

RESEARCH

**REPORTS**

RECOMMENDATIONS

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# MIGRANTS' LEISURE AND INTEGRATION

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## Migrants' leisure and integration

### Abstract:

Leisure is an often overlooked dimension of migrants' experience. The article is aimed at drawing policy-makers' and other stakeholders' attention to leisure as an important dimension of the migration experience, characterized by certain regularities. It is an overview of migrants' leisure choices and the influence of these on migrants' adaptation to receiving societies and their chances on job markets, as well as their general wellbeing.

### Tytuł: Czas wolny i adaptacja migrantów

### Streszczenie:

Domena czasu wolnego rzadko jest brana pod uwagę jako istotny wymiar życia migrantów. Artykuł stawia sobie cel zwrócenia uwagi aktorów odpowiedzialnych za politykę migracyjną oraz integrację imigrantów na domenę czasu wolnego, gdyż jest to istotny wymiar doświadczenia migracyjnego. Artykuł ukazuje pewne prawidłowości w wyborze sposobów spędzania czasu wolnego przez migrantów. Analizie poddany jest wpływ tych wyborów na adaptację migrantów w społeczeństwie przyjmującym, ich szanse na rynku pracy oraz dobrostan migrantów.

Understanding the subjective experience of migration is the key to understanding migration (Portes & Rumbaut 1996: 156). Migration can cause negative effects for individuals (illness, isolation, professional degradation etc.). It can also be seen as problematic for sending and receiving societies. However, another angle from which migration processes can be viewed is related to the positive potentials that migration engenders: personal betterment and empowerment for individuals as well as benefits from migrants' presence for receiving societies. Therefore, what makes migrants satisfied and confident in host societies deserves to be taken seriously. Following

other researchers, it is suggested here that stakeholders who participate in migration-related policy-making and public advocacy need to understand the “salutogenic” responses of migrants to their new conditions, i.e. responses that result in keeping people physically and mentally healthy and give them strength to cope with the “makeshift reality” of transnational life (Portes & Rumbaut 1996; cf. Liu Farrer 2004: 672). This article aims at demonstrating that one of the dimensions that has the potential to trigger “salutogenic” responses is **migrants’ leisure**.

The article is divided into seven sub-sections. (1) The concept of leisure is defined in relation to individual aspirations and the needs of society. (2) The functions of migrants’ leisure are discussed. (3) The differences between the mainstream population’s leisure and migrants’ leisure are outlined. (4) The causes of leisure constraints for migrants and minorities are discussed from the point of view of economic-centred and culture-centred approaches. (5) The leisure constraints that are concomitant with migration are presented on the basis of existing research findings. (6) The differentiation of leisure choices within migrant groups is discussed to provide a more nuanced account of the phenomenon and raise awareness of its complexity. (7) Finally, on the basis of academic research and best practices in this sphere, tentative recommendations are put forward on how to alleviate leisure constraints and facilitate migrants’ integration through leisure.

### *The meanings of leisure*

Leisure is commonly defined in contrast to work: while work is disciplined time, leisure is **free time**. Labour and leisure are two sides of one coin: modern society. Being an effect of industrialization, leisure is a historical notion. While in traditional societies, productive and non-productive activities were intermingled and did not have clear institutional or practical boundaries, in modern societies paid employment has institutionally delineated time off work (Thompson 1967; cf. Rojek 2010). This time is used to **recover from work**: to sleep, cater for basic bodily functions and socialize. Not surprisingly, many of the demands of the workers’ movement revolved around the issue of leisure: the limitation of working hours, free Saturdays and paid leave. Commentators note that the “right to leisure” was explained in terms of health and family needs (cf. Veal 2002), but it was also becoming a goal in itself, as in Paul Lafargue’s famous pamphlet entitled “The Right to Be Lazy” (Lafarge [1880] 2011).

The leisure of people engaged in paid employment was a matter of concern not only for themselves but also for their **employers and the state** (Rojek 1985). In the case of

employers, the healthy non-destructive leisure of workers was often seen as a guarantee of higher productivity. In the case of the state, the organization and institutionalization of its citizens' leisure were means of control as well as of mass mobilization and socialization of the population (cf. Urry 2002).

A brief outline of the historically shaped facets of leisure points to some of its characteristics. Other features of the concept are derived from classical philosophical discourse. Freedom of choice and **volunteerism** are components that used to be seen as inseparable features of leisure. Leisure is philosophically a domain of free will. However, sociological research demonstrates that free will is usually **socially guided**: the opinions and reactions of meaningful others, socio-economic limitations, considerations of good taste or moral value – all these factors influence individuals' choices of leisurely pursuits.

What is more, classical definitions of leisure (e.g. by Aristotle), which identified it with activities – or rather contemplation – without any pragmatic goal, have long been discarded (cf. Dewey [1916] 2011). The idea of investing in oneself during free time has gained more currency. These investments are aimed at building one's image (cf. Veblen [1899] 2008), maintaining social networks and developing emotional intelligence (Rojek 2010; cf. Hochschild 2003). In post-industrial societies, in which service economies have superseded the traditional industrial sectors as the main spheres of employment, leisure gets involved in the processes of building an individual's **social and cultural capital** and can therefore participate in reinforcing the mechanisms of intersectional exclusion. The intersectionality of exclusion is to be understood as the amplification and deepening of exclusion of individuals who belong to more than one marginalized category, e.g. non-white migrant women in Europe.

In the case of groups that are prone to intersectional exclusion, which is the case for migrants, it is important to study leisure as a “venue for making and expressing identity” and “explore how leisure contributes to community cohesion and conflict” (Williams 2002: 353). Leaving this sphere understudied may lead to important dimensions of exclusion being ignored and prevent sensible solutions for cohesive communities from being designed.

Moreover, since migration has become an indiscernible feature of contemporary societies, a constant effort to study migrants' leisure is vital. It should concentrate on how leisure functions as a mechanism of adaptation and identity building, on what the leisure constraints are that are reinforced or emerge as a result of migration, and on what the role of leisure is in developing a sense of belonging to a new place. The

task is even more urgent in the case of new immigration countries, such as Poland. Learning from the experience of countries with a longer history of immigration and carrying out detailed studies of country-specific and migrant group-specific leisure patterns is a pending task.

### *The functions of migrants' leisure for individuals and receiving societies*

The significance of migrants' leisure stems from the role leisure plays in individuals' lives. At the same time, leisure pursuits of migrants bear consequences for the receiving society both at the level of the nation state and the local community.

<b>For individuals, migrants' leisure means:</b>	<b>For the receiving society migrants' leisure means:</b>
Physical health -prevention of obesity -prevention of cardio-vascular diseases Psychological well-being -self-esteem -life satisfaction -harmony with self/environment & comfort -preventing depression Recuperation from work Emotions Identity -maintenance -expression -self-realization Prestige Contacts/networks building -among mainstream society -among other minorities -among own group Inclusion -adjustment, adaptation, integration -developing sense of belonging/place Cognitive/experiential function -acquiring knowledge, information -acquiring skills Threats stemming from illicit leisure -addictions -entanglement with organized crime	Physically and mentally fit labour force Less strain on public services (healthcare etc.) Richer cultural life Social problems (prevention) Crime (prevention) Conflict (prevention) Cohesion

Table 1. Functions of migrants' leisure from the perspectives of migrants and receiving society

The multifaceted character of leisure outlined in the table above illustrates the complexity of leisure. On the one hand, leisure is subjectively perceived as a domain of freedom and is therefore “salutogenic”, for it allows people to recuperate from work,

experience positive emotions and thereby build a sense of self-esteem and self-realization. Meaningful leisure contributes to an **individual's identity** reconstruction in the aftermath of migration (Stack & Iwasaki 2009); limited access to leisure can augment physical and psychological ailments of migrants. Research among elderly Korean women in the USA has demonstrated, for instance, that non-participation in leisure was correlated with low life-satisfaction (Kim 2000). In a similar vein, a study on Chinese social dance parties in Tokyo has provided ethnographic data on how “dance was obviously used as a shelter and social haven by the participants” (Liu Farrer 2004: 668). Migrants used dance parties and social occasions that ensued in order to have some “time away” from mainstream society, use Chinese language and listen to familiar music. Additionally, engaging in “salutogenic” leisure has beneficial spill-over effects for other spheres of individuals' lives: e.g., good health stemming from physical exercise is important for family life and work prospects.

On the other hand, leisure is also important in building and maintaining a **social group**. The processes of fostering ethnic solidarity and maintaining ethnic identity can run parallel to individual identity building, as in the case of Chinese social dance parties in Tokyo. Chinese identity was “played out” by participants in the parties. They performed and celebrated a kind of Chinese identity that was a new construct imbued with many anachronistic meanings and symbols (Liu Farrer 2004: 659). Nevertheless, the sense of fellowship and belonging to an ethnic group shared by the participants of social dance parties was authentic (despite internal differentiation of the Chinese community). Similar effects have been registered for the practice of cultivating gastronomic traditions among Italian immigrants in Chicago (Poe 2001). Immigrants who came from various parts of Italy were creating a new Italian American identity through the practices of cooking and eating together.

Apart from maintaining individual and group identities, leisure plays a role in migrants' adaptation to the receiving society through opening up opportunities of **contacts** with the mainstream population and ethnic group members (Stodolska & Yi-Kook 2003; Stodolska & Alexandris 2004; Kim 2012) and facilitates positive inter-ethnic and inter-racial interactions. In particular, participating in sports (and for parents: supporting children in their sport activities) entails cross-group contacts (Lee & Funk 2011; Stodolska & Alexandris 2004). Importantly, these contacts have a slightly different character than contacts at work. Arguably, leisure time contacts are less stressful and entangled in power relations, and more relaxed.

Another feature of leisure activities – diversity (from walking in a park to going to the cinema, from aerobics to going to car-boot sales etc.) – is important in offering varied

modes of coming into contact with the receiving society and thus gaining knowledge about its daily routines, cultural behaviours of its members and the like. In this respect, leisure is conducive to **adaptation** to the receiving society (Kloeze 2001; Stack & Iwasaki 2009). For instance, food preparation and consumption in Bosnian refugee families in Sweden was not only a venue for maintaining normalcy and retaining ethnic identity (e.g. through discussions of the different taste of food in Sweden and memories of home foods) but also a venue for experimenting with new recipes and products (Brembeck 2008). Women were negotiating the meanings of new dishes and eating habits, combining the new with the familiar and thus including them in their daily routines. “One woman spoke of discovering a shrimp, a specialty of the Swedish west coast where Göteborg is situated; this was not used in Bosnia but was now an excellent ingredient in Bosnian pie. So she has created her own Bosnian/Swedish pie” (ibid: 31).

The societal perspective on migrants’ leisure is similar to that of individuals in some respects, yet rather divergent – in others. The state should take an interest in migrants’ leisure because of the “salutogenic” potential of leisure, i.e. the promise of keeping people healthy and fit to participate in the labour market. This also reduces the demand for a variety of public sector services (e.g. the health care system). The other important societal benefit of migrants’ leisure is the promise of integration and community cohesion. However, in this respect, a two-way adjustment and adaptation is considerably more realistic than the expectation that migrants will undertake efforts to adjust while the receiving society (and particular local communities) will be passive. Leisure as a venue of ethnic identity maintenance may be viewed as contrary to the abovementioned goal of cohesion; however, this depends on the broader definitions of societal goals and integration projects (cf. Favell 2001). Maintaining ethnic identity can also be seen as a contribution to individuals’ and the group’s strength and interest in public affairs, and thereby beneficial for the prospects of individuals’ participation in the civic life of a broader community, including political participation. In parallel, the civic participation of migrants, which is pivotal for the political integration of new minorities, can clearly be facilitated by membership in recreation associations and pursuing other organized leisure activities (Stodolska & Alexandris 2004).

One more aspect of societal interest in migrants’ leisure has to be kept in mind. Social researchers point out that sport and leisure programmes in Europe have quite often been associated with programmes aimed at crime prevention and surveillance and have thus resulted in stigmatizing minority groups (e.g. “British Muslims”). Therefore,

scholars and practitioners warn that there is “a need to be cautious about the promotion of using people’s free time to address deep-seated inequalities and issues of inclusion or integration” (Long et al. 2011: 8-9). Reflexivity and in-depth multi-faceted knowledge about particular migrant groups, their internal diversity and histories of mobility as well as local, regional and national leisure contexts are needed in order to draw up sensible proposals aimed at improving leisure access for migrants and minorities.

*Differences between the mainstream population’s and migrants’ leisure*

Understanding the differences between mainstream and minority leisure is a pre-condition for understanding migrants’ leisure. A study of racial and ethnic minorities’ leisure in the US has shown that a larger proportion of the African American (52%) and Latino population (54%) does not participate in leisure-time physical activity (LTPA) compared to the white American population (40%) (Floyd et al. 2008). Similarly, race has been responsible for the differences in preferences for individual-centred pursuits in wild-life settings (White Americans) over group-centred urban pursuits preferred by Black Americans (Washburne 1978; Juniu 2000). Regional national parks and reserves were found to be more often visited by white patrons, while urban parks – by people of colour (ibid.).

In a similar way, migrants’ leisure pursuits diverge from those of mainstream community members. Statistical data from Australia can illustrate this difference:

Activity	Australian born population	Non-Australian born population
walk	24.9%	20%
aerobics	12.9%	10.1%
swimming pool	9%	7.5%
tennis	5.3%	2.8%

Table 2. Physical activity among the Australian-born and immigrant population in Australia, 2009-2010 [source: *Australian Bureau of Statistics*(2010)]

While the three most frequently practiced leisure-time physical activities among Australians were only slightly less popular among migrants than among the mainstream population, tennis – a sport which requires more economic, cultural and social capital – was significantly less popular among the migrant population. The

limited access of migrants to leisure pursuits is even more visible in statistics on children’s leisure:

Activity	Australian-born children	Non-Australian-born children from non-English countries
<i>physical activities</i>		
bicycle	61.3%	42%
other sports	39.8%	22%
<i>cultural activities</i>		
Going to cinema	68.3%	51%
Going to museum	41.5%	33.4%
Going to public library	53%	60.7%
Read for pleasure	71.8%	75.2%

Table 3. Physical and cultural activity among Australian-born and immigrant children in Australia, 2009-2010 [source: *Australian Bureau of Statistics* (2010)]

The discrepancy in the active practice of physical activity is most visible; among cultural activities, all children irrespective of origins devote most time to TV and screen-related activities (computer, video-games). Yet, similarly to adult immigrants, immigrant children have a preference for low-cost cultural activities (like reading books, which is more popular with immigrant children) rather than going to the cinema (this activity is significantly more frequently practiced by Australian-born children).

The difference in migrants’ leisure patterns as compared to the mainstream population can be caused by a number of factors that will be examined in the following section.

### *Leisure constraints – approaches*

Research on leisure constraints that migrants and minorities face, though not extremely prominent in migration studies compared to studies on legal, economic and political aspects of the processes, has produced several conceptual models accounting for the disadvantaged access to leisure facilities and leisure venues among migrants (cf. Aizlewood, Bevelander & Pendakur 2006: 5-6). They are enumerated below with short explanations:

1) The **Marginality** approach suggests that migrants are a marginal group (similarly to racial minorities or physically disabled people); the mechanisms of discrimination and

inequality in society are held responsible for migrants' exclusion from leisure (Washburne 1978; Juniu 2000; Floyd 1998).

2) The **Opportunity** approach holds that migrants lack opportunity due to limited economic resources and a disadvantageous position with regard to spatial resources (housing in impoverished areas, limited access to parks etc.); within this approach, it is believed that if provided with opportunities, migrants would have more or less the same leisure participation as the mainstream society (cf. Aizlewood, Bevelander & Pendakur 2006: 5).

3) The **Ethnicity** approach: in contrast to the previous suggestions, here migrants' ethnicity is held responsible for the different patterns of leisure participation. Within this approach, ethnicity is treated as a set of relatively stable cultural norms, values and patterns of behaviour that pre-determine individuals' choices in the sphere of leisure as well (Washburne 1978; Yu & Berryman 1996; cf. Stodolska & Yi-Kook 2003).

4) The **Identity** approach suggests that the avoidance of mainstream leisure venues is a conscious choice of migrants who thereby maintain their ethnic identity, which is perceived by them as being threatened by migration (Noel 1991; Poe 2001).

5) The **Compensatory** approach: migrants are faced with exclusion from mainstream society. Noting the effects of the "glass ceiling", they create alternative leisure venues where they can achieve the leisure goals they cannot achieve using leisure facilities/spaces of mainstream society; this relates, for instance, to discerning a sense of dignity and social prestige from leisure (cf. Stodolska 1998; Stodolska & Alexandris 2004; see also Stodolska 2000, on fishing as an element of Polish immigrant sub-culture in Canada). The compensatory approach that accounts for the need for social dignity and prestige is also useful in analysing the involvement in "serious leisure" (Stebbins 1992), such as membership of recreational or hobbyist clubs and associations, but also public engagement that stretches over the boundary between leisure and civic activity.

In empirical studies adopting these theoretical approaches, particular leisure patterns are treated as indicators of the degree of adaptation, while limitations to leisure participation are treated as a potential source of marginalization. However, the accents are placed differently with regard to the cause of deprivation. The five outlined approaches differ in accentuating **economic and political causes** of leisure constraints (marginality and opportunity approaches) versus **cultural causes** of limited access to mainstream leisure (ethnicity and identity approach). The compensatory approach is pragmatic in that it interprets culturally distinct forms of

leisure pursued by migrants as a rational and active reaction on the part of migrants to exclusion.

When designing measures aimed at alleviating leisure constraints among migrant populations, it is important to combine approaches that account for economic as well as cultural causes of limited leisure participation. Policies based on an exclusively economic or cultural approach risk running astray from migrants' and communities' interests and life-goals.

### *Mapping leisure constraints*

It is important to enumerate and discuss the most important leisure constraints affecting migrants, because – despite the great differentiation both within migrant groups and among various receiving societies – some constraints appear to be recurrent across migrant populations. The existing literature on migrants' leisure has accounted for the following **leisure constraints**:

1) **Time**: migrants experience time scarcity (“time crunch”) due to two interconnected factors often related to the predominantly economic reasons for migration. One is work-orientation, especially in the first post-arrival period, which means working long hours or working in two or more jobs. This leaves little time for leisure pursuits. The second is unusual working hours (night shifts, work at weekends etc.) that limit the possibilities of making use of leisure and recreation facilities, in which opening hours are usually adjusted to regular work shifts. Additionally, having free time at unsociable hours (e.g. mornings) diminishes the probability of having company for leisure pursuits (Stodolska 1998, 2000; Long et al. 2011).

2) **Economic resources**: economic constraints are not just specific for migrant groups but for all marginalized social groups, yet in the case of migrants the lack of money for leisure could be specifically acute in the initial post-arrival period (due to the necessity to invest additionally to make homes in a new place). Alternatively, the strategy of saving money for home can limit the spending capacity of migrants. Especially in the case of transnational migrants whose family stays in the home country, saving money for remittances or occasions of homecoming would divert migrants from spending money on leisure in the receiving country (e.g. Stodolska & Santos 2006, on Mexican transnational migrants in the USA). The possession of means of transportation is also a factor that influences leisure participation, especially leisure mobility.

3) **Language:** a lack of language competence is usual among economic migrants with lower socio-economic status and of rural origins, but educated migrants can also experience inadequacy of language skills with respect to local dialects (e.g. educated Eastern Europeans in Glasgow, the UK). Insufficient knowledge of language limits access to leisure in two ways: at the stage when the leisure and recreation offer is marketed by the service providers, it limits migrants' access to information (Long et al. 2009); at the stage when migrants actually participate in leisure pursuits at recreation venues, it limits migrants' capacity to make contact with other patrons. As my research on Polish post-accession migrants in West Midlands, the UK<sup>1</sup> shows, the lack of language competence is perceived subjectively as highly debilitating by migrants, as a kind of blockade which is psychologically difficult to overcome. This has been corroborated by the results of other studies on post-accession migration to the UK, which indicate that the lack of language competence is remedied by limiting one's contacts to one's own ethnic group. "Those not confident in English had limited non-work contact with British residents. As Piotr explained: «On the beginning, like I said, I couldn't speak, I couldn't met other people... My only choice was Polish people to have, like, social life»." (Long et al. 2011: 19)<sup>2</sup>.

4) **Knowledge about ways of life in a new culture:** this constraint is best explained through the lens of human face-to-face interaction. If it is a cultural habit to kiss a friend on the cheek three times as a greeting in my country, then in a country where only two kisses are habitual, the third kiss would be a surprise for the person I greet, and both participants of such an interaction would feel slightly embarrassed. There are a myriad of ways in which everyday behaviours, manners, gestures differ in a new culture. They are not "natural" ways in which this culture operates, but a result of a long enculturation process which members of this culture have been undergoing by way of interacting with other members. (And one has to keep in mind that within one national culture there are also internal variations reflecting socio-economic or regional divides). In the case of migrants, economic migrants in particular, lack of this knowledge may strongly discourage them from establishing contacts with individuals from the mainstream population in their free time. This unwillingness can

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<sup>1</sup> I refer here to two interrelated projects which I carried out in 2010-12: 1) An ethnographic research project "Leisure mobility of Polish post-2004 migrants to West Midlands, the UK" was a part of the Leverhulme Visiting Fellowship to the University of Wolverhampton in 2010-11; 2) A survey on leisure patterns of Polish post-2004 migrants to West Midlands, the UK is currently being completed and has been carried out under a statutory research grant from the SWPS. I am thankful to the Leverhulme Trust, University of Wolverhampton and SWPS for the possibility of undertaking this research.

<sup>2</sup> The original linguistic features of the participant's answer have been preserved in the transcription.

additionally be augmented by the change in social status economic migrants sometimes experience (social degradation, diminished recognition among peers at work etc.). Potential embarrassment in leisure situations can therefore be treated rather seriously and considered threatening to the self-esteem of migrants who experience the social degradation.

5) **Insufficient access to recreation** venues and services may result from the lack of knowledge about existing public and commercial offers of recreation service providers or lack of skills needed to look out for these. However, insufficient access may also be an outcome of the specific place of residence (e.g. impoverished central city districts with few green areas, parks, trails and sport facilities), which are non-accidentally connected to migrants' marginal status (e.g. the housing in such areas is usually cheaper and is therefore affordable by migrants). Insufficient access can be a matter of a lack of access to state subsidised recreation opportunities or other services (e.g. affordable and culturally sensitive childcare) that would allow more time to be spared for leisure (Rublee & Shaw 1991). Insufficient access may also be a result of the change: the known and desired forms of recreation are unavailable, while the available forms are unknown and appear unattractive (cf. Yu & Berriman 1996).

6) **Discrimination**: apart from economic constraints, discrimination and xenophobic attitudes can directly affect migrants' leisure participation (Stodolska 2005). Discrimination need not take the shape of violent acts against a minority; usually, it takes the shape of legal rules and procedures of conduct that favour citizens and local residents over migrants and newcomers. Moreover, quite often discrimination takes the form of a prejudice or even silent agreement to exclude minorities from culturally significant processes. If the general public or neighbourhood residents are not used to the presence of ethnically and racially different "others", migrants can perceive the disapproving looks and whispered comments (which can be due to the colour of their skin, native language use or even accent) as highly discouraging from spending their free time in public places. Alongside actual discrimination, perceived discrimination is a confirmed leisure constraint (Stodolska 1998). Discrimination can also exist between different migrant groups (Noussia & Lyons 2009).

7) **Networks/contacts**: the use of some recreation opportunities is clearly social-network dependant (e.g. access to team games such as soccer). A lack of appropriate social networks or companions will prevent participation. Also, in the case of non-

physical activities such as going to a pub, the lack of a network or company is a constraint (Stodolska 1998; Aizlewood, Bevelander & Pendakur 2006).

8) **Cultural differences:** this constraint is not mentioned in the literature as often as time, economic resources or language (cf. Rublee and Shaw 1991). Yet, if present, it can fully block migrants' participation in some leisure activities on the basis of, e.g. a religious view that a given activity is an unacceptable form of spending free time for a given category of people. This can be illustrated by findings concerning the weak participation of Muslim girls in physical activities. Summarising the findings of several studies Monika Stodolska and Jennifer S. Livengood concluded: "South Asian girls were constrained in their leisure pursuits by the lack of parental approval, strict dress codes, inadequate availability of single-sex facilities, and their religious beliefs" (Stodolska & Livengood 2006: 295). Other than religion, a different concept of leisure and different recreation forms can be seen as leisure constraints in a new society. This can be illustrated by the suggestion of two researchers who studied leisure pursuits of Chinese migrants in New York and compared these to leisure practices in China (Yu & Berryman 1996). They found that in China, leisure was perceived primarily as (involving) a lack of strenuous effort, while in the US, leisure often involved strenuous effort, e.g. biking, jogging etc. Thus the authors concluded the cultural difference was limiting leisure participation.<sup>3</sup>

9) **Family centeredness:** this limitation has been registered among migrant women, who, due to traditional and situational obligations to take care of their families, are excluded from leisure activities (Rublee & Shaw 1991; cf. Juniu 2002). A case study of Indian migrant workers demonstrated that while men had little free time (twice a week after receiving wages), which they spent "on sitting and doing nothing" and "drinking or chewing tobacco", women had no free time at all due to the necessity to prepare food, clean the house, wash clothes etc. (Madhu 2011). The findings regarding family centeredness in other geographic and cultural contexts (see e.g. Taylor 2001, on women in Australia) corroborate the thesis of the gendered nature of leisure constraints.

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<sup>3</sup> Some of the underlying premises of the explanation offered by Yu and Berryman (1996) have been discussed and questioned in the existing literature. For instance, the model does not take into account the internal differentiation of both cultures, their changeability over time as well as socio-economic class membership that has proven to be a significant factor influencing leisure choices (ref. Floyd et al. 1994). The issue of the variation within migrant groups will be addressed in the following parts of the article.

10) **Knowledge of landscape** (city orientation): this constraint is more typical of the initial post-arrival period and presently can be remedied by various IT facilities such as GPS. However, research has demonstrated that lack of orientation subjectively magnifies distances and discourages migrants from leisure pursuits they would have otherwise undertaken (Long et al. 2011). The fear of being lost in a new place – the anxiety because of not knowing the way – is a rather common constraint for migrants' leisure, as research I have carried out in the West Midlands has demonstrated. Additionally, access is constrained by the seasonality of some services and facilities, which might not have been the case in the sending society (in the case of migrants coming from southern to northern countries). Singling out this space-related constraint is also crucial due to the way in which the characteristics of space and public places affect the development of the sense of belonging to the new culture among migrants. The spatial dimension of the leisure experience will be discussed in the following section.

11) **Fatigue**: this constraint is correlated with the first two (time and lack of money) and is usually an outcome of work-oriented life-styles as well as working in manual jobs and working long hours. However, fatigue can also be a psychosomatic factor resulting from stress and depression caused by migration.

### *The variation in leisure patterns within migrant groups and across local contexts*

The previous section was devoted to migrants' leisure constraints. For the purposes of clarity in introducing particular constraints, migrants were treated as a homogenous group – although it was clear that some migrants are affected by a given constraint more than others (see, e.g. “family centeredness” or “cultural differences”). In this section, the variation in leisure pursuits and differentiated susceptibility to leisure constraints will be discussed. This will relate to variation within migrant groups as well as variation between receiving societies (and communities).

1) **Change over time**: empirical research on leisure constraints among migrants has repeatedly confirmed that the most noticeable shift in leisure patterns is characteristic of the immediate post-arrival period (Juniu 2000; Stodolska 2000). For instance, among Korean and Polish migrants to the USA, less sport participation was observed in the first post-settlement period (Stodolska & Alexandris 2004). In this study, the researchers suggested that the first 4-5 years after immigration are the most demanding and thus there is least participation in active leisure pursuits. In this

period, constraints connected with the lack of language skills, insufficient cultural and spatial knowledge (not knowing what to say, not knowing the way) are particularly likely to limit migrants' leisure experiences and satisfaction from leisure. As a rule, leisure participation gradually increases over time.

**2) Positive change:** alongside intensification of some leisure constraints in the immediate post-arrival period, there also other possible directions of change in leisure patterns in the aftermath of re-settlement. The change in leisure pursuits can occur as a result of the lifting of behavioural constraints that were present in the sending society and through an offer of new leisure opportunities that were unavailable in the sending society (Stodolska 2000).

Therefore, when talking about leisure constraints, one has to take into account the moment in the migratory cycle as well as positive changes alongside negative ones.

**3) Social class:** when comparing leisure behaviour across various migrant and minority groups, researchers have noticed that the discrepancy in leisure pursuits between working class minorities and their working class mainstream counterparts is considerable, whereas middle class minorities and mainstream populations share largely similar leisure patterns (Floyd et al. 1994; cf. Stodolska & Alexandris 2004). Comparative research on migrants' leisure in the Netherlands and Canada has demonstrated that years of schooling are positively associated with leisure participation – the more educated migrants were, the higher was their leisure participation (Aizlewood, Bevelander & Pendakur 2006). These observations and research results point to the importance of social class as a predictor of leisure choices (Juniu 2000). In other words, migrants who might be perceived as a single group on the basis of shared origins most probably will have rather different leisure choices and hence paths to adaptation depending on education and socio-economic status.

**4) Race, ethnicity religion:** studies devoted to the effects of race and ethnicity on leisure participation within the ethnicity approach (Washburne 1978; cf. Juniu 2000) have maintained that leisure patterns can be determined by race. For instance, a comparative study of wild-land use by black and white Americans from California demonstrated that black Americans preferred not to go to under-developed sites (the economic status was controlled for both populations) (Washburne 1978). Similarly, religious background might differentiate migrants with the same national origins (from multi-religious countries). There is some empirical evidence that Muslims exhibit

lower rates of participation (Stodolska & Livengood 2006; cf. Alesina & La Ferrara 1999). Other authors suggest that generally “religious affiliation was negatively correlated with leisure participation across several different migrant groups in Canada and the Netherlands, and exerted a negative influence on rates of participation [in leisure].” (Aizlewood, Bevelander & Pendakur 2006).

However, the differentiation that can be attributed to race, ethnicity or religion is further complicated by the internal differentiation within ethnic groups and the existence of education or regional origins-based sub-cultures that can explain the choice of leisure pursuits, as well as the differentiated meanings ascribed to the same leisure pursuits (Juniu 2000: 361). The policy-makers have to be careful not to over-generalize and over-value the effects of each single factor when designing solutions for particular groups and situations. For instance, in the case of immigration to Poland, the racial difference of a minority could be a significant leisure constraint to this minority due to the racial homogeneity of the mainstream population, which makes a racially different minority particularly visible and thus vulnerable. In countries (or communities) with racially heterogeneous populations, leisure constraints would probably be less dependent on race, unless some cultural narratives fed prejudice linked to a given race despite its wide presence in the population (cf. Long et al 2011).

**5) Transnationalism:** one of the factors that can contribute to differentiation of leisure constraints is related to the character of migration – to migrants’ relations with their sending societies, to be more specific. Globalization and the development of technology have intensified cross-country mobility and communication (cheap airlines, free phone calls and emails etc.). Regimes involving maintaining livelihoods across national borders have been coined “transnationalism”, i.e. “(...) the process by which immigrants forge and sustain multi-stranded social relations that link together their societies of origin and settlement” (Basch, Glick Shiller & Szanton Blanc 1994: 7). The characteristic features of transnational migration are the lack of fixity of affiliations that migrants experience and the need to balance between sending and receiving countries. In their study on irregular Mexican male migrants in the USA, Monika Stodolska and Carla Almeida Santos (2006) analyse transnational migrants’ leisure. The researchers come to the conclusion that relations with their home country and community and motivation to return are decisive in determining (limited) leisure participation in the receiving society – characteristic for this group – and have to be included in the analytical framework of research on migrants’ leisure

and policy-making in this domain. They introduce the concept of transnational leisure: “leisure that is maintained by transnational migrants to foster ties with their countries and communities of origin” (Stodolska & Santos 2006). This concept is perfectly applicable to the leisure pursuits of Polish post-accession migrants to the UK, which I observed in my studies on migrants’ leisure mobility in the West Midlands (2010-11). Visiting friends and relatives (which is recognized in leisure studies as a type of tourist behaviour – VFR) is a very common way of spending vacations for both migrants in the UK (who usually visit family in Poland at Christmas, Easter and celebrations such as weddings and christenings) and their families and friends from Poland coming to the UK (also for christenings, but also simply to visit and do some sightseeing). The research of Agnieszka Ignatowicz (2010) corroborates these findings. It indicates the importance of homecomings and at the same time suggests that visiting home can become a means of “advertising” one’s improved social or economic status. Thus as a leisure activity it gains complexity of function: it improves ethnic networks and contributes to psychological health, but also boosts one’s prestige and status in the sending society. Ignatowicz’s interpretation fits well into the compensatory approach to migrants’ leisure. Another feature of transnational leisure related to visiting family in the home country is perceptions of such visits as an obligation and not as a voluntary activity, articulated by post-accession migrants with whom I conducted interviews. If this interpretation dominates, the leisure qualities of migrants’ VFR vacations are compromised. One of the participants in the research I have undertaken in the West Midlands openly stated that for her “there is no grandma on vacations” (i.e. that when she has to fulfil family obligations and maintain networks she is not relaxing fully). This tendency can be seen as a change in leisure priorities under the influence of the receiving society’s values and imageries of leisure (in this particular case, individualistic rather than family-orientated in the UK). The previous several facets of differentiation were related to migrant groups as such; the following several facets of differentiation will describe the contextual conditions of migration both globally and in receiving societies.

**6) Global homogenization and local diversity:** the premise that migrants have one set of leisure patterns prior to departure and people in the receiving environment have another set of leisure patterns, different from those of migrants (e.g. Yu & Berryman 1996), overlooks not only the differentiation within the sending and receiving societies but also the processes of globalization that are bringing about much homogenization (or rather, cross-cutting of similarities), especially in the sphere

of consumer culture, which constitutes a significant part of leisure. This refers to such leisure venues as shopping malls and amusement parks as well as to serious leisure supported by “professionalised” recreation associations and clubs. Diversity is rather a characteristic of the local community and should be understood not only (or not primarily) as ethnic, racial or linguistic diversity, but also as the diversity of locally present and influential lifestyles and interest groups. Diversity as a feature of spatial organization deserves a separate discussion (below).

7) **Space:** space and place form the context for migrants’ leisure choices and adaptation to the receiving society. At the same time, spatial organization forms the basis for either appreciation or lack thereof of diversity by both the receiving community and migrants. Social space is usually organized in a way reflecting the characteristics of the existing social order and power structures. For instance, some spaces are reserved for use by particular groups or at particular times and therefore create potentialities of exclusion. The design of public space, including natural environments designated for public use such as parks and nature reserves, is a matter of public policy. Some of the most recent research in Europe demonstrates that the differences in leisure participation and social cohesion are higher across neighbourhoods than between migrant and mainstream populations in one neighbourhood (Kohlbacher, Reeger & Schnell 2012, on Vienna).

Research on migrants’ use of public places in southern cities has demonstrated that migrants may “colonise” public spaces (such as squares or parks) and thus get involved in contestation of the dominant meanings of these places (Noussia & Trova 2005). Not accidentally, these processes unfold within leisure practices, since leisure is “a form of resistance to marginalising structures” (Long et al. 2011: 10). They continue: “it might be imagined that the very newness and transience of new migrants mean they create less fixed or less strongly delineated appropriation of space” (ibid: 11). Yet, contestation by minority groups can lead to racialization and stigmatization of places and their “exclusion” from the map of safe public spaces in a city.

At the same time it has been noted that more often contested public spaces are “shared in time” by minorities and the mainstream population (Noussia & Lyons 2009: 602-603). This was the case of migrant and mainstream groups alternate use of central-urban public spaces in Hong Kong (Law 2000) and Singapore (Yeoh & Huang 1998). Yet another model of spending time together without conflict although without contact is “being together in parks”, described by Karin Peters, who studied Dutch urban park usage and found that various groups considered the presence of other groups

beneficial and saw it as a value in itself, yet rarely came in direct contact with each other (2010; Peters et al. 2010; cf. Stodolska et al. 2010; Jay & Schraml 2009).

Public spaces acquire a particular meaning in the case of migrants engaged in live-in jobs, i.e. work involving residing at the employer's home, such as cleaners, caretakers for the elderly or the disabled and *au pairs*. The conflation of work-space and private space as a result of living with one's employer creates a tension, which migrants (women, usually) try to ease by spending their free time in public spaces such as urban squares or parks (e.g. Małek 2011 on Polish migrant women in Rome; Kindler 2011 on Ukrainian migrant women in Warsaw; cf. Noussia 2004, on the use of domestic space).

Yet another aspect of space as a factor of variation in migrants' leisure experiences is the stipulated influence of geographic position and climate on the use of public spaces for leisure by migrants. More usage of public spaces has been reported in Southern Europe (e.g. Noussia & Lyons 2009, on various migrant groups in Athens city squares; Nalewajko 2012, on how Polish migrants learnt new codes of vibrant social life on streets in Spanish cities).

Spatial segregation of migrants and the mainstream population, creation of ethnic enclaves and ethnic enclosures is yet another important aspect of spatial and social context influencing migrants' leisure and causing differentiated choices in this domain. Spatial concentration allows a more tightly woven social network to be built within a migrant group, yet it limits the chances of fuller and more equal participation in mainstream leisure pursuits (Aizlewood, Bevelander & Pendakur 2006). At the same time, the ability to exit the ethnic enclave may depend on the availability of resources, especially economic and cultural capital migrants possess.

Last but not least, the features of public culture and general attitude to ethnic and cultural diversity in a receiving society are inscribed in social space writ large. Research demonstrates that, depending on public culture as well as the history of migration in the receiving society, migrants can participate in leisure more (as in Canada) or less (as in the Netherlands) (based on the research of Aizlewood, Bevelander & Pendakur 2006).

8) **Activity type**: the differentiation within migrant groups may depend on the choice of particular activities. While walking (in a park or on a trail) may be an activity type open to anyone, activities such as going to the cinema or to a pub may be less often chosen by migrants with lower language competencies and/or weaker knowledge of the ways of life in the new community and/or with a narrower network of social contacts. Activity types also delineate particular lifestyles and social positions (e.g. Stodolska & Alexandris 2004, on prestige-related meanings of golf and tennis for

Korean migrants in the USA); they can also have symbolic meaning for maintaining ethnic solidarity (e.g. Liu Farrer 2004, on social dance parties among Chinese migrants in Japan; data from my research on Polish migrants in West Midlands who went to a social club affiliated with an ethnic church (usually on occasions such as New Year) in order to socialize and spend free time “away from the host society”).

9) **Legal status:** various migrant groups as well as members of the same migrant group may differ significantly in their choices of leisure pursuits depending on their legal status and path of immigration. In this article, most attention has been paid to migrants legally staying in a receiving country. Beside the fact that research on irregular migrants is far more difficult and the data scarcer, it is clear that legal status significantly changes migrants’ leisure opportunities as well as choices. For instance, refugees staying in special centres or camps may be faced with “obligatory” free time: empty time they cannot meaningfully use for objective and subjective reasons.

### *Good practices and policy recommendations*

Migrants’ leisure is rarely treated as a separate domain of action within the field of integration by national policy-makers, local administration and NGOs catering for migrants’ needs (cf. Pawlak & Bieniecki 2009). However, a number of anti-discrimination policy instruments and programmes aimed at social cohesion and against social exclusion contain leisure-related components. For instance, sports and educational initiatives have been designed specifically to tackle the issue of refugees’ and asylum seekers’ integration in England, Scotland and Wales (Amara et al. 2005). Another example is presented below, in which the multi-vector inclusion of migrants in sports activities through sports clubs has been facilitated by the work of Swedish volunteers and by linking sports performance to educational performance among migrant children:

“Since 2003, the local football club ‘GIF Sundsvall’ has carried out the project ‘fotboll plus’ that is financially and organisationally supported by the city of Sundsvall. The basic aim of the project is to strengthen the immigrant children’s self-confidence, extend their social networks and counteract and oppose the feeling of being left out of the community. These goals should be achieved through the children’ meaningful and active participation in one of the various athletics clubs in the city. Members of the football club visit migrants, e.g. at Swedish courses for newcomers, inform them about different clubs and help them to find appropriate leisure time activities. They lead various activities, such as swimming for women, aerobics etc. that allow migrants to try out different sports, and facilitate contact between immigrants and athletics clubs in the Sundsvall area. In addition to being responsible for sports practice, the

club also organises a weekly hour of homework help for young football players, in order to support the children's study habits and school performance." (Lüken-Klaßen 2009: 28)

The experience of the USA demonstrates that local communities and neighbourhoods where migrants reside can work out efficient policies and measures aimed at overcoming leisure constraints that migrants face (cf. Stodolska & Shinew 2009) – or fail to do so. The situation of European cities is largely similar. The GETOINEN Project that was implemented in several European cities has produced a set of recommendations that appear to be useful if one accepts that leisure plays an important role in migrants' adaptation to the receiving society. The concrete actions proposed primarily for the municipal level were aimed at creating occasions for such participation in cultural activities that would bring together migrants and mainstream populations. The proposals included such measures as (1) informal cookery sessions, (2) library projects, (3) joint sporting activities, (4) other art and cultural projects, (5) development of recreational urban spaces and neighbourhood events in a way allowing for joint participation by migrant and mainstream groups, (6) encouraging migrants to join local mainstream organizations (Fonseca & McGarrigle 2012). Some of these ideas have been drawn from practices observed in a number of European cities. For instance, Festival 'Todos' in Mouraria in Lisbon's city centre (Portugal) or the Caribbean festival in Leicester (United Kingdom) are examples of events that allow people of different backgrounds to gather together and get to know each other. They also create a specific sense of place and a sense of belonging among the participants without the requirement of rigid loyalty. One Leicester resident described his feelings about the festival in the following way:

"I mean the Caribbean carnival ... It's a great way to meet new people, different races, different backgrounds, try different stuff. I mean the parade, the parade for the carnival, that was a great sense of community then. It made you proud to be from Leicester, sort of thing. (Long-term settled, young minority ethnic, Leicester)" (quoted in Hickman, Crowley & Mai 2008: 159).

In Poland, policy makers and experts have called for the inclusion of practical information on everyday life in so-called "welcome offers" addressed to migrants (Bieniecki & Pawlak 2010). The analysis of Polish conditions of migrant integration has also led researchers to suggest that more centralization and coordination in designing and implementing integration policies is needed (Bieniecki & Pawlak 2012; cf. Penninx 2009, the suggestion that decentralization is more beneficial on the basis of a different institutional and cultural context).

On the basis of the analysis of the meanings of leisure for migrants' integration and leisure constraints as well as the experience of integration projects in Europe, several tentative recommendations are put forward below.

At the level of society, policy-makers at national level as well as local authorities should seek to:

- 1) create occasions for majority and minority groups to meet and interact in public places, e.g. through landscape design, special events such as festivals, fairs etc.;
- 2) make sure of the availability and accessibility of the public transportation system connecting recreation venues with city districts or city outskirts where underprivileged groups live (including migrants);
- 3) organize majority language courses that are adjusted to unsocial hours of work (e.g. through e-learning and in co-operation with ethnic community centres/leaders);
- 4) support co-operation between mainstream society volunteers (from NGOs or local administration), migrant ethnic organizations/churches and researchers in order to establish migrants' actual preferences and needs in the sphere of recreation;
- 5) advertise publicly funded as well as commercial leisure and recreation opportunities within migrants' community centres, migrants' press and web-portals.

At the level of the individual, NGOs and public advocacy groups as well as migrant organizations should seek to:

- 1) promote and help promote a positive image of migrant groups and up-to date accessible knowledge about these groups in order to encourage and facilitate prejudice-free contacts between the mainstream population and migrant groups (e.g. through public awareness campaigns and community events with all stakeholders participating);
- 2) promote knowledge of mainstream culture among migrants, including knowledge of everyday life habits, with the aim of facilitating contacts;
- 3) promote membership of migrants in mainstream recreation organizations and clubs.

This list of recommendations is tentative and non-exhaustive. In order to design efficient measures of integration through leisure, the concrete ethnic minority and local context has to be thoroughly examined in order to establish the particular needs, peculiarities and internal differentiation of migrants' leisure preferences and limitations in accordance with the conceptual scheme suggested in this article. This means combining economic and cultural approaches in determining migrants' needs and designing adequate leisure opportunities.

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