

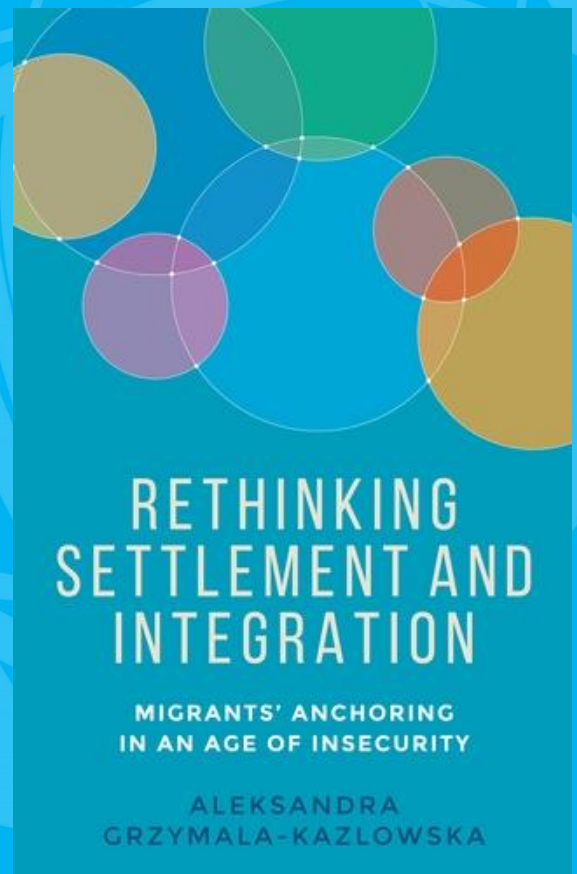
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Migrants' anchoring

This issue of CMR Spotlight is devoted to the concept of migrant's anchoring, developed by CMR's Prof. Aleksandra Grzymała-Kazłowska [@Kazlowskaa](#) in her new book published by Manchester University Press. Read on to find out why 'anchoring' captures the lives and experiences of Polish migrants in the UK and Ukrainian migrants in Poland better than 'integration' or 'settlement' (page 2).

We also have a special treat – an interview with Prof. Rainer Bauböck from the Global Citizenship Observatory at the European University Institute [@GlobalCIT EU](#), conducted during his recent visit at the University of Warsaw by Dr Marta Jaroszewicz [@m_jaroszewicz](#) (page 6).

Enjoy!



Migrants' 'anchoring' – an alternative way of thinking about 'integration' and 'settlement'

Aleksandra Grzymała-Kazłowska writes about her book "Rethinking Settlement and Integration: Migrants' Anchoring in an Age of Insecurity"

Fluid and diverse contemporary migration is accompanied by various complex processes of adaptation and settling experienced by today's migrants. As a result, established concepts in migration studies such as 'integration' and 'settlement' are not only increasingly debatable, but also insufficient to capture the mechanisms of adjustment and functioning of contemporary migrants – the multidimensionality, changeability and unevenness of their adaptation and settling. Therefore, the original concept of anchoring combining sociological and psychological perspectives has been proposed drawing on several years of research, including in-depth interviews with 80 Polish migrants in Great Britain and Ukrainian migrants in Poland, supplemented by ethnographic and autobiographical research, as well as the analysis of blogs and internet forums. The working definition of anchoring refers to the process of establishing and managing significant footholds which allow migrants to satisfy their needs for safety and relative socio-psychological stability in new life settings.

From a metaphor to an empirically grounded concept

The concept has been built upon the metaphor of anchor and inspired by a study of psychological usage of anchors in the therapy of cancer patients to overcome their identity crisis and restore their feeling of continuity and integrity (Little, Jordens and Sayers 2002). In spite of its theoretical and practical potential, anchoring had not been previously turned into an analytical concept either in migration studies or in broader social research, only being mentioned in passing in a metaphorical way by authors such as Bauman (1997) or Castells (1997). Thus, this is a novel tool which makes use of the strength of its founding metaphor and the promising intuitions which it embraces. This interdisciplinary concept represents an original theoretical approach to analysing the adaptation and functioning of migrants, linking the issues of identity, adaptation and integration. The proposed approach allows for overcoming the limitations of the concept of integration (e.g. those related to the structural and functionalist provenance of this notion; its

normative, practical and political use; assumed linearity and the binary based approach), adaptation (including insufficient consideration of social ties and community) and identity (e.g. the tendency to focus too much on subjectively defined, conscious and verbalized identification). The concept of anchoring helps to link various spheres and proposes an alternative approach to the hitherto dominant, but growingly criticized, integration paradigm. It highlights a key issue usually overlooked in research into integration - the need for safety and stability. The notion of anchoring allows for capturing the complexity of adaptation processes in an increasingly complex and dynamically changing reality; agency of individuals within specific opportunities and limitations; processual (but not necessarily linear), non-uniform in various aspects and relational character of anchoring (understood more as striving for stabilisation and "settling in" than "putting roots down"); flexibility and reversibility of anchoring (including "un-anchoring" processes). The concept of anchoring emphasises various types of anchors (not only social and cultural, but also cognitive, economic, material, legal, religious-spiritual, habitual, etc.) and their complex nature (e.g. weak/strong; deep/shallow). It also emphasizes the simultaneity (e.g. parallelism or complementarity) of anchors and their possible transnationality, when migrants maintain observable, cognitive and virtual anchors that cross national borders and connect individuals to different geographic places and non-localized spaces.

From moving to anchoring: Ukrainian migrants in Poland

The research demonstrated that the adaptation of Ukrainian migrants in Poland can be analysed as a process from drifting to anchoring. The concept of anchoring helps to understand the simultaneity, temporality and flexibility of Ukrainian migrants' attachments as well as the complexity and changeability of their 'settlement'. It allows for capturing dynamic identities as well as complex mechanisms of settling down. The adaptation and settling of Ukrainian migrants can be related to their 'lasting temporariness' linked to the nexus of legal constraints (e.g. only three out of 40 interviewees held a permanent residence permit), cultural and geographical proximity allowing individuals for crossing identity and cultural boundaries, as well as spatial circulation and maintaining diverse simultaneous attachments and links with the state of origin and the host country. The complex and dynamic processes of adaptation and settling were also influenced by Ukrainian migrants' multiple and fluid identities and ambiguous positionality in Poland, constructed as neither strangers nor the same; neither on the move nor settled. The research demonstrated the Ukrainian migrants' different layers of anchoring in Poland, from external footholds related to the legal and institutional framework and work, through more complex anchors embedded in social networks and to deeper internal footholds, linked to high competencies in Polish language, familiarity and the constructed cultural

closeness, as well as European aspirations. The latter could coexist with the revived Ukrainian civic identity in the face of the political changes and the military conflict in Ukraine.

Anchored not rooted: Polish migrants in the UK

The notion of anchoring was also useful to analyse the mechanisms of adaptation and settling among Polish migrants in the UK. Even though settlement processes remained more noticeable among the Poles than the Ukrainians, they could still be better characterised in terms of anchoring rather than putting down roots. The study showed the centrality of safety and stability in the experience of Polish migrants in Great Britain. The migrants could be seen as agents looking for life opportunities while recovering their sense of stability and security, based predominantly on the ethnocultural networks, family ties and work opportunities. The footholds strengthening Polishness and ethnic bonds included: Polish language and culture; strong national identity; close family; narrow circles of support and wider Polish community (especially involvement in the Polish school, church and voluntary initiatives and organisations). They were related to gender and family roles as well as homemaking and other daily practices. The main footholds grounding the migrants in British society encompassed: work, English language (e.g. skills, language classes); children's (English) school and after school activities, and footholds in neighbourhoods and local communities. In spite of many commonalities in anchoring

across the Polish interviewees, differences were noticeable among family-oriented participants, single (working) self-oriented individuals and institution-oriented migrants (e.g. the homeless or other vulnerable individuals), showing the diversity of adaptation and settling patterns.

Towards a model of migrants' anchoring

The research with Ukrainian migrants in Poland and Polish migrants in the UK has given an opportunity to synthesise crucial points about anchoring to develop a framework allowing for better understanding of the processes of adaptation and settling. Despite certain differences between the two groups related to their specifics and contextual insights, the study also highlighted key elements useful for advancing a general model of migrants' anchoring focused on commonalities. It includes the centrality of the needs of safety and stability. The developed model of anchoring outlines layers of anchoring, from external footholds linked to the legal and institutional frameworks and work opportunities, through more complex anchors embedded in social relations, to deeper internal anchors, such as constructed familiarity and closeness. The study showed the importance of spaces and practices for anchoring as well as the significance of cognitive, emotional and spiritual anchoring. It demonstrated the dynamic nature of anchoring, and the uneven and relational character of settling. The research sheds light on the flexibility and reversibility of anchoring, including the processes of re-anchoring or un-

anchoring (e.g. through relocation of loved ones, selling houses in the country of origin, , changing names). The study revealed that although the migrants were active agents endeavouring to establish themselves and reach a relative state of safety and stability, they also remained constrained by existing anchors and their limited resources.

Ambiguities and inequalities in anchoring

Apart from the analysis of the positive functions of anchoring, that is, recovering the feeling of safety and stability, the research also examined negative aspects of certain anchors disadvantaging or disabling migrants, producing insecurities and reinforcing exclusions. Possible disadvantaging anchors could have an involuntary and aggravating character. Some examples of such anchors could be illnesses or substance abuse. The study presented ambiguities in establishing specific footholds and countereffects of maintaining some anchors, including new types of insecurities produced, for example, by too strong grounding in the ethnic community. In addition to the positive features of anchoring underlining migrants' agency, the analysis also demonstrated specific constraints and inequalities in the processes of anchoring. Drawing on Cooper's (2008) work on the inequality of security, the analysis showed how individuals' positionality impacted both their levels of exposure to risk and uncertainty as well as migrants' capacities for agency, ability to navigate, deal with challenges and making use of opportunities.

Possible implications and applications of anchoring

In conclusion, it is worthwhile to explore new directions of research and possibilities of using the theory of anchoring. The book concludes with a discussion about policy and practical implications of anchoring. It highlights the significance of the first period of migration, with first encounters and exchanges providing crucial framing experiences. Additionally, the work underscores the importance of cognitive anchors (both adaptive and adverse) which may be changed when reflected upon by individuals willing to learn, especially when adequately supported. It is proposed that further applications of anchoring could be based on the principles of cognitive and behavioural therapy to assist migrants in adaptation and settling in terms of establishing themselves in the host society and better identifying and satisfying their needs of safety and stability. The theoretical and practical value of the concept of anchoring seems to go beyond migration studies. This approach might be useful for theorising the recovery of individuals' safety and stability after major changes and crises, as well as analysing the broader problem of settling and adaptation to life in the complex and changeable world, especially in the case of those who experienced traumatic life transformations and/or remain not grounded and socially connected such as those expose to homelessness or individuals with disability.

Democracies don't have a natural right to self-determination, including immigration control

Interview with Prof. Rainer Bauböck from the Global Citizenship Observatory at the European University Institute, conducted by CMR's Dr. Marta Jaroszewicz



Prof. Rainer Bauböck speaking on “The Democratic Case for Immigration” at University of Warsaw, October 11, 2021.

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Dr Marta Jaroszewicz: In your recent article “The Democratic Case for Immigration” you argue that the right to control immigration does not result from democratic self-determination but is a “hallmark of the contemporary international state system”. In my understanding, it means that the power to control immigration is not, in your opinion, an intrinsic internal attribute of democracy, but the result of an unequal international system where different states offer their nationals dissimilar access to freedom of movement or wealth. Could you

please explain what consequences this amplification has for both political theory and political debate?

Prof. Rainer Bauböck: As you have well summarized, I am opposed to a widespread view that democracies have a natural right to self-determination that implies a power to control immigration. I point to democratic polities at substate level (provinces, municipalities) that lack such powers. In the international state system, however, the power to control immigration is an inherent quality of independent statehood. This does not mean that states can exercise this power in any way they want. I argue that democratic principles commit states to honor different kinds of admission claims, from free movement for multiple citizens or citizens of a regional union like the EU, to the admission of refugees, family reunification and economic migration programmes that benefit societies of origin, destination and migrants. For political theory, the implication is to shift attention from the much-debated question of what grounds a right to immigration control towards the justification of particular admission claims. For the political debate the implication is to

set aside the self-determination argument and to show how democracies are already committed by their own norms to maintain fairly open borders.

MJ: You argue that democratic norms back open immigration policies more than it is usually recognized. This phenomenon arises from many unobvious connections between destination states and the individuals claimed to be outsiders, based either on human rights considerations or economic concerns, and also what you call different special responsibilities of a state. Yet you have also noticed that there is “huge gap between the current immigration policies of the EU states and the liberal democratic norms”. You are not an optimist in this regard, claiming that the relative openness of European societies may not last. What can politicians do to reverse this trend? Can you please specify what you mean by developing new mobility-adapted welfare policies and new historical narratives?

RB: It is hard to be optimistic about immigration these days. And the task of political theory is always critical. I regard the incapacity of the EU member states to agree on shared responsibilities for refugee protection and their reluctance to engage in migration-development partnerships with sub-Saharan African states as historic failures that will come to haunt us in the future. At the same time, I see the abolishing of border controls in the Schengen area and the right of free movement at the core of EU

citizenship as historic achievements. Regional free movement arrangements exist, by the way, not only in Europe, but also among most South American and African states. In parallel to the new trend towards creating border walls and fences there is a trend to promote free movement at regional levels or through the toleration of multiple citizenship. The main problem in Europe and all so-called Western liberal democracies is not closure towards immigration, but a deep internal divide within these societies over how open they should be. Brexit, the election of Trump, the rise of nativist populist regimes in Central-Eastern Europe are warning signs how political victories of the advocates of closure can damage democratic institutions and the rule of law. But as we have recently seen in US, German and Czech elections, this is not a historic inevitability. Democratic backsliding can be stopped if those promoting relative openness and diversity play the game of democratic politics well.

M.J. I’m sure you have heard that Poland is currently experiencing a huge political and humanitarian crisis (resulting also in serious social polarisation), steaming from the rapid increase in migration from the Middle East and Africa through the Belarusian-Polish border. Migrants, mainly originating from Iraq and Afghanistan, tempted by the perspective of easy entry into the EU, supposedly pay several thousand dollars for the trip to Minsk, from where they are transported to the EU border and

encouraged or pushed to cross it in an irregular manner. In vast majority of cases, they are returned or refused entry by Polish or Lithuanian border guards, who regard this situation as a “hybrid threat” of the authoritarian Belarusian regime aimed at undermining the stability of neighbouring countries. How would you comment on the crisis?

RB: This crisis illustrates how autocratic leaders can cleverly play on the lack of agreement within liberal democracies with regard to refugee protection to deepen the divide by using refugees as pawns. Turkey’s president Erdogan did exactly the same thing when he encouraged Syrian and Afghan refugees in his country to cross the land border to Greece. There is a real dilemma here since, on the one hand, the EU states have committed to examine the claims of asylum seekers and not to push them back, especially if doing so risks their lives. On the other hand, the images of massive and chaotic border crossings will signal to domestic voters that governments have lost control, as they did in 2015. For humanitarian reasons, those who make it across the border or are stranded in a no-man’s land must be provided with shelter. For legal and political reasons, there must be a procedure for swiftly examining their claims to asylum. And those whose claims are not well-founded must be sent back to safe countries (which cannot be Belarus) as quickly as possible, also to make it clear that the blackmailing by autocratic states is not

working. A condition for this strategy to work is enhanced solidarity among EU member states where all must either take in refugees or transfer proportionally resources to those states that have admitted larger numbers. The current plans of the Commission fall short of this goal, and I am pessimistic that member states will agree even to the very modest proposals from Brussels.

M.J. Currently, some migration researchers are arguing that there is no universal model/models to explain migration policy developments based on the empirical research produced in the West. Sometimes this endeavour is called overcoming the “Westphalian straitjacket” of migration research – it questions the presumption that the Western model of state and political culture is universal. The most vivid voices in this regard come from the global South, but you can also find some examples in our region. Do you think Central-Eastern Europe, with its specific past: domination of strong neighbours, territory partitions, specific patterns of nation building, multi-ethnic history which was drastically ceased during and after WWII, the imposition of communism, and accelerated “liberal revolution”, require some special theoretical or methodological lenses? Should more attention be paid to those patterns to better explain current migration policies of the countries in our region?

RB: My research does not engage so much with explanatory theories of migration flows. But in response to your question, I would, on the one hand, warn against underestimating the importance of the Westphalian state system for explaining both the causes of migration and its regulation and governance. It is disparities within that system with regard to economic opportunities and political protection that drive most international migration and it is the inherent power of states to control immigration that explains the evolution of international law and governance efforts regarding the movement of people. What we have to overcome are naïve economic push-pull models that black out the political drivers and controls of migration. In this sense, the “geopolitical” experiences of Central-Eastern Europe contain indeed important lessons for a “realistic” view of migration, as much as large migration flows within the global South do.

Prof. Rainer Bauböck's full lecture at the University of Warsaw "The Democratic Case for Immigration" can be watched on CMR's Youtube channel:

[Rainer Bauböck: The Democratic Case for Immigration - YouTube](#)



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