



Polish Academy of Sciences
Institute of Philosophy and Sociology
European Studies Unit



Working paper no. 1 / 2018

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Entrepreneurial strategies as a response to
discrimination. Experience of Ukrainian
women in Poland from the intersectional
perspective

Warsaw, July 2018

ABSTRACT. The aim of the article is to examine the experience of female immigrant entrepreneurs from Ukraine who reside in Poland. The Ukrainians constitute the biggest immigrant minority in the country and thus they are one of the symbols of the emergent Polish multiculturalism. However, being an immigrant and a woman may lead to the accumulation of obstacles in the process of integration with the host society. The barriers have various origins: some of them emerge in the host country, other result from gender stereotypes in the sending communities. The intersectional perspective is used in order to examine variety of marginalisation practices, which may appear in different dimensions of social life: activity on the labour market, family life, stereotypes and attitudes of the receiving society. The outcomes of the intersecting statuses may be even more discriminating than the results of each of these social statuses separately. The context of the life stage is also very important in examining social barriers experienced by the group under study: young mothers, older uneducated women and foreigners in the early phases of being abroad are under particularly strong threat of discrimination. The analysis reveals that female migrants actively strategize to counteract marginalisation, most notably by self-employment and setting up family firms.

KEYWORDS: labour market integration, immigrant entrepreneurship, Ukrainians in Poland

Entrepreneurial strategies as a response to discrimination. Experience of Ukrainian women in Poland from the intersectional perspective¹

Ethnic minority groups are not homogeneous and the categories particularly prone to discriminating practices may be inaccurately represented, overlooked or mistakenly identified with mainstream migrants. In-depth research is required to examine the patterns of inclusion or marginalisation of specific subgroups within immigrant communities. Intersectionality offers useful theoretical tools in such analyses and therefore it gains increasing attention in migration studies. Intersectionality examines the relations of power and their dynamics in situations where various dimensions of social belonging (cultural, economic, ethnic) interplay with each other and create a set of specific structural limitations to individual actions. Intersectional perspective was first used to examine experience of black women in the United States (Crenshaw 1993) and it became broadly used to study the experience of other unprivileged groups. It is particularly useful to study problems of “minorities within minorities”. The approach focuses on the crossings of various statuses, which potentially lead to discrimination: such accumulation of discriminatory social statuses is more dangerous than a single discriminatory status and may lead to marginalising practices, which cannot be “captured wholly by looking at each single dimension of separately (Crenshaw 1991: 1244). Social disadvantage on any two aspects is different than on any other two; therefore studies should focus on capturing the complexity of interrelationships of these dimensions (Weber 1998: 25). This approach also points to the increased vulnerability of specific social groups, including females, children, disabled persons, migrants and ethnic minorities. Vulnerability is defined as the state of being exposed to, discriminatory practices and marginalisation, or

¹ The research project was financed by the National Science Centre in Poland (decision no DEC-2013/09/D/HS6/03430).

being particularly sensitive to the consequences of such practices (see for example: OHCHR 2017: 5). In other words, discrimination not only happens more often in the case of members of vulnerable groups, but it may also have more serious consequences. Intersectionality involves research within groups which may be marginalised because of multiple factors such as gender, ethnicity, race, class belonging.

Patricia H. Collins (2000) coined the term “matrix of domination” to describe how intersecting oppressions in the sphere of gender, class, ethnicity are actually structured. According to her typology, practices in the structural, disciplinary, hegemonic, and interpersonal domains of power are shaping the main forms of disadvantage. These domains are interrelated in producing oppression, but each of them serves a specific purpose. The structural domain (eg. legal norms) organizes disadvantage and maltreatment, while the disciplinary domain (eg. bureaucratic hierarchies and techniques of surveillance, administrative practices) manages it. The hegemonic domain (public discourse, including school curricula, mass media) justifies abuse. And the interpersonal domain (interactions) affects daily lived experience and the individual consciousness which emerges in this process (Collins 2000: 276). While this typology reveals the normative forces behind the possible exploitation, it does not refer to individual’s spheres of life where the potential abuse may take place.

The aim of the article is to use the intersectional perspective to examine various roles and social statuses, which affect activities of female immigrant entrepreneurs. In what ways may their statuses constitute an obstacle and a resource for their activities in the host country? How do the strategies of self-employment play a role in counteracting vulnerability and diverse discriminatory practices? The two social statuses, which may potentially affect discrimination and abuse in case of this group, are gender and immigrants status. In the experience of women entrepreneurs of immigrant origin, being a foreigner as well as being a

woman may shape the patterns of social and cultural alienation. These interrelated conditions further lead to emergence of various forms of discrimination, which appear in the sphere of labour market and private life. The text specifies three dimensions in which intersecting statuses may lead to diverse marginalising outcomes. In each of these three aspects, the intersecting social positions of an immigrant and a woman result in discriminatory situations, which cannot be reduced to the effects of solely the role of gender or foreigner status. The first dimension is labour market presence and economic activities. The second dimension is family relations and defining gender roles in the private sphere. The third dimension is the process of stereotyping taking place in the host society. The distinction of the three factors allows one to examine diversity of experience of discrimination in the various spheres of social life. It may be useful to understand the complexities of interaction between various social roles in each dimension of social reality. The exploration of the three aspects allows one to have a close look at the areas where the process of immigrant integration happens, and where the obstacles which immigrant experience may hinder social cohesion. Examining various dimensions of marginalisation demonstrates how intersecting statuses, and also intersecting spheres of social life create barriers in immigrant incorporation.

Research methods

Qualitative orientation allows one to understand the individual experience and subjective meanings behind certain practices and events. Micro-perspective may be particularly beneficial in studying discrimination, because it emphasises the role of individual resources and biographical context in interpreting and counteracting unjust social practices. The research presented in this article was conducted between 2014 and 2017 in Poland among migrant entrepreneurs from Ukraine. Heterogeneity sampling was used in order to capture variety of biographical experiences of respondents, differentiation of their occupational trajectories and their diverse demographic characteristics, i.a. in terms of age, city and region

of origin. While Ukrainian migrants to Poland traditionally come from Western Ukraine, new “post-crisis” wave of migrants consists of individuals both from Western and Eastern part of the country, and this heterogeneity (in case of post-2014 migrants) was also visible in the sample. Moreover, although most Ukrainians live in Polish big cities and agglomerations (especially the capital), attempt was made to include also immigrants residing in other regions of Poland. In total, in-depth interviews with 51 respondents were conducted: 31 males and 20 females². The analysis below focuses on the 20 narratives of female immigrants who are, or used to be, self-employed in Poland.

The study included both one-person firms as well as business owners who employed workers (on a temporary or permanent basis). The border between the two types of enterprises is sometimes blurry: for example, some firms hire employees only short-term, others (while being officially one-person businesses) obtain frequent assistance from other individuals, for example family members. The research was conducted in various regions of Poland, most of the women (13 individuals) lived in Warsaw, which is the city with biggest Ukrainian population in Poland. Other female respondents resided in cities such as Cracow, Wrocław, Bydgoszcz, Toruń, or small towns such as Biłgoraj. Majority of them (11 women) had university education, and one was enrolled at a Polish university at the time when the interview took place. At the time of interviews, all respondents stayed in Poland legally, either as naturalised citizens or on the basis of legal statuses such as permanent residence permit, temporary residence permit and long-term EU resident permit. However, some of them had experience of unregistered stay in the past. The languages of research were Polish, Ukrainian and Russian; all quotes presented in the text are translations.

Specificity of experience of Ukrainian migrant women in Poland

² The research results, including some threads developed in this article, were presented in the book: K. Andrejuc, „Przedsiębiorcy ukraińscy w Polsce. Struktura i sprawstwo w procesie osiedlenia” (Warsaw 2017).

Since the fall of the Soviet Union emigration from Ukraine has been increasing. In 2006, Frank Duvell referred to Ukraine as “Europe’s Mexico” to describe the intensity of emigration processes. Bastian Vollmer (2016) observes that migration from Ukraine in the “post-1991 era” takes very diversified forms: there is labour migration, of both registered and irregular character, ethnic migration and repatriation, circular mobility and shuttle migration of cross-border commuters. There are also internal flows within Ukraine, mainly from rural to urban areas (Vollmer 2016: 36), and after the military conflict from Eastern to Western part of the country. In certain decades or periods after 1991 different forms of mobility dominated, depending for example from the visa regime between Ukraine and receiving states. In the 1990s, small scale traders from Ukraine in Poland – often coming from borderland regions – were among the pioneers of capitalism, developing new traditions of market exchange in post-communist Central Europe; nevertheless, their activities such as smuggling were often illegal or lacked a proper legal protection (Wallace, Bedzir, Chmouliar 1997). In 2010s, worsening economic situation as well as the recent military conflict with Russia reinforced mobility of Ukrainians, leading to growing migrant population in countries of Central Europe (Poland, Czech Republic), and Southern Europe (Portugal, Italy). According to the Eurostat statistics, Ukrainians receive the highest number of first residence permits among all third country nationals in the EU (Eurostat 2015).

Poland is hosting the biggest migrant population from Ukraine in Europe (Eurostat 2015). This phenomenon can be attributed to the fact of geographic proximity of the neighbouring states, but also cultural proximity and similarity of languages, which makes participation in the labour market and integration with the host society easier. While in the recent years the policies have been introduced which facilitate the admission of migrants from post-Soviet states, there are no gender-specific policies or legal acts which would focus on the problems of labour market inclusion of immigrant women or which would address the

specificity of their situation. Ukrainians migrating to Poland are most frequently labour migrants (Chmielewska, Dobroczek, Puzyrkiewicz - NBP 2016). There is also an increasing number of Ukrainian students enrolling at Polish universities (Gierko 2015; Popowska 2016; Leśniak 2016). Economic migration often takes the form of short-term and circular mobility; many of such Ukrainians are employed in the temporary and seasonal works in agriculture (Górny, Kindler 2016; Górny 2017). Moreover, in 2008 a law was introduced in Poland (*Ustawa o Karcie Polaka*, Act on the Card of Pole), which allows ethnic Poles from post-Soviet states come to their ancestors' homeland. They can obtain a right of permanent stay immediately after crossing the border, without fulfilling any further conditions related to the length of stay. Since the requirements of proving one's Polish origins are rather liberal, many Ukrainians apply for the Card of the Pole and come there within the repatriation scheme.

The available official data can only serve to estimate the actual number of Ukrainians in Poland. The number of individuals who possess residency statuses (permanent stay, long-term EU residents, right of temporary stay, EU family members, refugee status and auxiliary forms of protection) can be identified precisely basing upon the statistical data. As of 2016, these categories encompass 103 457 Ukrainians living in Poland. Yet, the most numerous category currently are immigrants coming on the basis of employer's declaration of intent to employ a foreigner (*oświadczenie o zamiarze powierzenia pracy cudzoziemcowi*). This system was first introduced in 2007, it was the subject to several amendments and until it has attracted the biggest number of Ukrainians³. The system encompasses citizens of six post-Soviet countries: apart from Ukraine, it is directed to workers from Belarus, Armenia, Russia, Moldova, Georgia. Ukrainians constitute the most numerous group of foreigners coming within this system. Over 1,2 million declarations for Ukrainian citizens were issued solely in 2016 (more than 437 thousand for women). However, the system of declarations can be also

³ Starting from 2018, the system will be gradually substituted by the permit for seasonal employment, as required by the EU law (Directive 2014/36/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council).

interpreted as a mechanism within the “structural domain” which legitimises limited opportunities on the labour market: foreigners who lose their jobs acquired as in the *oświadczenie* are obliged to leave the host country. The number of migrants who actually come to work in Poland on the basis of declarations is unknown. Individuals possessing *oświadczenie* do not need residency permit. Each individual may have even several number of declarations. Moreover, not every individual who possesses the declaration may actually want to use it and work in Poland.

A distinct matter is the gender structure in migrant communities in Poland and other host states. Women migrants constitute a significant share of Ukrainian diaspora worldwide. Researchers emphasise the process of feminization of migration, indicating that in some countries such as Italy women are more than a half of Ukrainian migrant population (Montefusco 2008; Marchetti, Venturini 2014; Fedyuk 2016). Migrant workers concentrate in specific “female” sectors, such as domestic care where duties are frequently performed in the grey zone. As described on the case of Ukrainian women in Poland, it is often connected with the risk of irregularity and temporariness, lack of stability, and low social prestige (Kindler 2011). Moreover, the outflow of women, who are traditionally principal carers, from Ukraine leads to “care drain” and “care deficit” in the country of origin, where children and elderly members of families are left behind (Tolstokorova 2009; Tolstokorova 2010, 2013). Despite the fact that female labour migration helps maintain survival and economic stability of Ukrainian households, international mobility of women is very negatively perceived in the sending state and public discourse which stigmatize migrating women as prostitutes, betrayers and defectors (Solari 2014; Keryk 2004).

The official statistics indicate that the recent migration streams from Ukraine to Poland are not as “feminised” as in the case of Ukrainian labour migration to other European countries. Nevertheless, profile of an average female migrant is distinct and specific which

validates the need of separate conceptual and empirical exploration of female migration. In the most numerous categories (right of temporary stay and stay based upon employer's declaration of intent to employ a foreigner) women constitute below 40% of all migrants. The share of women among migrants with more long-term statuses is higher. Females are circa 47% of Ukrainians who obtained a right of permanent stay (*karta stalego pobytu*) in 2016. In case of another permanent status (long-term EU residents) even more Ukrainian women than Ukrainian men were registered in 2016. Women radically dominate in the category of acquisition of right to stay of a family member of EU citizen, which suggests that inter-ethnic marriage with EU nationals may be more significant trend among Ukrainian women than among Ukrainian men. These varying patterns of gender share in specific migrant categories suggest that female mobility is specific and different from male migration.

Table 1. Ukrainians in Poland – share of male and female migrants who acquired temporary or permanent residency status in 2016

Status acquired	males	females	Ukrainians total	Foreigners total
Right of permanent stay	3143	2777 (46,9%)	5920 (100%)	9042
Long-term EU resident	284	325 (53,4%)	609 (100%)	1864
Stay of a family member of EU citizen	14	45 (76,3%)	59 (100%)	235
Right of temporary stay	35181	22072 (38,6%)	57253 (100%)	86616
Employer's declaration of intent to employ a foreigner	825044	437801 (34,7%)	1262845 (100%)	1314127

Source: Author's own elaboration based on UDSC (2016) and MRPIPS (2016) data

Self-employment is increasingly popular in the Ukrainian community in Poland. Although the official statistics do not expose the gender of entrepreneurs, the available data indicate the rise of migrants' own firms in the last decade. It is mostly because of the growth of Ukrainian population, but also due to the fact of liberalisation of legal provisions concerning business activities in general and immigrant's access to entrepreneurship in particular (Andrejuk 2017). The narratives of female entrepreneurs about their migration

experience and professional trajectory in Poland expose variety of practices of discrimination and marginalisation, which cannot be attributed solely to their immigrant status or solely to their gender.

Intersecting statuses and the labour market experience: precarity of working conditions

Immigrant self-employment is often explained as a strategy of combating discrimination on the labour market, overcoming limited opportunities of satisfactory earnings and blocked professional advancement in the host country (i.a. OECD 2010; Aliaga-Isla, Rialp 2013). It was also confirmed in the case of Ukrainian respondents under study, for whom establishing of own firms is a way to enter the sector adequate to their qualifications or escape unjust labour conditions in their branch. Within the sphere of regular (wage) employment, even highly qualified migrants tend to concentrate in less ambitious, “secondary” segments of the labour market, which means that they are often forced to take up positions below their qualifications. In case of female Ukrainians, these processes lead to concentration in the branches of the market, which are traditionally associated with women’s work (cleaning, caregiving). Research in Poland demonstrates that Ukrainian women concentrate in specific sectors of the labour market, such as domestic care and agriculture (Chmielewska, Dobroczek, Puzyrkiewicz - NBP 2016). Another popular sector, which I observed in the sample, is cosmetology. Apart from performing low-skilled work in underpaid sectors, Ukrainians are the immigrant group which, during the official state controls, is most frequently found working without the necessary work permit and being subject to various violations of work safety (Polish Labour Inspectorate 2016: 97).

The origins and background of Ukrainian women’s self-employment often lay in the previous negative experiences on the Polish labour market. Accumulation of social roles, which may contribute to marginalisation, also causes increasing social acceptance for discriminating practices, bullying or mobbing. Employers seem to treat such individuals with

less respect for their rights, abusing their position of power, for example by violating labour rights and forcing the arrangements which are advantageous for them (unregistered work, exceeding working hours, avoiding payment of social welfare contributions). But some illegal activities, while extorted by supervisors, also cause discriminated and exploited foreigners to avoid public institutions and legal measures in fear of being expelled from the country. In the story recapitulated below, the respondent decided to seek legal help from the official institutions. However, at the same time her opponent used the authority of these institutions in order to intimidate the immigrant; it was suggested that seeking help from the state by the Ukrainian would also mean for her being punished because of unregistered work. This can serve as an example of how the organisation of the “disciplinary domain” may reduce the chances of fair treatment for migrant workers.

When she called me, she always said, ‘what are you thinking, you are a newcomer here. I am Polish and you know, if you oppose to me, I will find witnesses’. Because she did not pay my salary. She did not pay my money and she issued an employment certificate that I was fired, because I did not perform my duties properly. Which was not true. I went to a lawyer, I went to the labour inspectorate and they told me to go to the court, we went to the court. I talked to a lawyer. First we wrote a letter to her. I said, maybe we can send a letter and maybe she will think it over and change the certificate. She did not do that. She called me and she said ‘what are you thinking?’ She said ‘I can even find witnesses that will confirm that you performer unregistered work, additional jobs, and it will be you who has problems, not me’. You know, I just resigned it. I was so tormented that I went to hospital, at rehabilitation [woman, cosmetic salon, Warsaw]

Intersecting statuses of a woman and an immigrant are not the only aspects, which may lead to discrimination. Another factor diminishing opportunities on the labour market is age of female migrants. While since the 1990s migration from Ukraine to Poland concerned

mainly young individuals, after the military conflict in Ukraine the demographic profile of migrants changed. International mobility is increasingly taken up by older people, who escape from the war and the associated escalation of economic crisis. The solution to the problem of difficult economic integration of such migrants is establishment of own firms. It is also a reflection of responsibility for the family, because other family members (spouse, adult children) frequently find employment in such immigrant business. The migration research so far has emphasised the role of female migrants in providing income for “transnational households”, which consist of migrants and family members left behind (Haidinger 2008). However, the narratives collected during research expose yet another strategy – family migration and ensuring work in the host country for other family members:

I just knew that because of my age, education and experience, I will not be able to work for someone. My husband is a masseuse, my sister is a make-up artist, and my daughter is a tattooist. So I thought that it would be good to open the salon here just like the one I had in Ukraine [woman, cosmetic salon, Cracow]

In such narratives, self-employment and setting up own business is a tool for empowerment, gaining economic independence and a sense of control over occupational trajectory. While channels of professional advancement for migrants may be limited in the case of regular employment, entrepreneurial activities give them the opportunity of occupational development or at least providing financial stability for the family.

Inequality in the access to labour market opportunities stems from a set of interrelated factors. Individuals who belong simultaneously to various underprivileged groups may experience multiple barriers in employment, which cannot be limited by instruments aimed at activation of solely one of these categories. In such cases, setting up one’s own firm is a tactic of eluding the cumulative discrimination resulting from being a woman and an immigrant. Moreover, individuals from certain segments of population may also be threatened by

increasing risk of marginalisation on various stages of their lives, when the obstacles are growing. That refers to immigrants, especially with weak knowledge of the host country's official language; women, especially with small children; the elderly, especially those who have relatively low level of education.

Intersecting statuses and family obligations: traditional and non-traditional gender roles

The interviews demonstrate that gender roles of men and women are less diversified when respondents do not have children. It is exposed for example in the below narrative about motivations of migration to Poland. The interviewee states that the decision of a young couple to be internationally mobile was made without careful planning, her background was a romantic desire for adventure. The narrative emphasises that such mode of operation was possible because respondent is not yet a mother:

We just took the risk, it was a spontaneous decision, we just wanted to do that. We would have regretted if we had not gone. We do not have children yet... why not try? [woman, Warsaw, gastronomy sector]

In the biographical accounts of mothers, on the contrary, there is a very clear thread of prudence and responsibility (also financial) for a child. Some narratives of mothers working from home also indicate that the strategy of self-employment was chosen due to flexibility of this form of economic activity, opportunity to modify hours of work and combine it with motherhood. However, not all respondents praised self-employment as an "easier" form of work, emphasising the necessity of freelancers to take up multiple obligations and simultaneous earning activities. In the narrative below, the cultural role of immigrant-mother is portrayed in its duality. It means being a primary caregiver and at the same time primary breadwinner. The figure of father is invisible in the whole interview. Effective realisation of

both of these cultural scripts is difficult, or even impossible, which leads to the sense of remorse.

[One should] *Take into account the language barrier; take into account adaptation with the society. Take into account time devoted at my family's expense. Surely my daughter is not grateful and at the age of almost 19 in a little while she will always remind me of that time spent with the nanny. When one had to work on a daily basis, on a contract, on two contracts, make money in the education [sector] or languages because one had to provide for one's home and the family. Surely Poles have... Surely there were times where I worked until 4 pm in the office in the export firm and after 4 pm until 6 pm I had classes at [language school] and sometimes until 9 pm I had tutoring at home. So nobody will tell me that Poles are miserable and unhappy, because he is not unhappy, he just does not want to work, unfortunately [woman, Bydgoszcz, translations]*

Another interesting thread, which the respondent expressed in the quote above, reveals the mechanism of constructing opinions about the native workers by immigrants. It is required from immigrants, and particularly from migrant women, to be particularly hard working, patient and consequent in building their position on the host labour market. Therefore, immigrants quite bitterly evaluate any demonstrations of the lack of resourcefulness in the host society (“[a Pole] is not unhappy, he just does not want to work”) as an insufficiency of effort.

Analysis of intersecting statuses of female immigrants demonstrates that the women combine the traditional gender roles (mothers who are primary caregivers) and the roles, which in the conservative approaches to a family are ascribed to men (primary breadwinners). Legitimacy of such attribution of tasks within a family seems to be confirmed through the practices, which P. Collins described as “interpersonal domain” (everyday interactions) as well as “hegemonic domain” (public discourse). The respondents notice the difficulty of

simultaneous performance of both roles, but on the other hand they do not protest or neglect the necessity to take each of these obligations. Both types of the social roles appear to be internalised, they are perceived as necessary elements of the biography of female Ukrainians abroad.

Intersecting statuses and stereotyping in the host society: sexualisation of Ukrainian women

The process of labelling foreigners also occurs in the “interpersonal domain” and “hegemonic domain”. Both in the public (media) discourse and on the micro-level of daily interactions, certain typecasts and categories are developed to describe the fast developing community of Ukrainians in Poland. Some stereotypes about immigrants and attitudes towards foreigners are gender-neutral, for example the image of immigrants taking jobs from the natives or the positive stereotype about newcomers as particularly diligent workers. Relatively new and recurring media topic is also a thread of immigrant workers drastically exploited by unfair employers.

However, other images are gender-specific: especially sexualisation of immigrant women, who are portrayed as promiscuous and/or involved in sex work. The stereotype is duplicated and intensified by media releases where female foreigners are presented in a sexualised manner. The (in)famous example of such practice was a popular radio programme, in which two talk show hosts made insulting comments about female immigrants working in the domestic sector in Poland. The scandal, which happened in 2012, led to a fine imposed on the radio station.

In the narratives of the respondents, this stereotype appears as a display of symbolic violence within the “interpersonal domain”. An example of such representation is a narrative below, which author is a labour immigrant who came to Poland as a teenage girl. During her

work in the Polish labour market she engaged in typical branches of Ukrainian women, such as childcare and cosmetic services. Her statement indicates that she experienced the stereotype of immigrant-prostitute since early days of her stay in Poland. At the end of the quoted narrative the respondent starts speaking about herself in the third person, externalising own feelings in order to achieve emotional distance. This reflects the power of the accusations on woman's wellbeing and sense of alienation:

I had so many cases when it comes to guys. Because everybody says, thinks, especially guys, that when one is from Ukraine, then one surely has this job. Either works in a brothel or is a prostitute, let's be honest. Just like this, it was established like this, but it is not true. And I had many cases, such interesting things, that I just thought... oh my God, I am not like this, why does everyone perceive me like this and only because I am from Ukraine. It was a hard, hard time, and now it happens sporadically but it still does, and I try to... I try to interpret it somehow, I am not that sensitive any more as I used to be. Because sometimes one just came back home and wanted to cry, because one is far from home. [woman, cosmetics salon, Warsaw]

The respondent specifies that stigmatising practices and accusations of being a prostitute appeared more frequently at the beginning of her stay in the receiving country. As the time went by, the woman obtained proficiency in the language and a secure legal status, which resulted in deeper embeddedness in a new place; she was less frequently perceived as an alien. The narrative suggests that certain factors may reduce discriminatory potential resulting from intersecting statuses of a woman and an immigrant. These elements include better integration, knowledge of the host population's language, higher economic and professional status (which were obtained after the respondent graduated from a Polish school with a BA diploma and established her own firm). The choice of self-employment may also

be a strategy of reducing the risk of practices based on sexualising stereotypes and images. Self-employment leads to more occupational independence and strengthening self-esteem.

Perceptions of discrimination on the basis of gender are contextual and contingent upon earlier experiences. Female migrants frequently formulate their opinions in this respect by making comparisons between the sending and receiving country. Situations, which could be interpreted by some women as a form of mobbing are actually evaluated more softly, through the prism of more prevalent stereotypes and sexist practices in Ukraine. In this context the experience of international mobility may be understood as emancipation from the environment where gender constitutes a serious restraint to women's occupational activities. This opportunity appears especially in the cases of immigration to urban settings, where cultural norms and customs are less conservative: they put more emphasis on equality of genders, and women's rights to self-realisation. The example is a situation described below; the interviewee focuses on the positive element of the story (message of her boss) and not on the negative element (sexist remarks by the business partner):

I remember those times when I worked... and I came with my boss to the fair in Kiev, there was a representative of a firm from Gliwice [Polish town], and he says 'your girls are very beautiful, there must be booty grabbing at the desk'. And my boss says, 'you know, there is a desk between me and my employee, and there is no possibility of booty grabbing'. So in the East it is still customary that almost every secretary will be a boss's lover. And in Poland, fortunately, it is not like that, it never happened to me, and I am glad because of that. A woman is more independent here, she can develop her business entirely on her own' [woman, translations, Bydgoszcz]

The narratives prove that gender issues play an important role in constructing stereotypes about immigrants, and specifically about Ukrainian women. Although there are other important points of references which shape the image of Ukrainians in Poland (for

example historical conflicts between the two nations, such as Volyn slaughter during the second World War), clichés which relate to gender appear to be increasingly important in creating conventional perceptions and categorisations. On the other hand, for the women who experienced an even more sexist culture of work (in the post-Soviet country) before having migrated, such clichés seem to be less disturbing.

Discussion: how discriminating practices translate into types of entrepreneurial strategies

The research demonstrated that intersecting statuses of female immigrants from Ukraine lead to different forms of obstacles in the integration process. Both actual discriminatory practices as well as anticipated discrimination may initiate and shape certain reactive strategies of migrants. Their vulnerability has various origins: in some cases it is connected with the host state, in the other it results from immigrants’ culture and attitudes of the co-ethnics. The marginalising outcomes of intersecting gender roles and immigrant status are presented in the table below.

Table 2. Entrepreneurial strategies and dimensions of social life affected by the intersecting statuses of female immigrants

consequences of intersection between gender / immigrant status / (age / family status)	Risk of hindering integration and social cohesion	Self-employment strategy	Positive outcomes of self-employment
Limited possibilities of employment, reducing work opportunities to feminised low-paid sectors	Deactivation on the labour market, lack of professional advancement, work below qualifications and brain waste	Self-realisation strategy	Increase in agency, opportunity to gain control over one’s occupational career, professional independence
Defining role of immigrant women as primary caregivers and breadwinners	Deactivation on the labour market, worsening position of female immigrant workforce in comparison	“Family defender” strategy	Providing work for family members, stabilising and legalising their stay abroad. Flexibility of working

	to men		hours enabling parallel childcare
Sexualising images of immigrant women, accusations of sexual work as a form of symbolic violence	Hostility and discrimination in various areas of social life, limited participation in social networks of host society, enhancing sense of cultural alienation in both states: sending and receiving one, limiting personal aspirations	“Survivor” strategy	self-reliance, internalisation of a cultural paradigm of gender equality, escape from practices of abuse, sexualisation, mobbing (strategy may encompass both migration and self-employment in the host country)

Source: own elaboration

The research results allow one to introduce a typology of the most common strategies of counteracting discrimination connected with intersecting statuses. The self-realisation strategy is an individualist one. It is a consequence of internal motivations (aspirations for occupational advancement, lack of satisfaction with the labour market position) and external circumstances (unfair employers, structural obstacles in the process of labour market inclusion). The “family defender” strategy is collectivist, a woman acts first and foremost as a member of a household, she provides employment for other adult individuals in the family or she chooses self-employment as the best way to combine work and childcare. The “survivor” strategy is an individualist one; it is a result of previously experienced discrimination against females either in the sending or the receiving country, for example sexualisation in the workplace. Some female immigrants may combine several entrepreneurial strategies. Moreover, in some cases - particularly business ventures, which have been operating for a long time – a specific strategy may be substituted by another strategy because of the changing environmental or personal circumstances, such as for example starting a family. It is worth noting that the majority of respondents in the sample resided in big Polish cities, which might have also determined their strategies through the exposure to liberal gender norms and patterns of women’s empowerment (equality at work, acceptance for working mothers).

The three dimensions under study: labour market activities, family sphere and attitudes of the host society are interrelated and discrimination in each of these areas increases the risk of abuse in other areas. Negative stereotypes of female foreigners constitute an obstacle in achieving satisfactory position on the labour market, but at the same time low-skilled jobs and threat of migrant unemployment may strengthen stereotypes and hostility of both groups (immigrant and native) towards each other. The cultural role of Ukrainian mothers as primary caregivers restricts the chances on the labour market, and at the same time professional development is interpreted as a barrier in fulfilling childcare duties. Moreover performing jobs in the host country is sometimes hindered by the sexualised perceptions of Ukrainian women. The context of the life stage is also very important in examining discrimination of female immigrants from the intersectional perspective. Narratives about the experience of being a self-employed woman often focused on the issue of motherhood and concerns about child(ren). Narratives about experiences related to the immigrants status referred mostly to the problems of unstable legal status, weak knowledge of the host language and culture – the factors which are much more frequent on the early stages of staying abroad.

As the table shows, there are also positive aspects of the phenomenon under study. Intersecting statuses of female immigrants lead to a difficult and unstable situation on the labour market, but at the same time Ukrainian women have a strong sense of responsibility for their families and their wellbeing, which leads to establishment and development of family firms in the host country. Overcoming the difficulties in the integration process through self-employment also overthrows prevailing stereotypes about immigrants, such as the image of foreigners taking the jobs from native workers (they rather create new jobs through own businesses). Numerous respondents in the sample, who achieved success as entrepreneurs, contributed not only to the improvement of the image of Ukrainian immigrants, but also to a more positive image of females as resourceful, responsible and efficient business owners.

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