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## **The Problem of Otherness: Poland's Immigration Policy and the Virtues of Parochialism**

### **Abstract**

Over the past decade, immigration has been the main driver shaping Poland's migration policy. This has given rise to the concept and problem of an immigrant as an "other" who should be adjusted to Polish reality. The idea of parochialism is helpful in addressing the matter of the looking-glass self and its consequences for immigration policy. This article aims to interpret Poland's immigration policy in the context of parochialism and its virtues. It points to the consequences of a migration paradigm shift generated by modernisation and indigenisation. The methodology embraces a theoretical framing of parochialism, an interpretive political analysis approach, a qualitative content analysis, and an interpretation of selected public opinion polls and surveys. The argument developed in this article holds that Poland's immigration policy after 2015 has been marked by the tendency to favour parochialism as an attitude which captures immigrants in the exclusionary formula of "others". The mobilisation of the Polish population to oppose the inflow of immigrants is in line with their "domestication" according to ethno-nationalist standards. Such process facilitates the implementation of Poland's immigration policy by shifting responsibility from the central authorities to local communities.

**Keywords:** Poland, Immigration, Parochialism, Domestication

### **Introduction**

For a long time, a general opinion prevailed about Poland in that it was an emigration country (Okólski, 2021). The long history of waves of Polish emigres leaving their motherland because of poverty, oppression,

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injustice, and hopelessness consolidated a pattern of the Polish migration as a form of exile and martyrdom and the Polish diaspora as an example of solidarity, brotherhood, and self help. Despite the fact that Polish emigration was “surrounded by myths, symbols, cultural codes and stereotyped framings” (Garapich, 2014), it cultivated the image of a stranger coming to a strange land where he or she must overcome the feeling of otherness by being domesticated by indigenous actors and institutions.

Over the past two decades, Poland has transformed from a traditional emigration country to an emigration-immigration state (Szyłko-Skoczny, Duszczyk, 2010, p. 10). Moreover, as Szonert and Łodziński (Szonert, Łodziński, 2016, p. 4) argue, immigration has been the main driver shaping Poland’s migration policy in the 21st century. Therefore, the problem of otherness must be perceived in the context of both the contemporary experience and the legacy of the past as the reverse image of a migrant being an “eternal wanderer” and the other “by default”. The Poles, used to praising their compatriots living in a diaspora, have to learn to coexist with members of other diasporas settling in Poland as their land of destination. Polish nationals have been confronted with the necessity to discern certain patterns of otherness as everyday experiences.

Against the predominant background of an externalisation of the Poles’ attitudes towards contemporary migration (reinforced by their accession to the EU), the inflow of foreigners triggered a specific kind of imagination determined by the attitude attributed to a contact with an “other”: that of the looking-glass self (Cooley, 1922, pp. 184–185). Building on Cooley’s classical concept, this applies to a symbolic interaction between a Pole’s identity as a member of a migrant nation and an immigrant who arrives to Poland with the expectation of being accepted as a person in need of assistance or protection. A question arises: How does a Pole attribute the same virtues to themselves and the same vices to the immigrant (the “other”) while being aware that their image in the eyes of the immigrant may be, in many aspects, identical with the predominant pattern of the immigrant in society? The concept of parochialism is helpful in addressing the matter of the looking-glass self and its consequences for immigration policy. This article aims to interpret the Polish immigration policy in the context of parochialism and its virtues. It points to the consequences of a migration paradigm shift generated by the concomitant processes of modernisation and indigenisation.

The argument developed in this article holds that Poland’s immigration policy during the government of the United Right (Zjednoczona Prawica) coalition (since 2015) has been marked by the tendency to favour parochialism as an attitude which captures immigrants in the exclusion-

ary formula of “the other”. An auxiliary argument suggests that parochialism as a predominant pattern of indigenisation of the perception of the “others” (immigrants and refugees) has tended towards its altruistic variant which mobilised an indigenous population to oppose the inflow of those migrants who resist “domestication” and show inherent features of alienation (in terms of race, religion, language, or customs).

The methodology applied for the research presented in this article embraces the following elements: (1) a theoretical framing built on the concept of parochialism; (2) an interpretive political analysis approach to the study of public discourse; (3) a qualitative content analysis of policy documents, official statements, public speeches, and media coverage for the years 2015–2022; and (4) an interpretation of selected public opinion polls and surveys concerning attitudes of the Poles towards foreigners. An important disclaimer must be applied here; the present analysis excludes the effects of the Russian aggression against Ukraine in 2022 on Poland’s official position towards migrants and refugees, because of the relatively short period of the ongoing military and humanitarian imbroglio and inability to critically assess the structural consequences of the war in Ukraine for migration processes and policies in Poland and in Europe.

### **Parochialism: A Theoretical Outline and the Polish Experience**

The attitude to immigrants in Poland has been increasingly shaped by the recreation of parochialism as a cautious group attitude deserving praise for its traditional, tribal, and ethno-nationalist virtues.

Polish parochialism is the result of the historical evolution of the Polish nation, its peripheral location in relation to the centres of development and modernisation, its predominantly rural population and the strong position of the Catholic Church (Mayblin, Piekut, Valentine, 2016; Porter-Szűcs, 2011, chap. 6). Marginalisation and isolation from the main streams of progress and modernisation have resulted in the concentration of everyday life around the traditional institutions of local life: a mansion, a parish, and a local state authority, or – to quote a 16th-century poem – a Squire, a Bailiff, and a Parson.

Today, the parochial mentality is still strongly embedded in many rural areas, especially in the eastern and south-eastern part of Poland, as well as in small and medium cities, located far from the centres of development and devoid of direct benefits derived from EU membership and economic growth. The sense of nativeness, life in the local community, and ethno-

linguistic identity generate a fear of the “other”: an alien, an immigrant, a refugee, a Muslim, a Jew. The Polish Episcopate, the central organ of the Catholic Church, has contributed to the petrification of the conservative and parochial mindset, also with regard to immigration, recommending “prudence” and pointing to the responsibility of “secular authority” for handling the refugee issue.

Parochialism is strengthened to a considerable extent by inferiority complexes. The Polish inferiority complex is a typical result of the loss of the status of European power in the 18th century and the shift to the periphery. The feeling of humiliation, historical injustice, instrumental treatment by the great powers, and the growing distance to the rich and developed West have contributed to the sense of being “second-class Europeans” (Kurczewska, 2003, pp. 86–88). It was reinforced under Communist rule, when the Soviet-type economy and Communist party apparatus produced a poor, backward *homo sovieticus*. Fed by the stories told by numerous Polish emigrants who settled mostly in the United States, the inhabitants of Poland became depressed by the bleak picture of their daily existence. After the fall of communism, Poles quickly got themselves Europeanised and westernised. Nevertheless, the sense of discrimination, marginalisation, disrespect, and abuse continued as a result of a bitter confrontation with the reality of life in Western Europe, with terms of employment, cultural diversity, and with moral freedom. With the explosion of anti-immigrant propaganda in 2015, it erupted into a chauvinist, ultra-nationalist and intolerant discourse, particularly visible on social media, but also present in some radical views and opinions publicly shared by representatives of the ruling party.

The above-presented structural grounds for the parochial behaviour of the Polish people need to be captured in a theoretical and conceptual framework. Parochialism is commonly understood as an individual or group attitude towards a social reality which structures collective behaviour around local, indigenous, and inner-circle affairs. It is associated with a tendency to focus on issues that are being debated within a given group, a community, or a society (Poulson, Campbell, 2010, p. 32). It is marked by a passive attitude towards the political system, the diffusion of roles along political, economic, and religious orientations. It puts a considerable emphasis on autonomous local communities. Parochialism manifests itself at the grass-roots level. It addresses local actors (autonomous local authorities, religious leaders, grassroots activists) and, if necessary, local representatives of central authorities or nation-wide political parties and social movements. It reduces the scale and extent of social ties, making them not only smaller, but also more homogeneous due to the efficiency-

enhancing effects of similarity or social affinity with parochial interactions (Bowles, Gintis, 2004, p. 18).

Despite the diversity of identities and individual roles performed in local communities (every member of such community has their own sense and understanding of parochialism), external factors significantly shape group behaviour and foster cooperation among the individuals. “Outer” impulses, disturbing and unwelcomed, trigger basically negative reactions activating defence postures and the manifested rebuff. The “other” (a “not-one-of-us”, an outsider, a foreigner, a stranger, an alien) is often perceived in terms of their being or causing a disturbance, interference, anxiety, or threat. The increasing presence of the others encourages a parochial community to “close the ranks” and cooperate in absorbing or deterring external influence. Relative in-group homogeneity spurs parochial cooperation in two instances: as a protection and promotion of in-group coherence (in-group love), and as a derogation and the fighting of rivalling out-groups (out-group hate) (De Dreu et al., 2014, p. 4). Thus, the group logic of parochialism breeds social exclusion and reduces tolerance and the diversity of interactions within a given community, as well as with external actors. It also bolsters parochial forms of behaviour epitomised by particularism, localism, and familism. Likewise, it endorses sentiments and practices which restore archaic social distinctions and diffuse an intolerance of strangers (Bowles, Gintis, 2004, p. 3).

A spatial dimension of parochialism entails the constant connection with homeland. This evokes a strong sense of territorial confinement and the desire for unity, solidarity, and protection. The formation of local attachments and the sources of identification and belonging (Tomaney, 2012, pp. 659–661), reflected in everyday interactions, constitute the main determinants of spatial settings and “parochial places”. Parochiality can be produced in a specific location which often is delimited by territorial boundaries. The need for bordering stems from the parochial spatial property; the parochial realm offers a degree of physical and emotional safety. The reductionist construction of parochial “home territories” creates an antithesis of “our” place and homeland and “theirs” (Hewitt, 1983, p. 253). An exclusionary formula of belonging and anchorage makes the parochial realm inhospitable or even hostile to “strangers” or “outsiders” (Lofland, 1998, p. 118).

Bowles and Gintis (Bowles, Gintis, 2004) argue that parochialism increases specific problem-solving capacities. It evokes altruistic sentiments within a community or social group bound by kinship, ethnicity, race, cultural affinity, or national identity. In-group altruism promotes mutual trust and reduces communication difficulties. The intersection of paro-

chialism and altruism, conceptualised by Choi and Bowles (Choi, Bowles, 2007, pp. 636–640), addresses the social solidarity and group benefits resulting from hostility towards other groups. Parochial altruism is based on a combination of in-group tendencies to discriminate and cooperatively engage in violent aggression against out-group members (De Dreu et al., 2015). Parochial altruists “give preferentially to their own members and punish those who harm group members more severely than if the victim is not an insider” (Choi, Bowles, op.cit., p. 638). Parochial behaviour, consisting in preferences for favouring the members of one’s own social group, is altruistically internalised through egalitarian norm taking and expressed by a determination to enter conflict with norm-breakers and punish them for disobedience. Redistribution preferences also matter as material incentives for in-group solidarity (Rueda, 2018, p. 228). Parochial altruism prefers wealth-maximising action with a lower moral cost, which might be disturbed by the necessity for redistribution modifications in the face of incoming migrants (immigrants competing for available jobs or refugees in need of at least minimum material assistance). Thus, parochial altruism engenders fear of the “other” as a contender for jobs and as a prospective consumer of welfare benefits so far guaranteed to indigenous social groups. It also arouses a reluctance to provide refugees (and asylum seekers) with a greater public aid which might affect the redistribution model in a way that could reduce welfare benefits for the indigenous communities.

Applying the main patterns of parochial behaviour to the attitudes towards the “others”, one should underline the following features:

- (1) in-group indifference to the “outer” world and a preference for exclusionary reaction to the presence of the “others”;
- (2) ethno-nationalistic rites of inclusion (kinship, language, culture, and religion as threshold conditions);
- (3) integration through “domestication” in local parochial places as a mechanism of anxiety management and a reduction of uncertainty associated with the “others”.

## **Immigration Trends in Poland**

According to estimates of the Central Statistical Office, the number of foreign nationals living in Poland amounted to 2,106,000 at the end of 2019, which constituted 5.5% of Poland’s total population (GUS, 2020). This was an average EU level. According to Eurostat (2022a), 5.3% of people living in the EU on 1 January 2021 were non-EU citizens. The number of long-term residents reached the level of 500,000 in August

2021 (Dudziak, 2021), which was five-fold higher than in 2010. This illustrated an impressive transition from an insignificant number of foreigners residing in Poland in the period following the fall of Communist rule and the subsequent two decades. Still in 2011, the share of foreign nationals as long-term residents in the total population of Poland equalled 0.2% (GUS, 2011). As a result, immigration policy had long been an essentially secondary issue, overwhelmed by the dynamic and large-scale outflows of the indigenous Poles, chiefly due to the membership in the EU (Pacek, 2020, pp. 91–94).

However, the need to compensate for the negative consequences of emigration on the labour market, the more and more attractive conditions of employment and residence, and the getting used to the presence of the increasing foreign population has allowed for a gradual absorption of substantial immigrant groups and their accommodation to local circumstances. Under the rule of the United Right coalition (dominated by the Law and Justice party led by Jarosław Kaczyński), the intense growth of the immigrant population has been conditioned by several factors.

Firstly, the majority of the immigrants arrived from neighbouring countries, belonging to the common ethnolinguistic group (Slavs), religion (Christianity), and customs and habits. Their “rites of passage” were relatively mild and quick. Their otherness was relatively soft and expressed by some specific traits and behavioural patterns: a specific labour ethos, a distrust of authorities, in-group solidarity (“washing one’s dirty linen at home”), and underdeveloped professional skills. However, those deficits have been considerably reduced by “parochial adjustment” facilitated by a snowball effect of migrant settlement. The regular inflows of immigrants from Eastern Europe – mainly from Ukraine (64% of the total immigrant population in Poland) and Belarus (5%) – have been greatly assisted in their adaptation by compatriot settlers and ingrained in the local contexts of parochiality framed by cultural and linguistic proximity. The virtue of parochialism has been revealed by inclusionary mechanisms facilitating the adjustment of the immigrants to local conditions through the cultural and ethnolinguistic “goodness to fit”. As public opinion polls have shown, “parochial adjustment” coincides with a depoliticisation of the migration issue, especially with reference to Ukrainian nationals.

Secondly, Poland has been relatively strict when it comes to granting international protection. The hardening of Poland’s stance during the migration crisis in Europe in the mid-2010s was due to the Law and Justice’s interpretation of the crisis in terms of refugee pressure. The Polish government, afraid of the prospects of the arrival of asylum seekers (and international refugees subject to the relocation procedure in the EU) in

terms of poor reception infrastructure and cultural backlash, vehemently opposed the reception of refugees and hardened its already tough stance on asylum applications. In the beginning of 2016, the number of foreigners enjoying international protection in Poland (asylum and refugee status; subsidiary protection; residence permits for humanitarian reasons or tolerated stay and temporary protection) was 5,550. Within this number, 1,359 were granted refugee status (MRPiPS, 2016). According to Eurostat, the recognition rate was just 3%, which means that the number of positive decisions on asylum applications in 2015 was only 695. This has not changed substantially in subsequent years. In 2020, the number of asylum applications was roughly 2,785 and only 135 of those applicants were granted international protection (Eurostat, 2022b).

The post-2015 Polish official discourse on refugees consisted of dissuading prospective asylum seekers from lodging an application in Poland and even denying foreigners in need of international protection the ontological status of refugee. This was strengthened by the use of the word “refugee” as a misnomer and a widespread tendency to replace it with other synonymous or euphemistic terms, such as economic migrants (Gruszczak, 2021). As a result, the very word “refugee” acquired negative connotations which was evidenced in public opinion polls conducted in the midst of the migration crisis. The number of respondents opposing the reception of “refugees” rose sharply from 21% in May 2015, to 38% in August 2015. It was 53% in January 2016, and 61% in April 2016 and fluctuating between 52 and 60% until June 2018, and slightly decreased to 48% in September 2021 (CBOS, 2021, p. 2).

Thirdly, the negative attitude towards asylum seekers and refugees did not preclude an interest in attracting foreigners to the Polish economy. The declaration on entrusting work to a foreigner for an employment period of up to 24 months, submitted by Polish employers to the local labour offices, may serve as a reliable indicator of a relative openness of Polish entrepreneurs to foreign manpower. This has coincided with the positive attitudes of Polish society towards labour migration (CBOS, 2016; CBOS, 2020).<sup>1</sup> The number of declarations has increased enormously since the beginning of the second decade of the 21st century. In 2011, it was 163,984. In 2014 it amounted to 387,398 and three years later it had skyrocketed to 1,824,464. In 2020, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the number of declarations decreased to 1,595,599, yet in 2021 it reached a record-high of 2,065,416 (Wortal publicznych służb zatrudnienia, 2018, 2021).

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<sup>1</sup> In a survey conducted in December 2016, 85% of the respondents approved the employment of foreigners in Poland.



Openness to labour migration may be explained on nothing more than pragmatist and utilitarian grounds. There are substantial benefits from foreign manpower accompanied by a relatively low level of involvement and duties on the part of the authorities. Simply put, the state does the minimum required to regulate the residence of the labour immigrants and needs not be preoccupied with them, for they are self-sufficient, including in the matters of in-group security and justice, and are distrustful of the authorities.

### **Poland's Immigration Policy as Seen Through the Lens of Parochialism**

Parochial politics praises traditional community life absent from external elements which might disturb local customs and orders. The presence of an outsider is the cause of anxiety and the exodus of the locals provokes regret and a sense of loss. Therefore, a parochial migration policy aims to defend parochial communities against an undesired arrival of "aliens" and to prevent them from disturbing the local order by their very appearance. Likewise, such a policy welcomes compatriots, especially those returning from "exile", and the "domesticated others" who want to and can adjust to local conditions and put down roots in the parochial structures. The Polish immigration policy has disclosed some features of parochialism which offer us an insight into the structural background of the problem of otherness.

A first, comprehensive assessment of the migration policy was adopted by the Polish government only in July 2012 (*Polityka migracyjna Polski*, 2012). It conceived immigration as a compensatory mechanism for the intensive emigration which followed Poland's accession to the EU in 2004 and the gradual opening of labour markets in EU Member States to Polish citizens. It was noticed in that document that increased immigration in Poland is natural and – due to economic and demographic determinants – largely unavoidable. However, the government warned of some risks and challenges accompanying that trend, addressing therefore the essence of a parochial reaction to an intensifying inflow of strangers. To quote the document: "When using the potential of foreigners residing or settling in Poland (along with cultural potential), one should take into consideration the emerging new challenges, e.g., counteracting negative phenomena related to migration. These include, first of all, potential social tensions and intolerance on the part of the citizens of the host country resulting not only from cultural differences, but also from more or less conscious competition on the labour market, especially in the event of economic fluc-

tuations” (Polityka migracyjna Polski, 2012, p. 13). Priority was given to foreigners of Polish origin, repatriated persons, and holders of the Pole’s Card (Karta Polaka in Polish). The argument was that “representatives of these groups, due to their cultural and historical proximity, do not cause difficulties and problems in social interactions, as these people integrate relatively easily with Polish society” (Polityka migracyjna Polski, 2012, p. 25). Yet another proposition incorporated into the principles of the immigration policy concerned financial and tax incentives for the returning Polish emigrant workers. There have been no reliable data thus far, however, to prove that those measures have been effective. Nevertheless, the intent to convince Polish labour migrants to return to their homeland has been a salient point in the immigration agenda.

Preferences for the Polish diaspora were legally sanctioned in 2007 when the Polish parliament adopted a law on the Pole’s Card. The holder of the Card has the right to visa-free travel to Poland, multiple crossings of its borders, and is entitled to various benefits and forms of assistance provided by the Polish state. However, an applicant for a Pole’s Card must prove that at least one parent or grandparent, or two great-grandparents, are or were of Polish nationality, or Polish citizens. Moreover, the applicant must sign a written declaration on belonging to the Polish nation. A 2016 amendment to the law on the Pole’s Card introduced further facilitations. The holders of the Card are exempt from fees for temporary and permanent permits. Persons who were granted a settlement permit can apply for Polish citizenship upon having stayed at least one year on Poland’s territory. Also, family reunion rights can be enjoyed by bearers of the Card. Members of their families can obtain a visa for Poland and later apply for a temporary stay permit. Arriving in Poland, the holder of the Card can then request a financial assistance from the state for a 9-month period (EMN News, 2016). Pole’s Cards have enjoyed popularity, especially among the descendants of Polish nationals of the inter-war period (currently, citizens of Ukraine and Belarus constitute over 91% of the card holders). Over 308,000 of those documents were granted in the period between 2008–2020 (Statistics Poland, 2020, p. 468).

The priority given by the government to ethnic Poles has coincided with a fear of multiculturalism as a privilege of the others (non-Poles, non-Catholics, non-Slavs). The Strategy for Responsible Development adopted by the government in 2017 warned against “solving demographic problems and the needs of the labour market exclusively through immigration of people who are religiously and culturally distinct” (SOR, 2017, p. 152). This, according to the above document, “in the long run may outweigh potential gains and threaten the cohesion of social structures”

(SOR, op.cit.). Another document outlining the Polish migration policy emphasised that “the paradigm of immigration and integration based on the multiculturalism model needs to be re-evaluated towards the concept of a leading culture” (Polityka migracyjna Polski, 2019, pp. 2–3). Prospects for anchoring the immigration policy in the controversial concept of a leading culture (*Leitkultur*) left no doubt about a preferred model of integration and the “domestication” of foreigners. The above-quoted document pointed out that “the system of integration of foreigners should set integration as a certain obligation, and not only one of the options that can be chosen by a foreigner. The objective that should be pursued in this context should first be an effective integration, and then the assimilation of a foreigner” (Polityka migracyjna Polski, 2019, p. 3).

Integration of foreigners has been one of the key postulates concerning Poland's immigration policy. In the 2012 policy document adopted by the government, this matter was framed by general EU guidelines of integration of third-country nationals. Nevertheless, it also placed emphasis on some elements typical of assimilation and not integration. Since 2015, emphasis has been placed on assimilation as a security-motivated process of “social prophylaxis” and control preventing immigrants from looking for alternative values to those predominant in Poland as the host country. In addition, it was underlined in migration policy documents that integration based on multiculturalism in Europe ended in fiasco. Therefore, “a final solution, ensuring the maintenance of social cohesion and counteracting potential cultural violence, should therefore be selective immigration followed by the assimilation of foreigners, preceded by intensive integration activities” (Polityka migracyjna Polski, 2019, p. 42).

Fear of “the others” after 2015 has been strongly associated with racial, religious, and cultural factors, along with indifference to humanitarian arguments and issues. It was fuelled by the post-2015 Polish official discourse at least on two occasions: the 2015–2016 migration crisis in Europe and the 2021–2022 humanitarian tragedy at the Polish-Belarusian border. Attitudes towards refugees shifted under PiS rule, moving towards open aversion. Already during the electoral campaign in 2015, PiS leader Kaczyński warned against receiving refugees and made a direct causal link between refugees, especially Muslims, and terrorism in Europe. Religious and racial factors have been another interesting aspect of that discourse. The troublemaking “others” have been commonly identified in Poland with the inflows of Muslims (so-called “Arabs”) who flood European countries, undermine public order and abuse their right to international humanitarian assistance. The xenophobic narrative constructed by the Law and Justice party correlated with certain attitudes of the public towards foreigners. The surveys

conducted since 2002 have proven that Poles strongly dislike ethnic and religious communities, such as Muslims (commonly identified with “Arabs”), Roma, and Jews. Although anti-Semitic statements and slogans have considerably abated, the antipathies to Roma and Muslims have remained strong. A surge of anti-Muslim and anti-Arab sentiment has been observed since mid-2015. In March 2016, antipathy to “Arabs” reached the level of 67%. Accordingly, the majority of respondents (64%) highlighted the intolerance and aggressive features of Islam: 57% thought that it encourages violence, and 51% believed that Muslims approve of violent actions against other religions (CBOS, 2015). Arabian people have historically been the most disliked group of foreigners, with the disapproval indicator oscillating between 67% in 2016 and 46% in 2022 (CBOS, 2015, p. 4).

## **Conclusions**

Parochial attitudes are widespread in Polish society, and are reflected in the migration policy of the Polish government. They favour the ethno-national criteria of inclusion and place special emphasis on language as the key means of a successful “domestication” of immigrants. Simultaneously, they contain a significantly negative message, warning the indigenous population of the strangers in terms of criminal activities, labour security, and even terrorism (Olbrycht, 2021). A fear of immigrants, fuelled by the Polish authorities, has resulted in the fact that in the post-2015 period, only 5–9% of the Poles have been willing to accept refugees unconditionally and allow them to settle.

Irrespective of the exclusionary repercussions of parochialism, especially in its altruistic form, immigration policy may be more effective and make a better use of the virtues of parochialism. Taking into consideration the ideological and doctrinal principles of the post-2015 ruling coalition, parochialism may be useful to explore and develop the following mechanisms of immigration:

- 1) A better integration of “domesticated” foreigners.

Parochialism may reconcile the assimilatory forms of integration with the emphasis put on the ethno-linguistic fitness of an immigrant. By co-existing with immigrants on an everyday basis, local communities may be much more helpful than state officials in implementing adaptation programmes of linguistic and cultural education. The locals can teach the “aliens” more quickly and more efficiently, particularly if the latter come from similar parochial millieux in their country of origin.

- 2) A stronger internalisation of the problems of foreigners in the context of local, parochial cultural patterns.

Parochialism in its inclusionary form may facilitate an effective handling of a wide range of problems and issues transferred by the immigrant population from their past, such as poverty, health issues, shiftlessness, or inexperience. Parochial rules facilitate the selection of immigrants, giving unambiguous preferences to those who meet the parochial standards of adaptability and denying those who resist “domestication”.

3) Introducing a bottom-up capacity for self-organisation, without the need to involve central authorities.

A successful domestication (by assimilation and integration mechanisms) of immigrants in local communities to a considerable extent relieves the authorities of the necessity (and duty) to manage the immigrants in terms of international obligations, domestic norms, and security-related concerns. Parochial rules and regulatory mechanisms supplement the law and its enforcement and make the authorities intervene as a last resort.

The Polish case proves the rule: The stronger and more diversified contact is with the “others”, the higher the level of approval for their presence and willingness to host them on a temporary or even permanent basis. The example of the Ukrainian immigrants and their coming to Poland offers convincing evidence of Poles “getting used” to their constant presence and accepting their contribution to every-day life in Poland<sup>2</sup>. Faced with the amassing inflow of immigrants, the Polish state and society should appreciate the virtues of parochialism as an inclusionary formula of tackling the immigration issue.

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<sup>2</sup> Public opinion polls show that the percentage of those declaring sympathy towards Ukrainians have increased from 27% in 2016 to 43% in 2021. See CBOS, 2022, p.3.

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