz, a spokeswoman, or who she was, a secretary, I don't remember what her function was. And then the answer came, that we can get citizenship, me and Damian, on the condition that we have to renounce Belarusian citizenship, and now the situation is such that I am, and Damian, only a citizen of this country, and to go to Belarus we have to apply for a visa. This is ridiculous. Well, unfortunately. I don't know what it depended on because the president didn't give any reason why this decision was like that. (MD)

The consequences of these decisions on the lives of the people I spoke with are significant. First and foremost, they are concerned about entering their country of origin, where they have often left behind family, friends, and their life affairs. Family ties are the strongest factor in keeping migrants connected to their country of origin, and the loss of their previous passport often makes it much more difficult for them to nurture and maintain their culture of origin. The loss of citizenship also affects the future life plans of the respondents, particularly the possible decision to return to their country of origin (Szymańska 2013: 224). This strikes hardest at those whom Brettell (2000) or Piore (1979) call *target earners*, migrants who are transnational by design, striving to maintain ties with both their country of origin and their host country so they can return to where they came from at some point (Gutiérrez 2008: 207).

> And I'll tell you frankly that at this moment, after all this, I'd love to return to my hometown and country to work and live in Moscow for a few years before retirement, which is currently impossible because of the sanctions and the number of jobs for Western managers, and I would already be a Western manager in Russia. (Sergei; interviewed in 2019)

Therefore, were possible, many respondents decided to keep the passport of their country of origin while at the same time accepting Polish citizenship. This is in line with the results of research conducted in other countries (Soysal 2003: 20). Notably, the

mere possibility of renewing citizenship in one's country of origin is often sufficient, and it is then treated as an insurance policy, "just in case" (see Górny, Koryś 2001).

> I also have Serbian citizenship, but I haven't renewed my documents because that would have to be done there, and you usually stay there for a very short time, and you don't have time to go to those offices and waste time on those clerks, so I use Polish documents, but I also have old and unrenewed Serbian documents, and I can renew them at any time. (Dragan)

The possibility of dual citizenship is a very strong motivating factor for naturalization. Numerous studies conducted in the US and Europe indicate that lifting the ban on dual citizenship significantly increases the number of naturalizations (Freeman, Ogelman 1998, Jones-Correa 2001, Mazzolari 2009). The idea of transnational citizenship (Bauböck 1994) – a situation in which migrants are involved in the broader social life in more than one state and their affiliation to both political communities is permanent (Andrejuk 2015: 148–149) – is an attempt to theorize the concept of dual citizenship. From the point of view of the state, this represents a negation of both the traditionally understood loyalty to a single state and the idea of the state as a limited territory with a clearly defined, homogeneous population of citizens (Łucka 2017: 24). However, research indicates that transnational citizenship which contributes to the integration of migrants in host countries, is a factor that encourages naturalization and counteracts the linking of ethnicity with exclusion (Castles 2002: 1162, Ersanilli, Koopmans 2010: 775, Sejersen 2008), and enables countries of origin to gain financial and non-financial transfers (Łucka 2017: 25, Kivisto, Faist 2007: 109). Ongoing research shows that state tolerance of a dual citizenship does not threaten immigrants' identification with their country of residence. In a study by Maehler et al. (2019: 8), naturalized respondents with dual citizenship did not differ in their degree of identification with Germany compared to naturalized respondents who only held German citizenship.

After the law on citizenship on Poland changed, one of my respondents, Sergei, eventually decided to take Polish citizenship. However, another of my respondents, due to his inability to retain citizenship in his country of origin, did not complete the naturalization process, and the change in legislation alone did not prove sufficient motivation to do so. Here, it is worth noting that the decision not to undertake the naturalization process, if it is the autonomous and free decision of a migrant, should not be considered in terms of failure in the acculturation process or as a marker of marginalization (Andrejuk 2015: 150). Rather, criticism should be directed towards the state, whose policy prohibiting dual citizenship is an assimilationist and oppressive policy (Faist 2000: 204). Long-term residents often eventually decide to adopt citizenship, but this process cannot be seen as linear, inevitable, or necessary. There has also been a shift in the literature away from understanding the state of non-citizenship as transitional and unnatural (Gutiérrez 2008: 193–194).

At this point, I would like to reiterate my skepticism about treating citizenship as a determinant of the state of the acculturation process. At the level of identity, naturalization may very well be what "anchors" migrants in the host country, but other factors, such as family, work, and language, may also play a similar role (Andrejuk 2015: 161, also see various spheres in RAEM [Navas et al. 2005]). Having dual citizenship is often associated with divided loyalties and identities (Bosniak 2000: 462–463), but the line of this division is not obvious and does not run symmetrically. Migrants are most often bound to their country of origin by emotions, family ties, and a symbolic sense of belonging and to the host country by ties of a more pragmatic, instrumental nature, such as work and daily life (Lucka 2017: 25, again see Navas et al. 2005).

This has also long been recognized by acculturation theorists, who have noted the selectivity of the selection of cultural elements by acculturated persons. In conceptualizing integration, Voget (1951) assumed that while the cultural patterns adopted by migrants are those that allow for participation in the wider society, identity remains tied to the culture of the country of origin. Horobin (1957) also distinguished between change at the level of visible cultural patterns and invisible cultural goals and ambitions. Roy (1962) wrote explicitly that in integration, participation in the formal institutions of the host society by acculturating migrants is crucial.

D. *Sense of duty*

The respondents do not consider citizenship only in terms of their rights. Some of them also see it as a kind of obligation of the individual towards the state. In Poland, loyalty is an obligation that is reflected at the highest level of legislation. According to Article 82 of the Constitution, the duty of a Polish citizen is loyalty to the Republic of Poland and concern for the common good and therefore the state (Journal of Laws 1997 No 78, item 483).

However, this is not the only obligation that the literature links to citizenship. There is also *good neighbourliness* (Bellamy 2008: 6), active citizenship in the political field (voting, debating, protesting) or the requirement to share a certain set of norms and beliefs, and obligations are increasingly emphasized by states in how they shape their relations with citizens (Pulinx, Van Avermaet 2015: 337–338). In the case of my respondents, the aspect of obligation to the state is most often manifested in their approach to exercising their active right to vote.

– You said you were voting after you got your citizenship, right? [JBK].

Yes, we take care of each other among our friends, so even when I didn't want to go, they say, "Come on, how can you? After all, why did they give you citizenship?" My friends from Belarus, who also already have citizenship say "How can you say that? You should go and take a selfie, show us that you were there." (...) I think that I am

more interested, because I live here, in what is happening in Poland, so even if there are some elections in Belarus or something, even though I still have this Belarusian passport as well, no one took away my citizenship, and when I am sometimes asked now how it is in Belarus, I say, "I don't know," because I don't live there. (Natallia)

It is worth noting that whether or not the respondents participated in voting, this did not determine their attitudes towards whether this "fulfillment of civic duty" is important for them or not. Sometimes, the importance of the act of voting was even seen as overwhelming.

– First election soon with Polish citizenship, right? [JBK]

I honestly don't know. At first, I thought I would vote, but you know what, I don't know, I guess I won't, because I'm not conscious enough to make the choice the way I need to, but I don't know, maybe I'll change my mind yet.

– So in the long run, maybe someday, right? [JBK].

Yes, of course. It's just that now I feel more like I have some kind of obligation because I used to treat the residence card more as freedom of movement around Poland, that I don't have to get a visa, that I can go anywhere I want in the European Union. And now I understand that this connection is greater, deeper, and I have some obligation to the state, so in the future I will participate in political life. At least I believe so. (Ludmila)

Citizenship itself is also often seen as a virtue to be cultivated. According to this approach, citizens should be active participants in democratic processes (see Fishkin 1991; Macedo 1990; Oldfield 1990). However, this assumption is controversial, and as Rubin (2009: 287) rightly notes, "it is part of the age-old pattern of the privileged, well-educated, and well-connected wagging their fingers and clucking their tongues at ordinary people for their lack of higher virtues." If we examine the social reality, we can see that many citizens do not express interest in what is political or express it in a way that apologists of civic virtues would not consider appropriate. Studies show that most citizens of a democracy are neither well informed nor particularly interested in political affairs (Kivisto, Faist 2007: 10). Therefore, if this virtue is not common among those who are born citizens, what right do we have to demand it of those who are yet to become citizens?

However, willingness to accept the obligation to participate in the democratic process is sometimes a motivation to undergo the naturalization process and obtain Polish citizenship.

– So what about this citizenship now? Where does the idea come from? [JBK].

The idea has been around for a long time. If it weren't for the fact that it requires some formal effort on my part… I don't like paperwork (…), and this requires gathering a certain amount of documents, but I suspect that if I took the time, I would gather them in a week because there is no reason to assume that I might not get this

citizenship. I have an apartment to my name, I have a car to my name, I have a company to my name, I have a husband, I have a half-Polish child, so it's like everything is there, but I have to collect these documents, go to the office… I went to ask about it after I got married, and I was told that I have to wait two years after the wedding, something like that (…). I didn't have to apply for it then, I just needed a permanent residence card to take care of all the formal matters except for voting, and actually now, because somehow this popular movement was connected to the elections, I felt that since I'm in this country, actually I'm living in it, I don't know much about the political situation in Bulgaria, much more about the situation here, so it's kind of my civic duty to declare myself politically as well. But, as I say, I am involved in some local activities, some projects, some petitions all the time. I am active in this respect and also politically. (Emilia)

It remains an open question whether attaining citizenship status will meet Emilia's expectations and actually complete her function in society. Citizenship studies emphasize that while formal incorporation in the form of citizenship status is a prerequisite for being able to speak effectively in the public sphere, it is no guarantee. This implies that the theoretical possession of rights by immigrants is not always reflected in reality (Łucka 2017: 31).

It is also worth noting that the acceptance of citizenship itself can be seen as a kind of obligation and an expression of gratitude for perceived opportunities. Kumar and Silver (2009: 60) point out that recognition as a citizen also implies a certain sense of social solidarity with other citizens. Bellamy (2008: 13) writes in a similar vein, pointing out that a certain degree of trust and solidarity between citizens is important, as this is the only way to collaborate in creating the collective benefits of citizenship rather than simply benefiting from the efforts of others. He (2008: 53) even states that given the association of most people's nationality in a place of birth over which they had no influence, it may seem frivolous to make it difficult for people to transfer their membership to another state that offers them better opportunities if they are prepared to take on the responsibilities of citizenship rights there.

I am very grateful because it really is a completely different world, I wouldn't have had such opportunities staying there, in Belarus (…). I already have citizenship because of my marriage, although my friends who studied here applied like through these permanent residence cards. I've always worked honestly, always legally since I graduated, and that's how my friends and I agree, (…) we are very grateful to Poland for these opportunities that it gave us. (Natallia)

This is connected with the changes in social identity that are occurring among my respondents. The relationship between these changes and naturalization is complicated, as is the way in which they manifest themselves, but the connection between the two cannot be denied.

Even when we were watching the match with Damian... I once thought, oh man, I support Poles (laughs). I don't support Russia or Belarus anymore, I support Poles. It is strange, but it is like that. I don't know why. I think I was offended that they were unkind when I gave up my citizenship (laughs). I think it's a grudge left somewhere. (MD)

Thus, citizenship is also a formal expression of a subjective sense of identity (Andrejuk 2015: 158). This ties in with the shift in economic and social entitlements I have already mentioned in this paper (from citizenship to permanent resident status), where citizenship – apart from some political rights – remains primarily a function of symbolic self-identification. Moreover, identity can be divided and differentiated as well. Often, the division follows a similar line as the division of ties detailed earlier – a more emotional one with the country of origin and a more pragmatic one with the host country (which is in line with the division proposed within RAEM into private and public [central and peripheral] spheres of psychosocial functioning – but other studies suggest that it might also be otherwise (Andrejuk 2015: 158–159). However, the results of my and other studies confirm the frequent occurrence of mixed national identity (see Górny, Koryś 2001).

V. Summary

Summing up the relation between the concept of citizenship and the process of acculturation, I would like to emphasize that in the light of my research, it is unjustified to treat citizenship uncritically as the main indicator of the effects of the acculturation process or as an instrument that inevitably supports this process. Indeed, research confirms the dual role of this institution: on the one hand, the positive correlation of the degree of acculturation with the decision to apply for naturalization (Wunderlich 2005; Hochman 2011; Vink et al. 2013 after Maehler et al. 2019: 3), and on the other hand, naturalization itself leading to an increase in identification with the country of residence (Maehler et al. 2019: 8), loyalty, and security (Howard 2009: 203–204) as well as the level of cultural competence in migrants (Howard 2009: 7–8). With this said, however, it is important to remember that obtaining citizenship does not automatically determine the full integration of naturalized migrants (Trzcinski 2006: 200, Howard 2009: 204).

This paper therefore calls for greater consideration of alternative theories of citizenship in acculturation studies. As challenging as it may be to place them within existing models such as RAEM or CMA, it is worth considering such ideas as Young's (1989) concept of *group differentiated citizenship*, Kymlicka's (1995) multicultural citizenship, or Taylor's (1994) *politics of recognition-based citizenship.* What they have in common is an emphasis on giving real citizenship rights to excluded groups and a rejection of the universalist approach towards citizenship as expressing the values

78 and interests of the dominant group only.

However, I am aware that it will be long before such positions can be translated into the framework of public policies in Poland. For the time being, the literature recognizes two ways of treating citizenship in the context of integration policies. Szymańska (2013: 222) explains them as follows: in some countries (e.g., Sweden) granting citizenship to foreigners is treated as a natural step on the way to full integration, while in others (e.g., Austria), it is treated as a crowning achievement of individual efforts towards integration, a distinction, or a reward for effective integration into the community of the host country. In the former case, the applicant must take proactive steps to achieve a certain level of language proficiency and cultural knowledge and declare their loyalty to complete the naturalization process. As Goodman (2012: 665) writes, this is integration through performance and behavior, requiring active signs of commitment to the process. A passive attitude, following the medical principle of "first do no harm," is not sufficient. However, being active in preserving one's own culture is not advisable either. One might even say that the ideal attitude is a kind of active passivity, making an effort to conform (Pulinx, Van Avermaet 2015: 338).

This is also related to the distinction introduced by Schinkel (2008) between formal citizenship (associated with status and entitlements) and moral citizenship (a set of values, norms, and beliefs that citizens should internalize). It was once assumed that an immigrant who became a citizen in the formal sense would, over time, give back to society and become a citizen in the moral sense as well. Today, the opposite is the case: to become a citizen in the formal sense, the migrant must first become a citizen in the moral sense and integrate into society. Meanwhile, there is something particularly cruel in establishing the finishing line of the integration process in the place of full moral citizenship, a state that migrants will never achieve in principle and certainly not without renouncing what they hold dear (Pulinx, Van Avermaet 2015: 341).

Associated with this change is also a shift away from seeing integration as a positive social measure and towards repressive immigration measures (Besselink 2006: 18). Taking this into account, it seems legitimate to ask whether immigrants in general can develop an attachment to a country of which they are not yet full citizens (see Maehler et. al. 2019). This is particularly relevant in the context of Poland, where naturalization regulations have embarked on the path described above with the introduction of compulsory language tests, while not being complemented by any kind of comprehensive integration policy.

I will not attempt to predict whether the path that began with the introduction of mandatory language testing will be the one that the Polish government will follow in terms of naturalization policies. Certainly, in the context of acculturation studies, it is important to remember that to uncritically and unjustifiably accept citizenship as a variable indicative of acculturation is to simultaneously embrace a right-wing assimilationist narrative.

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