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**MIGRATION AND MODERNISATION – AN ALTERNATIVE.
POLEMIC ESSAY WITH MAREK OKÓLSKI'S ARTICLE
“MODERNISING IMPACTS OF EMIGRATION”**

In this polemic essay I critically engage with the migration-modernisation argument presented by Marek Okólski in his article “Modernising Impacts of Emigration” published in “Studia Socjologiczne”, issue 3, volume 206. By employing postcolonial and decolonial theory I offer an alternative voice in the discussion on theorising migration. The polemic attempts to question the prevailing thinking on the migratory situation in Poland (patterns of immigration and emigration) anchored in the rhetoric of modernity and, by doing so, provoke further discussion on theorising and researching migration in Poland.

Key words: migration; modernisation; polemic; postcolonial studies; decolonial option.

One repays a teacher badly if one always remains nothing but a pupil.
Friedrich Nietzsche “Thus Spoke Zarathustra”

Introduction

In this polemic essay I would like to engage in a theoretical discussion with the argument presented in Marek Okólski's (2012) article “Modernising Impacts of Emigration” published in “Sociological Studies”, issue 3, volume 206. In this paper he points to the interdependency between migration and modernisation in Europe and argues that the transition from being a country of net emigration to one of net immigration may be indispensable for ‘modernisation’ in the region. The final sentence of the article I see as an invitation to discussion¹. By employing a postcolonial and decolonial sociological studies approach I want to critically review the thesis of the migration-modernisation argument and discuss its limitations. I anticipate that this

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¹ „Finally, as I have attempted to demonstrate in the previous section of the article, it may be favourable or even indispensable for modernisation” (p. 74). Some of the literature I refer to in the polemic was published after 2012, the year Marek Okólski article was issued in “Sociological Studies”. I refer to more recent literature in order to include contemporary debates in social sciences, but not to make the main critical points regarding the migration-modernisation argument.

polemic will constitute the starting point of a broader debate on the condition of migration theoretical and empirical studies in Poland.

Why, then, might postcolonial and decolonial optics be useful here? Centrally because responding to theories of modernisation go to the heart of postcolonial studies and what Walter Dignolo terms the ‘decolonial option’². While postcoloniality “emerged as an option to poststructuralism and postmodernity [...] [the] decolonial emerged as an option to the rhetoric of modernity and to the combined rhetoric of ‘development and modernisation’” (Dignolo 2011: xxviii). Postcolonialism as a critical theory aims to describe social reality from a different than dominant (Western European) perspective (Gawrycki and Szeptycki 2011: 71). The decolonial perspective emerged from social studies in Latin America and it incorporates unique historical experience of the region and its epistemology (Dignolo 2011). In the decolonial option the ‘colonial’ is understood differently – as imperial-colonial interrelationships of core European countries manifesting in economy, knowledge production and power (Tlostanova and Dignolo 2012: 17–18). Importantly for this paper, what links the two approaches is the challenge they pose to the dominant epistemological frames used in much social science research which take ‘modernity’ to be a fact, and modernisation to therefore be a process which can be facilitated.

Postcolonial sociological studies are less familiar in Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) than in Western Europe or outside Europe, because CEE countries were not subject to colonisation by Western powers in the way that many African, Asian and Latin American countries were. In other words, there is a lack of ‘real’ colonial experience in the region (Korek 2007). Sociological literature employing postcolonial methods is becoming more visible in Poland (e.g. Carey and Raciborski 2004; Horolets and Kozłowska 2012; Kania 2009; Zarycki 2013, 2014), but it is more common in literature studies. For example, the faculty of Polish studies at some Polish universities have created a research network called the Post-Dependence Studies Centre which incorporates a post- and decolonial studies approach (c.f. Gosk and Kraskowska 2013)³.

Social studies on migration in Poland could certainly benefit from post-/decolonial perspective(s). Postcolonial sociology offers an alternative understanding of the concept of ‘modernity’, challenging the rationales of modernisation and leading to new questions about the very basis upon which we understand Polish society and Poland’s place in the world. In this sense discussing and theorising migration in relation to the modernisation in Poland has a pivotal role for the future of migration studies, and indeed for policy recommendations. The migration-modernisation argument has been proposed by Marek Okólski. Although the author does not explicitly employ his argument in relation to migration to/from Poland in the article published in “Sociological Studies”, he does so in related publications (c.f. Grabowska-Lusińska

² Decolonial ‘option’ does not ‘study’ colonialism, but attempts to “decolonize knowledge, subjectivity, gender, sexuality” (Tlostanova 2012: 133).

³ For information on the Post-dependence Studies Centre see: http://www.cbdp.polon.uw.edu.pl/index_eng.html.

and Okólski 2009; Okólski 2011) and recent scholarly debates (Okólski 2013). My polemic is a response to the question how relevant the argument is in the Polish context. Before I critically engage with the migration-modernisation argument, let me first briefly recapitulate the main points and definitions of the hypothesis.

Marek Okólski migration and modernisation hypothesis

The main point of the migration and modernisation hypothesis is that the two processes are interdependent (page 49 of the article). The concept of modernisation is based on the idea that there are three main types of society: those who are ‘modern’, those who are not (the ‘traditional’, ‘developing’), and those who are on their way to becoming modern (‘transitioning’). Modernisation is thus “a transition, all-encompassing social change that leads to creation of a new, ‘different’ society” (50). There is an assumption that modernisation is linear (‘traditional’ societies ‘develop’ into ‘modern’ societies, passing through various stages), and that owing to this linearity undeveloped countries can follow the path taken by modern countries and therefore achieve modernity. Implicated here is a temporal dimension: some countries are ahead, while some are behind. In this sense Poland, as a country framed in terms of requiring ‘modernisation’, exists in the past, while Western European countries inhabit the present and represent other’s future.

In Okólski’s terms a modern society is defined by a number of characteristics that are derived from the classical sociological literature⁴: economic (e.g. market and money, mass industrial production, a „focus on innovativeness, effectiveness, profit and expansion”), political and institutional factors (e.g. constitutional democracy, “negotiation and contract as the regulatory basis of social relations”), ways of life and lifestyles (e.g. “economism and urbanity, individuality, diversity of life patterns; multiplicity of life choices”), the motivations of individuals and groups (e.g. rationality), as well as their personalities (e.g. “scientific perception of reality, openness to innovation, future-orientedness, tolerance towards diverse opinions; mobility”) (51). The second main term, migration, is more straightforward, and it is understood in terms of long-term flows of people across national borders, i.e. international migration and those movements that result in settlement (54).

Modernising societies, in Okólski’s thesis, undergo two transformations: population change and migration status change – going from being a net sending country to being a net receiving country. The population cycle consists of three stages: “a long-term stabilisation characterised by high rates of births and deaths,

⁴ The Author mentions Herbert Spencer, Ferdinand Tönnies, Max Weber, Emile Durkheim, Talcott Parsons, Henry Maine, Robert Redfield and Krishan Kumar who “would have no trouble pointing out the fundamental structural differences between a pre-modern and a modern society or the time and place of the change called modernisation” (51). But this classical sociology was developed in response to challenges faced by modern European societies in 19th and early 20th Century (political and industrial revolutions, European colonialism and new social relations brought with them) and embraced Enlightenment assumption of the centrality of West European type of modernity (Bhambra 2007a, 2007b).

a demographic transition, and a long-term stabilisation with low rates of births and death” (59). The migration cycle is embedded in the demographic context, i.e. the population cycle, and the latter constitutes structural foundations of the former: in the first population cycle phase “migration plays ancillary role in population reproduction”; in the second phase of the demographic transition and fast population growth mass emigration can occur; in the third phase close-to-replacement-mortality and population ageing create a room for immigration (60). The ‘crowding-out’ hypothesis bridges the analytical gap between the two cycles and modernisation. Modernisation starts in the middle phase of the migration cycle when the permanent outflow of some people occurs and the outflow “creates or deepens the deficit of the work force in the segment they have abandoned and therefore creates attractive opportunities and incentives for the above-mentioned professional mobility of the people from outside this segment” (69). In other words, mass emigration of ‘unemployable’ people could facilitate an internal spatial and social mobility which would positively stimulate the labour market (*vide* modernisation), but it could further contribute to the modernisation process through return migration, when these people would be ‘employable’ again.

My polemic is organised around three limitations of the migration-modernisation argument: 1) the homogenising perspective on the European space; 2) the teleological view on modernisation in those parts of Europe which are not ‘modern’ yet and 3) the normative assumptions interwoven with empirical (historic) evidence. I shall explain my points in next sections.

One European space: Euro-centrism or Euro-ignorance?

Okólski (2012) recognises that there are different approaches to the modernisation theory; specifically that some scholars talk about ‘multiple modernities’ (51) or perceive it as a product of Western societies (52). However, this acknowledgement is not applied to his own argumentation. On pages 61–65 we read a comprehensive account of the ‘case of Europe’ serving as a scientific evidence of the foregrounded theoretical frameworks. The case is built upon literature developed predominantly in Western Europe. Various migration and demographic processes are put together into one pot, as occurring in a generalised ‘Europe’, only sporadically referring to more local scales (for example, north-western Europe (63) or the Industrial Revolution in England and its consequences (64)). This universalistic approach is evident in many places, for example:

With modernisation and colonisation of other countries by Europeans, the world has gradually become divided into a group of core (or centre) countries, where modern changes were either complete or highly advanced and a group of peripheral (or semi-peripheral) countries, where these changes were only just pending (64).

What is surprising here is that while Okólski acknowledges the role of colonialism in producing the economic and political dominance of Western European countries globally, he does not also acknowledge that this process also involved epistemic

hegemony, or the power to shape how others saw the good life and how to achieve it. European colonisation, starting in 16th Century did indeed divide the world into ‘centres’ and ‘peripheries’, but the ‘centre’ was the region that defined structures of control and management of authority, economy, subjectivity, gender and sexual norms, specifically Iberian Peninsula, Holland, France and England (Mignolo 2011: 7). At the same time when Western European countries were undergoing modernisation processes, some of the Eastern Europe countries were deprived of their sovereignty. The best example is Poland, which in 18th Century was partitioned by three other empires. After the Treaty of Utrecht was signed, a few decades later, the colonial division of the non-European regions was cemented. Partitions as a form of intra-European semi-colonisation (Moore 2001; Carey and Raciborski 2004) do not fit into the picture of the global division into European modernising ‘core’ and ‘peripheral’ others. While critics of modernisation accuse its theorists of *Euro-centrism* (cf. Berstein 1971)⁵, in the migration-modernisation argument the ‘centrism’ reappears as *Euro-ignorance*, because the ‘centre’ is moved outside the parts of Europe that have not followed the modernisation/colonisation path.

Differential experiences of colonisation have implications for the migration cycle, a key element in the migration-modernisation argument. Western European countries developed economic and societal relations with their overseas colonies and these multiple mutual links had later contributed to the transition from emigration to immigration country. In the decolonisation period these countries implemented a favourable migration or citizenship policy for residents of their ex-colonies, which enabled the migration cycle to be completed (e.g. British Nationality Act 1948 and free entry policy until 1962, Hansen 2000; until 1962 Algerian citizens had formal status as French nationals and freedom of movement within France after 1962, Hargreaves 2007: 20–21). Crucially, though, this process was also heavily influenced by racism and states, such as Britain, gave preferential treatment to ‘white’ colonial migrants (e.g. those from Australia) while simultaneously legislating against ‘black’ immigration (Fryer 1984; Hampshire 2005; i.e. Commonwealth Immigration Acts of 1962 and 1968), or gave privileges to European migrants in case of France (ban on immigration in 1974). Within the context of vast empires, family reunification and the strength of migration networks, such practices still left Britain or France with a large pool of potential migrants.

Thinking about the CEE context we could argue that similar dependencies have been developed among some countries in the region. For example, although relations within the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth were built upon equality and national tolerance, Polish gentry stood higher in the social ladder and had more institutional powers (Chmielewska 2013; Snochowska-Gonzales 2012). The privileges were still at work during the 2nd Republic and after the Second World War have been re-channelled into a colonial style discourse on the ‘Borderlands’, which was a source

⁵ In the seminal essay Berstein (1971) objected ‘traditional-modern’ dichotomy which defines the traditional in a negative manner reflecting Western ethnocentrism in the formulation of modernity criteria.

of nostalgia and otherness at the same time (Bakula 2007). From this perspective the contemporary Polish migration policy, encouraging immigration from the pre-war Poland (by such policy instruments as 'Polish Charter' or work declarations instead of work permits) could be seen as parallel actions to the Western-colonial empires' attempts aiming to compensate 'exploitation' to the residents of the formerly 'dominated' and 'colonised' regions. Still, immigration from the eastern neighbour countries is too small in number to contribute to a transition in migration status in Poland and due to a physical proximity it is mostly temporary (Fihel et al. 2013). In this respect migration experiences of this part of Europe, both historical and potential, do not fit the migration-modernisation argumentation.

Teleologism/Path-dependency: transition 'from-to'

The intellectual reasoning underpinning modernisation is based upon the assumption that if we know past conditions we can make predictions about future events. It could be seen as a 'dream of a reason'; a belief that social reality could be rationally controlled and formed into a desirable shape (Alexander 2013: 11). In the discussed paper the dreamt reason is of course modernisation through/along with migration status change⁶. The paper admits that the migration transition "involves inherent cultural differences between these societies" (65), nonetheless modernising forces are 'indispensable' and only "[i]n the short-term, those factors contributed in many cases to a significant deviation from the main trend or even to distinct exceptions from that trend. In the long-run, however, the impact of demographic phenomena, especially the change in the regime of (vital) population reproduction, turns out to be essential" (65). It is claimed that thanks to the demographic change any differences from the main modernisation trend disappear in the long-term. The *long durée* perspective applied in the analysis by Okólski (2012) enables hiding any unwanted anomalies in modernisation processes across Europe, assessing them as not important for the 'final' modernisation outcome. Otherwise, any deviations from the basic migration-modernisation model would turn the 'dream of reason' argument into 'nightmare of reason', because "an 'end' towards which society should strive, [would be] thrown into doubt" (Alexander 2013: 19).

The 'dream of reason' logic has analytical consequences. The way Okólski (2012) theorises modernisation limits this process to the 'transition' from one specified moment to another. Let me refer to two fragments from the paper for illustration:

Social change does not have to be in any way directed, whereas development and modernisation do. However, the endpoint of modernisation seems to be much more clearly specified than that of development (51).

...one might perceive the demographic transition as an intermediate stage of the modernisation-related population cycle, whose initial (premodern) and final (modern) stages are character-

⁶ According to the Author the two processes are interdependent and it is impossible to establish causality; migration status change is indispensable for modernisation (50), but high level of mobility is also a symptom of modernisation (54).

ised by some form of enduring population stability and a more or less erratic but also enduring equilibrium between the population size and its man-made environment (61).

Okólski (2012) claims that it is known what the ‘endpoint’ or the ‘final stage’ of modernisation is. This final stage is known because some societies have already reached it. One question which such an assumption raises is what happens after the end point is reached – if modern states are continually moving forward to something new, can others possibly catch up? This is the temporal fallacy at the heart of the modernisation thesis. Equally, if modernisation is defined as ‘deep structural changes’ of a society (55) and particular societies differ in their structural skeleton, then structural transformations could result in different endpoints (‘multiple modernities’; Eisenstadt 2000). Such claims seem to reduce the “diversity and complexity [involved] in [the] transition” of post-socialist countries (Smith, Pickles 1998: 11) and of social transformation in all European societies to one ‘final’ modern model.

The mono-linear approach explains why later in the paper Okólski (2012) states that “[t]he later a society undergoes modernisation, the more it can *borrow or copy* from pioneers or predecessors” (65; italics added by the author of the polemic). After questioning the ‘endpoint’ of modernisation we could ask how ‘deep structural changes’ could be ‘borrowed or copied’? This fragment is remarkable, because it demonstrates that modernity is identified here as a feature that can be imported from the West and adapted within local conditions and cultures by some institutional powers (Bhambra 2007a: 58). Is modernisation a process that can be modelled by social engineers?

This ‘modernisation teleologism’ echoes ‘transition teleologism’ from the post-1989 literature. The notion of ‘transition’ has been widely questioned since the early 1990s. Criticising ‘the renaissance of modernisation theory’ in the post-soviet region it has been noted that there emerges a “teleological view of the future (...) [where] variants of modernisation theory fail to come to terms with the specificity of the Soviet experience” (Burawoy 1992: 774). Other scholars critically noted that such ‘transitology’ “replicates errors of modernisation theory in assuming preordained destinations”, where the West is taken as a blueprint, although the modernisation processes were not consciously designed there (Stark 1992: 301). According to the migration-modernisation argument becoming an immigration country is the final ‘dreamt’ destination of the ‘modern’ society.

Hidden normative assumptions

Okólski (2012) explicitly states that he tries to avoid taking a normative orientation, or adopting subjective and ideology-driven assumptions (74) which, as he notes, caused ‘an interpretative chaos’ (72) in previous studies on relations between modernisation, development and migration. Nonetheless, it appears that he cannot escape them, which is a result of Euro-ignorance and the teleological view discussed above. Okólski claims that societies “aspire to become more modern” (49). Do societies aspire to anything? Or is it in fact individuals, some of whom

have considerable political power, who aspire to the achievement of imagined futures? Can structural change be manipulated in such a way that it will end in modernisation? Such normative assumptions are specifically applied into Central and Eastern European countries which ‘lag behind’ in the modernisation, but who have the modern finale of transformation ahead of them “if only they wanted to fulfil their modernisation aspirations” (71).

The paper is peppered with pejorative descriptions of CEE, as some regions are judged as, for example, ‘backward areas’ (e.g. 52, 55, 64). My strongest objection concerns the ‘crowding-out’ hypothesis. The hypothesis is based on the assumption that some social groups could be marked as ‘redundant’ people of a society and emigration is the best solution to resolve their situation. Otherwise, they constitute a problem for national policy and for their country more broadly (by increasing the unemployment rate and stretching social policy benefits), but foremost their presence endangers the modernisation processes (70). This section of the paper incorporates the idea that it is ‘domestic others’ who are to be blamed for slowing down modernisation. While ‘losers of transformation’ constituted ‘new others of transition’ who were marked as a ‘backward’ and ‘incompetent population’ and were blamed for the slowdown of economic transformation (Buchowski 2006), this ‘redundant population’, the potential emigrants, are positioned in this social nexus as those who do not act properly for a greater good. Furthermore, the idea that those countries designated ‘modern’ do not experience unemployment and do not contain workers who perform inefficiently is a gross misunderstanding of the capitalist system to which CEE is encouraged to ‘aspire’ to. Against the wish of the author such statements reveal a strong normative orientation in the paper.

Both ‘modernisation as aspiration’ and ‘no emigration=modernisation slow down’ are written in a way which suggests the *internalisation of orientalist perspectives* on Poland and the CEE region as not yet being a ‘proper’, ‘modern’ European country, of being the ‘underdeveloped East’ which ‘lags behind’ a ‘more civilised’ West (Kania 2009). The migration-modernisation argument indicates an *acceptance of external, orientalist discourses* (Thomson 2010), i.e. the Western experience is recognised as a ‘destination’ (Berstein 1971). Western societies are perceived as more modern, but the criteria were developed outside the CEE region, so the modernisation processes would be ‘imitative’ (Ziółkowski 1999) or developed ‘from above’ (Kochanowicz 1992). Clearly, there is a need to develop an alternative argument in migration studies.

The alternative (an outline)

Post- and decolonial approaches could serve as inspiring theoretical insights for social scientists to reconstruct forms of understanding: what do we recognise as ‘modern’ and what is its relation to international migration in the Polish context? In other words, this approach demands that we question the dominant understanding of the ‘modern’, not only recognising that there are ‘multiple modernities’, but to make a difference to the ‘original’, pre-existing category of modernity that has been coined outside Poland (Bhambra 2007b: 878–80). The neglect of such a critical approach

is surprising in the case of Polish migration studies, given complex Polish history and the non-linear consequences of various domination relations – both with the East (Soviet empire) and the West – resulting in the ‘post-dependence condition’ (Gosk and Kraskowska 2013). This condition requires social scientists of migratory processes to ask how these previous and on-going dependency relations could be used to better understand modernisation and migration in Poland. In my alternative I would offer a different vision than Marek Okólski did in order to “disrupt the linear historical narrative” and allow much more “diversified picture of modernity/coloniality” (Tlostanova 2012: 135). International migration and complex social change are driven by various processes, which do not proceed in a linear manner, starting and fading away, but they compose a complex ‘post-dependence condition’. Briefly, the conditions could be explained:

Post-partition condition is a source of different logic of development, social organisation and ways of life of local communities within Poland. Social studies anchored in the rhetoric of modernity often fail to notice these differences and their different relations with spatial mobility. Moreover, they seem to reproduce negative and stigmatised pictures of some regions against others, e.g. eastern Poland and eastern ‘peripheries’ as not properly ‘modern’ in relation to national, usually urban, ‘centres’ of modernity (Zarycki 2013).

Post-occupation condition partially disrupted the post-partition division through border shifts, forced migrations and population replacements. Societal change and development were implemented within the socialist modernisation paradigm, but it was believed that ‘modernity’, equalled with economic development and mass industrial production, could be achieved through state intervention and centrally planned economy (Leszczyński 2013). Migration, as other freedoms, was controlled by authorities, thus international (settlement) migration to the Western countries was an act of rejection of the system and applied modernisation path.

Post-socialist condition has to be seen as a ‘hybrid social formation’ which is founded on former forms of organisation, socialist, but developing in combination with contemporary, hegemonic forms of organisation – western capitalism (Stenning 2005). Post-1989 ‘widening of horizons’ with neoliberal reforms brought not only more ‘modern’ ways of life (e.g. diversity of life patterns or multiplicity of life choices), but resulted in ‘shrinking of lifeworlds’ for some social groups (*ibidem*). Emigration after 1989 could be understood as a response to the ‘imitative’ modernisation, based on external patterns (Ziółkowski 1999), and the ‘shock therapy’ reforms.

Finally, a *post-accession* condition. Accession to the European Union in 2004 meant Europeanization of law, policy and political discourses; Poland ‘returned’ to Europe, and CEE countries were encouraged by the ‘European/Western core’ to learn to be European again (Kuus 2004). Modernisation processes have become more integrated to the EU policy, including the freedom of movement agenda which supports development of transnational and diasporic communities of Poles within the EU. Contemporary Polish migrants do not base their migration strategy on an emigration-remigration pattern (as assumed in the migration-modernisation argument), but they are more likely to lead a ‘boundaryless’ life (Krings et al. 2013).

One migration-modernisation optic that was proposed by Marek Okólski inevitably fails to explain these complexities. According to Okólski's concept there is a hierarchy of countries in Europe where modernisation processes are more or less advanced and which are more or less transformed in terms of the migration status change, respectively. As I demonstrated in previous sections of the article such an analytical approach is constrained by the perception of the European space as a homogenous social space, the teleological assumption of a starting and an endpoint of modernisation, and the normative assumptions in the migration-modernisation argument. In my alternative I briefly outlined a more multifaceted vision of the contemporary migration processes, though more work clearly needs to be done by scholars in this field to develop alternative frameworks in light of the critique of modernity.

Conclusions: towards further debate

In this polemic essay I have attempted to question some of the assumptions of the migration-modernisation argument presented in Marek Okólski's article "Modernising Impacts of Emigration". My purpose was to demonstrate that by stepping outside the modernisation epistemological lens we inevitably ask a question: is it 'our' modernity that is discussed in this argument? The main limitation of the migration-modernisation argument stems from omitting the specific historical and societal context of Central and Eastern Europe. These countries that have not acted as colonising powers on a global scale and for 45 years after the Second World War have been themselves dominated and controlled from the outside might not follow the *exact trajectory* of countries with their own specific histories. Indeed, Dipesh Chakrabarty's famous call for scholars to 'provincialize' our idea of 'Europe' (Chakrabarty 2009[2000]), to fully take account of the specificity of the historical experiences of countries such as France and Britain, should be heeded by scholars of modernisation theory in CEE⁷.

As post-1989 transformations in CEE offered an "opportunity to develop new theories of complexity to understand and explain societal change" (Stark 1992: 304), their unique migration experience offers a parallel opportunity to theorise the impacts of emigration on social transformations. Marek Okólski and his migration-modernisation argument is an important and strong voice in the debate on the socio-economic implications of emigration which cannot be ignored. When the migration-modernisation optic is applied to contemporary migration from Poland, it sounds like a comforting scenario and a justification of the return migration policies (i.e. we have mass emigration, but this was a 'redundant' population and thanks to this outflow the country could become more 'modern'). However, other questions emerge when

⁷ Moreover, if we go further and employ the decolonial option, we see that epistemological domination is still reproduced and lurks in social studies as the concept of the Western, 'modern' civilisation (Mignolo 2011: 82), which is assumed to be the universal basis of social sciences in and outside Europe.

we apply this scenario: what if emigrants do not return or what if they return, but the ‘important modernising changes’ have not occurred yet? Thus, it is worth developing alternative ‘theoretical scenarios’ that could feed migration policy programmes, especially scenarios incorporating diaspora relations, which could be achieved by implementing non-linear visions of the social reality and ‘unlearning’ assumptions on societal change that have been made elsewhere (Tlostanova and Mignolo 2012).

As such, through critically examining the migration-modernisation argument I aimed to question the prevailing scholarly thinking about the migratory situation in Poland anchored in the rhetoric of modernity⁸. I further argue that a more critical theoretical discussion is needed with regard to de-westernisation of migration debates in Poland and de-colonisation of sociological debates on the contemporary migration in Poland. More alternative voices in the discussion are welcome.

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⁸ It is prevailing, because it is promoted by the leader of the major migration studies unit in Poland – the Centre of Migration Research, University of Warsaw.

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Migracja i modernizacja – alternatywa. Esej polemiczny z artykułem Marka Okólskiego pt. „Modernizacyjne oddziaływania emigracji”

Streszczenie

W niniejszym eseju polemicznym pragnę krytycznie odnieść się do tezy migracji-modernizacji, która została przedstawiona w artykule Marka Okólskiego „Modernising Impacts of Emigration” opublikowanym w „Studiach Socjologicznych”, numer 3, tom 206. Moja wypowiedź opiera się na perspektywie studiów postkolonialnych i dekolonialnych oraz stanowi alternatywny głos w dyskusji dotyczącej conceptualizacji migracji. W polemice pragnę zakwestionować dominujące myślenie o procesach migracyjnych w Polsce (wzorach emigracji i imigracji), które osadzone jest w retoryce modernizacyjnej, tym samym, pragnę sprowokować dalszą dyskusję na temat stosowanych podejść teoretycznych i empirycznych w badaniach migracyjnych w Polsce.

Główne pojęcia: migracja; modernizacja; polemika; studia postkolonialne; opcja dekolonialna.