A Risky Business?

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Chapter 1

In the second half of the 1990s, the Centre of Migration Research (CMR) at the University of Warsaw carried out several studies on immigration to Poland analysing Ukrainian petty traders and circular migration (Łukowski 1997; Okólski 1998, 1997; Stola 1997; Iglicka & Sword 1999). Research focusing on migration of Ukrainian nationals to Poland gradually advanced (Antoniewski 1997; Iglicka 2003; Bojar, Gąsior-Niemiec, Bojaniec & Kurczewska 2005; Bojar, Gąsior-Niemiec, Bieniecki & Pawlak 2006; Drbohlav 2003; Górny & Kępińska 2004; Górny, Grzymała-Kazłowska, Fihel, Kępińska & Piekut 2007; Kępińska 2002; Kloc-Nowak 2007). Current Ukrainian migration was also addressed in general studies on foreigners on the Polish labour market (Iglicka 2000, 2003; Golinowska 2004; Bednarski, Kryńska, Pater & Walewski 2008). Most recent publications concern integration issues and their related policies (Grzymała-Kazłowska 2008; Górny, Grabowska-Lusińska, Lesińska & Okólski 2010; Kindler & Szulecka 2010).

Chapter 2

The authors of the value-expectancy model present seven values and goals influencing the decision to migrate (De Jong & Fawcett 1981). The most common goal is to improve or maintain one’s financial standing in order to gain or keep social position and prestige. The higher the migrant’s status, the higher the expectations in regard to the standard of living, quality of work and level of education acquired during migration. A person who has a particular social status and expects to improve or maintain it might actually experience a decrease in status due to migration.

For a comparison of the realist and the constructionist approaches, see Shrader-Frechette (1991) and Clarke and Short (1993).

Author of the risk-society approach, Beck displays in his writings a realist approach to risk, understanding it as a hazard or danger. However, he is inconsistent in this approach, also highlighting social and cultural processes by which the understanding and perception of risk is filtered (Lupton 1999: 60).

‘Governmentality’ is a term Foucault used to refer to the strategy and rationale that developed in Western Europe in the sixteenth century and dominated politics and social regulations in the eighteenth century (Lupton 1999: 85).

The notion of risk is absent from the neo-classical migration theories in which action results in one outcome, rather than a set of possible outcomes, and is
considered certain because of assumed perfect information flow. There is little space for doubt, uncertainty or risk. The rational actor calculates expected gains on the basis of his or her skill multiplied by the probability of getting a job and then subtracts the anticipated costs from them. Migration is seen as an investment in human capital (Sjöaas 1962). In those theories, the labour market is treated as the migrants’ basic environment whereby choice is institutionalised and conditions are restricted, various variables can be ‘controlled for’ and the outcome of specific actions calculated. This approach has been criticised for failing to take risk into account. It is argued that the market, with high uncertainty and cost of information, is actually responsible for creating a situation where the principle directing the tactics of actors is not maximisation of their income, but rather the prevention of risk (Guilmoto & Sandron 2001:137). In addition, the role of actors, such as the state (which can influence both the political and economic situation) or of the household (which can influence who migrates), is not taken into account in this highly individualistic approach. The focus is thus on the economic aspects of migration and a pure cost-benefit calculation, leaving out the social, political and historical factors.

6 In economics, risk is understood as ‘the fact that the results of any action are not certain, but may take more than one value’ (Black 1977).
7 Migration as a risk strategy has been analysed in earlier economic studies (Elkan 1959).
8 Although the notion of family and household are not synonymous – with the household encompassing the family, but also consisting of non-family members – this paragraph uses them interchangeably, as social and economic units.
9 This contrasts with active recruitment of foreign domestic service by some states, such as the French governesses in Europe in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, as well as the ‘export’ of European domestic servants to colonies in North America and Australia (Sarti 2008).
10 In contrast to domestic work carried out for households, cleaning offices and buildings by cleaning companies is a professionalised domain. Still, the social status and wages for this work remain low (Lutz 2008: 49).
11 In the EU, the au pair system has been regulated by the European Agreement on Au Pair Placement since 1969.
12 Until the late 1980s, neither national nor international law contained articles on the protection of migrant women. Poor unmarried migrant women of an ethnic background different than that of the receiving society’s dominant group were regarded with suspicion, as a potential threat to the society ‘morale’ (Chapkis 2003: 923). Evidence from research on the exploitation of migrant women led to the 1990 adoption of the UN International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families, where migrant women’s status is to some extent recognised. However, the convention does not mention sexual exploitation, victimisation of migrant women workers or the question of legal status of the second generation of migrant women (Hune 1991: 813). Some regulations, at first glance seemingly covering all migrants, protect only a very small fraction of them. For example, the US Trafficking Victims Protection Act exempts only a small group of trafficked migrants from punitive immigration and welfare measures (Chapkis 2003: 924).
13 The demands concerned recognition of domestic work as ‘real work’, a legally enforceable contract of employment, right to health insurance, family life, leisure and personal time and immigration status independent of any employer (http://


16 This research was carried out by the UK domestic workers organisation Kalayaan, recording the experiences of 775 workers.

17 The survey was carried out in eight countries: Germany, Austria, Finland, France, Italy, the Netherlands, Portugal and the UK.


20 For example, in the domestic sector in the UK, only men work as butlers and chauffeurs (Cox 2006). However, Italy and Spain seem to be experiencing a ‘re-masculinisation’ of domestic staff. In Italy, migrant men constituted 15.5 per cent of all domestic workers in 2003. In Spain, 18.5 per cent of those who applied for regularisation as domestics were men (Sarti 2008: 91).

21 In a study carried out in Germany before 2004, migrant domestic workers received, on average, € 810 per hour for cleaning and € 58 per hour for child-care. The monthly salary for elderly care ranged between € 800 and € 1,200 (Lutz 2008: 45-46).

22 An example of how the overall understanding of risk changes can be seen in Britain’s Royal Society report from 1992 that states: ‘the view that a separation can be maintained between “objective” risk and “subjective” or perceived risk has come under increasing attack, to the extent that it is no longer a mainstream position’ (in Adams 1995: 9).

23 In the present-day Western cultural realm, risk is associated primarily with danger. Even though in technical analysis there is focus on both positive and negative possible outcomes, positive aspects of risk-taking tend to be downplayed (Short 1984). Games of chance and competitions are one of the few areas where the positive aspects of risk are accentuated. Knight, among others, claimed that the economic assumption that men are directed toward the ‘satisfaction of wants’ is limited in scope because human beings are generally influenced in their decision-making by emotions, similar to when playing a game (Knight 1973; LeRoy & Singell 1987).
Chapter 3

1 Giddens has been criticised for presenting the notion of reflexivity as requiring a rational, calculating actor; it has been argued that Giddens’ reflexivity is more a response to expert knowledge, whereas risks are dealt with at the everyday, local level (Wynne 1996). He has also been criticised for his notion of reflexivity being overly based on the processing of information, not on signs and symbols (Lash 1993). However, he understands the intentionality of human action in reflexive monitoring as a routine feature. Intentionality does not mean here that an actor has clear goals that he or she is conscious of throughout acting. According to Giddens (1979: 59) the whole process of reflexive monitoring takes place in unacknowledged conditions of action and the intentional action often has unintended consequences.

2 As Giddens (1993: 39) claims: resources are drawn upon by actors in the production of interaction, but are constituted as structures of domination. Resources are the media whereby power is employed in the routine course of social action, but they are at the same time structural elements of social systems, reconstituted in social interaction. Social systems are space: power in social systems can thus be treated as involving reproduced relations of autonomy and dependence in social interaction. Thus, structures of domination imply ‘asymmetries of resources employed in the sustaining of power relations in and between systems of interaction’.

3 In contrast, group social capital involves a particular level of trust, effectiveness of norms and social relations in the group.

4 Although international mobility during Communism was restricted, Poles began engaging in international short-term mobility as early as the 1970s. These were migrations of an exploratory nature, where migrants were investigating prospective opportunities, mainly within the Communist bloc. These short and frequent trips (primarily for petty trade) came to a halt with the introduction of martial law in 1981. Between then and 1988, the second most popular destination place for the majority of migrants after Germany was the US (Okólski 1996: 97). In turn, the 1990s saw a visible return to international temporary migrations among Poles (Jaźwińska 1996: 88). Although Western Europe remained the main destination, migrants chose geographically closer ‘employment centres’, engaging in shorter (i.e. under three months) yet more frequent periods of mobility and participating in activities not in accordance with their tourist entry status, as given by the receiving country (Okólski 1998: 14). For example, in the community of Podlasie, the migration flow went from being bound for the US to Belgium. Trips to the former Soviet Union were no longer dominant; instead, the pull of Germany increased. Since Poland’s 2004 entry into the EU, the country’s six main migration destinations are the UK, Germany, Ireland, Italy, the US and the Netherlands (Kępińska 2007).

5 The stock of foreigners who had permanent residence at the end of 2006 was equal to 54,800 (0.14 per cent of the total population of Poland), with three groups dominating: Germans (primarily because of Poles’ double citizenship), Ukrainians and Russians. Asylum applicants have mainly been nationals of the Russian Federation (mostly Chechens) (Kępińska 2007).

6 This is partially due to the fact that border guards upon return to Ukraine check registration.

7 A total of 39,673 foreigners was registered for temporary stay.
8 The total comprised 5,563 persons.
9 The bazaar’s location at the sports stadium was closed in September 2007. The traders were moved to new bazaar areas.
10 Each interview lasted between one and two hours. All the interviews, apart from one, were recorded and fully transcribed. Some of the stories of the migrant women interviewed are presented in detail, while others are only briefly mentioned. This is mainly related to the quality of the interviews, some of the women being much more talkative and expressive in relating their stories. I use pseudonyms for all of the migrants.
11 The interview script was partly based on an analysis of interviews selected from CMR archives. I attempted to identify key themes in the experience of women migrating to perform undeclared work and the role of risk in this experience. The interview script is semi-structured and semi-standardised. It consists of open-ended questions, starting with those concerning the women’s overall life experiences before migration (education, employment, material situation, internal migration), which allowed me to gather – apart from my demographic questions at the end of the interview – some background data about the respondent. This helped me understand their motivations for migration and the risks they had experienced in their country of origin, such as working in an undeclared fashion. Following up on this were questions about experiences of their first trips to Poland, crossing the Polish-Ukrainian border and at their workplaces. This allowed me to find out about strategies of entrance, stay and finding work in Poland. I continued with questions concerning their current working conditions, everyday strategies and reflections on fears and hopes related to their migration to Poland. After the first two interviews, I rephrased some questions in the interview script that the interviewees did not seem to find comprehensible.
12 The use of Ukrainian seems to have influenced the quality and type of information provided during the interview. An interview conducted in Ukrainian made me a person that the migrants could trust, and the interviewees were willing to share more of their negative experiences with Polish employers and other Poles.
13 Obviously, this meant that the presence of the cared-for person could have had an influence on the quality of the interview. However, the cared-for person usually was in a separate room from where I conducted the interview. I am also aware of other factors that influenced the quality of the data gathered: the fact that I am Polish as well as the fact that I come from a milieu from which many of the migrant women’s employers originated. However, thanks to the time I spent with them as well as my learning to speak Ukrainian, I was able to build a certain amount of trust in these relationships.

Chapter 4

1 The phenomenon of people being officially employed in a company but not receiving any pay is also referred to as under-employment (Dudwick et al. 2002).
2 Throughout the book, euro equivalents of Polish zloty and Ukrainian hryvnia are generally given. The currency is given in US dollar equivalents if that is how it is specifically relayed in the stories of the migrant women or in the original sources.
3 According to a study monitoring social changes in Ukrainian society, in 1995 there was a high level of distrust towards Parliament (60 per cent) and government (49
per cent) and an even higher lack of trust towards political parties (67 per cent) (Panina 2005: tables d6.13, d6.14, d6.18). Between 1994 and 2005, the majority of Ukrainians continued to trust their family and relatives. However, in 1994 they tended to distrust (19 per cent) and were uncertain whether to trust (47 per cent) their compatriots (Panina 2005: 4041, tables d6.1, d6.2).

Field-work on 16 December 2004 in Warsaw. Interviewee no. 1 (see Appendix).

Field notes from meeting in Larysa’s living space in Warsaw – a garage – on 26 December 2005.

All references to ‘dollars’ or use of the $ sign throughout this book refer to US dollars.

Field notes from August 2005, town B., Ukraine.

Field research 6 August 2005 in village K-B, Ukraine.

Fieldnotes from 19 December 2004, Warsaw.

A similar phenomenon was noted by Ho (2005) in her study on women in Taiwan.

This follows a pattern visible in a study conducted by the Centre of Migration Research (CMR) at the University of Warsaw in the 1990s. According to this research, the majority of migrant workers in Poland experienced a higher sense of physical security than foreign traders. This was due to the fact that they were not exposed to extortion by criminals, encounters with police and direct conflicts with Poles competing for their work (Stola 1997).

In the nineteenth century in Galicia (today partly Ukrainian western borderland), the Polish-Ukrainian conflict was based on strong social tensions (Szporluk 2004:21). The social segmentation to a large extent reflected the two ethnicities. In general, Poles belonged to the landowning strata, while the Ruthenians (western Ukrainians) were peasants. At that time, Poles attempted to become independent (in the eighteenth century, the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth was partitioned into Prussia, Russia and Habsburg Austria). But Ukrainians were denied the right to their own state (Konieczna 2003: 1; Szporluk 2004: 21). The ethnic conflicts existing during the Second Polish Republic (1918-1939) were aggravated during World War II as a consequence of German and Russian politics (Motyka 1997, 2000). After the war, Poland’s borders were shifted: its eastern borderland (today Ukrainian western borderland) became part of the Soviet Union. For this reason, some Poles refer to the Ukrainian western borderland as the lost ‘outskirts’ (kresy in Polish).

Poland has also a large Ukrainian minority (Łodziński 2003; Berdychowska 1998). However, at the time of carrying out this research there were almost no ties between Ukrainian labour migrants and the Ukrainian minority (Stefańska 2008). The minority did not identify with the migrants, largely perceiving them through negative stereotypes similar to those present in Polish society (Konieczna 2003: 21).

Taras Babiy, ‘Strashne Kino (Horrific cinema)’, Ekspress 105 (2964) 810. 09.06; Olecya Pasternak, ‘Mama v Itali (Mother in Italy)’, Vysokiy Zamok 172 (3335).

A much broader approach to parenthood and motherhood is present in migrant domestic work literature, acknowledging that it is historically and socially constructed, with contemporary variants distinguished according to ethnicity, class and culture. The term ‘transnational motherhood’ is used in various studies to explore the changing meaning of motherhood, trying to accommodate spatial and temporal separation (Hondagneu-Sotelo & Avilla 1997: 548; Lutz 2004: 54; Parreñas 2005: 319). Also, transnational care of the elderly is addressed, looking at the way ageing parents and adult children who live at a distance relate to one
another (Baldassar 2007). Family identities, in the same way as national and ethnic identities, can be maintained across time and negotiate space via particular rituals (Baldassar 2007: 276; Gardner & Grillo 2002).

By way of comparison, in 2003, there were 25 divorces per 100 marriages in Poland (every fourth marriage fell apart) and 34 divorces per 100 marriages in the EU-25 (every third marriage fell apart). However, in other former Soviet Republics (such as Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania), the number of divorces almost equalled (and in some cases exceeded) the number of marriages. http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/areas/qualityoflife/eurlife/index.php?template=3&radioindic=54&kidDomain=5; accessed 25 September 2010). In 2005, the ratio of divorce to contracted marriages in Poland was approximately one to three (GUS 2010: 179; table 1(16)); The total divorce rate in Europe ranges from fewer than ten divorces per 100 initial marriages to more than 50 (Sobotka & Toulman 2008: 110).

The study was carried out on the basis of semi-structured interviews with 103 children of labour migrants, between ages twelve and seventeen, experts and members of the children’s social environment. Parents of most of the children in this study had been abroad for one to three years at the time of the interview. According to the experts, families ought to be registered for specific surveillance, especially with law enforcement agencies, if both parents are away for 13 months or if one parent is abroad for over one year. This means that the experts do consider the children to be potential criminals in the first place, and only then as victims of violence (Halustyan et al. 2006: 14). In Ukraine, parents can be deprived of parental rights, following article 164 of the Family Code in Ukraine. Experts claimed that this could happen if the parents do not keep in touch with the child, if they do not provide financial support and if they have committed crimes or are using abusive substances (Halustyan et al. 2006: 16).

According to my informers, the Schengen visa combined with the trip to Italy costs €1,500-2,000. In comparison, the Polish visa, including a necessary bribe, costs $100 and the trip to Poland costs PLN 70-100 (approximately €22-25).

Chapter 5

Goss and Lindquist (1995) used Giddens’ concept of institution to analyse the process of labour migration. According to Giddens, institutions are the most deeply layered social strategies. They are strategies that are very well known to the members of a society; the knowledge of these strategies is involved in the functioning of the society. Individuals and institutions interact in a reflexive relationship in a reorganised time and space context.


The Aliens Act of 1963 (Journal of Law 1963, no. 15) was passed under Communism, when immigration to Poland hardly existed and was thus not a subject of public debate. Since the main trend experienced was emigration, the state tended to focus not on entry, but on exit policy.

In 1991, Poland became a member of the Council of Europe and began to participate in the creation of a common strategy towards migration. It signed the Geneva Convention and the New York Protocol. In 1992, UNHCR opened its office in Poland. In 1993, Poland signed agreements with Schengen countries regarding readmission. Regional cooperation also developed with Poland joining the Berlin
Group in 1991: work began on issues of illegal migration, border control and re-entry agreements, later known as the readmission agreements. In 1993, an agreement between Poland and Germany was signed on cooperation in combating the consequences of migration flows (in force since June 1993). Poland received 120 million DM from Germany as compensation for the costs of intake of readmitted persons; the money was spent on border infrastructure and asylum infrastructure (Weinar 2006: 4; Kicinger 2005: 5).

In December 2007, Poland entered the Schengen zone and changed the visa requirements for Ukrainian citizens, who are currently able to enter Poland either on a Schengen visa or a national visa.

According to the interviewees, the fee was in the €1,500-2,000 range in 2005.

The JHA chapter began in 2000 and included implementation of the Schengen acquis.

Poland received funds from the PHARE programme, which were also spent on training and workshops.

Aliens Act of 25 June 1997 (Journal of Law 1997, no. 114, item 739). That same year, Polish Parliament adopted a new constitution, stating that foreigners should enjoy equal rights with the country’s nationals and any restrictions to this rule must be justified and specified by law.

Reasons include the foreigner being a danger to state security or public health and the state having a well-founded suspicion of the foreigner participating in terrorism, smuggling or trafficking. The act also incorporated regulations of entrance to Poland that until then were contained in the Act on Border Guards of 12 October 1990 (Journal of Law no. 78, item 462).


Act on Population Registration and Identity Documents (Journal of Law 2006, no. 139, item 993).


The Aliens Act of 13 June 2003 with amendments (Journal of Law 2003, no. 128, item 1175). At that time, the Act on Granting Protection to Aliens (Journal of Law 2003, no. 128, item 1176) was also implemented.

Council Regulations (EC) No 539/2001 of 15 March 2001 lists countries whose nationals must be in possession of visas when crossing the external borders and those whose nationals are exempt from the requirement: http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CONSLEG:2001R0539:20070119:EN:PDF.

In such cases, a person is obliged to leave Poland within seven days. Other reasons for expulsion are an attempt at crossing the border illegally, failure to leave Poland within the time specified by the authorities and failing to meet fiscal obligations.

A foreigner had the right to appeal this decision. A deported person had his or her photograph and fingerprints taken. Data on deported persons was kept by the border guard in an index on aliens whose stay in Poland is seen as undesirable.

A voivodship refers to an administrative unit or province.


The agreement from 1994 set the following conditions of work: 1) it gave Ukrainian workers in Poland protection under the Polish Labour Code; 2) it restricted the worker to carrying out only the activity for which the work permit was issued; 3) employment could not exceed twelve months; 4) the Polish employer was responsible for submitting all requisite documents and paying the application fees.


When this research was being carried out, this amount was equal to approximately PLN 900 (approximately € 225).

Since 2007, the cost of applying to employ a foreigner has substantially decreased: it costs PLN 100 for the first application and PLN 50 for subsequent ones.

Journal of Law 2003, no. 128, item 1175.

Entering as tourists to carry out economic activities for profit was also a known strategy of Polish migrants (Jaźwińska & Okólski 2001).

During my study visit to the Polish-Ukrainian border in August 2006, some of the Polish border guards mentioned being aware of the fact that the majority of crossing Ukrainians intended to work in Poland. The guards claimed they had to show a certain degree of ‘tolerance’ and, for that reason, introduced informal rules – based on how often the person had already crossed the border and for how long he or she had stayed in Poland – to determine whether to let the person pass. In the case of young men, they looked at their hands, trying to check if they were bruised from manual labour. The guards claimed that if they were to follow the regulations strictly, traffic at the Polish-Ukrainian border would come to a halt.


By 2003, there were Polish consulates in the Ukrainian cities of Kiev, Lviv, Lutsk, Kharkiv and Odessa. Initially, right after the introduction of visas, up to 2,000 persons would queue daily at the consulates in Lviv and Łuck, fewer in Kiev. Between October 2003 and September 2004, more than 600,000 visas were issued to citizens of Ukraine, with a large share of visas issued in the Ukrainian western borderlands, approximately 210,000 in Lviv and 190,000 in Łuck (Boratyński, Burakowskyj & Dodonow 2004: 44, 63).

At the time of this study, the Lviv consulate had introduced a computerised service assigning ‘queue numbers’. However, few of the potential migrants, who generally came from rural areas and small towns, had home access to the internet. A new informal service appeared: in exchange for a few dollars, one could obtain a ‘queue number’ from a van parked in front of the consulate that had a computer with internet access. The computerised queuing was abandoned in 2008 due to hackers cracking the system and selling the queue numbers.

‘During participant observation in January 2005, going from Ukraine to Poland, I learned about how this service worked and who its users were. My fieldnotes are as follows:

I. [the driver] was supposed to arrive at ten in the morning. Before ten o’clock, a neighbour of Z. [woman who works as a cleaner in Warsa w] tells us that I. called and said that he would be there at 1 p.m. [Z. does not have a phone in her house]. Apparently one of the passengers could not leave in the morning and asked him to postpone the trip until the afternoon. At 1:30 p.m. he arrives and picks me up from the house of Z. From there, we go to the nearby town of M. to pick up a man who has been migrating to Poland for six years already – at first he worked in construction, then traded homemade vodka at the Stadion, now again he works for a construction company (he got the contact from someone at the Stadion) laying bricks and painting. He told me how he carefully wrote down all his hours of work, because his boss owes him money now. He
has a new passport now and so he enters Poland once on the old one and once on the new one. [...] He is a retired music teacher. His wife is ill and he claims that the money he earns in Poland allows him to provide medical treatment for her. His son also used to work in Poland. From this town, we drive to Lviv to pick up two more people from the train station. One of them, a woman, is from a village right next to the border. She speaks Polish very well. She is going to Poland to a textile company, where she had already worked once before. She said it is difficult because they get no free days during the week and they are not allowed to leave the premises of the company. Before that, she worked collecting cherries. The third person is an Armenian with a Ukrainian passport, who stays in Poland on the basis of a temporary residence permit. He claims to be married to a Polish woman, wears a long black coat, dark sunglasses and a signet ring on his finger. His clothes and overall appearance contrast with the rather impoverished looks of other passengers.

Waiting in the queue concerns only private vehicles, since buses have a separate lane to pass the border-crossing point.

Participant observation at one of the Ukrainian-Polish border-crossing points in February 2006.

The fee amount was arbitrarily established by the border guards.

In 2005, 2,260 marriages between Polish citizens and foreigners took place in Poland. Of those, 168 involved a Ukrainian citizen (Kępińska 2006: 72, table 26). Since October 2005, marriage to a Polish citizen has also protected a foreigner from deportation (Kępińska 2005: 20).

For more information on bazaars in Poland, see Peterlik (2000).

Chapter 6


The number of those accepting foreigners at every job in Poland has quadrupled since 1992.

According to projections, those aged 65 and older will rise to 29.4 per cent in 2050. According to 2002 census data, the total population of Poland comprised 38,230,000 persons (GUS 2007: 111, table 1 (61)).

This is due to the birth ratio being lower in Poland than in old EU member states.

Between 1999 and 2002, total health expenses in Poland constituted between 5 and 6 per cent of GDP, which is the second-lowest figure in Europe after Slovakia (Nunckowska & Perek-Białas 2004: 20). In 2002, investment in health care in Poland was the lowest among selected OECD countries.

The Law on Public Benefit Activity and Volunteering of 24 April 24 2003 states that the public administration is responsible for implementing public tasks in cooperation with civil society associations. Among the objectives of such cooperation is the provision of nursing services as well as development of long-term care facilities and hospice care facilities (Nunckowska & Perek-Białas 2004: 29). According to the Constitution of 1997, the state is obliged to provide special health care to children, the disabled and the elderly (article 68). However, the article remains largely a letter of the law (Journal of Law 2003, no. 96, item 873).
In 2001, a research project involving 1,603 non-governmental organisations was carried out in Warsaw. Of them, 280 declared that they provided care services for the elderly (CIS 2001).

Labour Code article 186 paragraph 1 and article 189 (1) paragraph 1, the act of 1 December 1998 on family, child-care and nursing allowances (Journal of Law 1998, no. 102, item 651) and the ordinance of MOLSP of 28 May 1996 on leaves and child-care allowances (Journal of Law 1996, no. 60, item 277 with subsequent amendments).

In 2001, a new law was introduced allowing fathers to take the last ten weeks of their partner’s maternity leave, if the mother decides to return to work. This provision was later modified, allowing parents to divide the extended leave into four periods and decide who will stay home during which period (Saxonberg & Szelewa 2007: 363). However, men are generally not expected to use these benefits in Poland.

Those looking for domestic elderly care in Poland usually do so through informal arrangements. According to opinion polls, elderly people receive most help from family and neighbours. The least help is received from institutions that are officially responsible for the care provision (CBOS 2000). Compared to the period before 1989, more senior citizens live together with their children and children’s families. This also means that grandparents are close by to care for their grandchildren, compensating for the lack of institutional child-care. Interestingly, care services given by the elderly are more substantial than those they receive (Czekanowski 2002). According to research carried out by CBOS, the role of grandparents in raising grandchildren increases from generation to generation, in contrast to trends observed in Western Europe (CBOS 2008). Almost half of all adult Poles (47 per cent) received care from their grandparents when they were children. Taking into account the fact that 14 per cent of the respondents never met their grandparents (the latter had died before their grandchildren were born), this makes grandparents a substantial source of care support and shows how much the family in Poland depends on informal care solutions (CBOS 2008: 3).

Declared remunerated domestic care and housework in Poland is carried out on the basis of a written contract of paid services, i.e. the ‘activating contract’, which is regulated by the Polish Civil Code. Polish men and women are officially employed as cleaners and care workers by cleaning and care agencies as well as public institutions, such as schools and hospitals.

According to the 2002 population census, there are 13,337,000 households in Poland.

In 2006, the Mazowieckie province only issued 4,743 permits, 899 of which went to women.

The following categories of workers were issued permits by the Mazowieckie labour office: care worker (24), child-care worker/housekeeper (4), care worker for a person with Parkinson’s disease (2), house care worker (71), home-based child-care worker (2), child-care worker (4), child-care worker, home (14), care worker for a disabled person (1), care worker for an elderly person (1), care worker for a person with a disability (1), elderly care worker (6), domestic help (103) and housekeeper (4) (categories and data derived from the migration department of the Mazowieckie Voivodship labour office).

Furthermore, 7,069 Ukrainian women registered their stay in Poland (Kępińska 2007: table 19).

In neither my interviews nor informal conversations with the migrant women in
Poland did I come across any information on the phenomenon of migrants charging a fee for job referrals, as is practised in Italy (for the case of Filipino migrant domestic workers in Italy, see Pareñas 2001).

17 By 2010, the hourly wage rose to a range of PLN 1015.

18 In 2000, the average level of earnings on the Polish labour market was equal to PLN 1,894 (approximately € 470); in 2005, it was PLN 2,361 (approximately € 590).

19 Ukrainian women had a different experience from the Filipina domestic workers in Hong Kong in Constable’s (2003: 133) studies, who had separate ‘servant areas’. Spatial division in the household changed the dynamics in the power relation, which were clearly outlined by spatial segregation.

20 Piore (1979) claimed that accepting work in the secondary labour market is possible for the temporary labour migrant because he or she separates social status from work status. The social status is related to the position in the country of origin, but not in the receiving society.

21 Referring to it as ‘contradictory class mobility’, this phenomenon was observed by Parreñas (2000: 150, 244) in her study on migrant Filipina domestic workers in Rome and Los Angeles. This contradiction occurs due to a decline in the migrants’ occupational status and an increase in their earnings. The Filipina women in Parreñas’ study experienced underemployment as an ‘excruciatingly painful experience’.

22 A similar finding was noted in research carried out by Rosińska-Kordasiewicz (2010) on Polish women in the Italian domestic sector.

23 Female domination of the household in Poland compelled researchers to coin the term ‘matriarchal manager’ (Titkow, Duch-Krzystoszek & Budrowska 2004), describing women who build their social status around their role as mother and wife. The concept serves as a possible explanation for the treatment some of the interviewees experienced.

Chapter 7

1 According to the opinion polls carried out in the late 1990s, over half of Poles declared a dislike of Ukrainians (CBOS 1998, 1999a). This negative attitude towards Ukrainians changed to some extent in 2004: Poles not only sympathised with, but often actively supported, the Orange Revolution in Ukraine (CBOS 2004). However, in the following years the same level of negative attitudes was visible, showing the strength of historically rooted ethnic stereotypes (CBOS 2005, 2006).