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## **Evolution of needs and contexts of development in transnational vocational counselling**

This paper discusses transnationalism and transnational economic migration as a new context of vocational counselling development. It is assumed that prefix cultures are the most important globalizational context of transnational vocational counselling development in Poland and the European Union. The idea of international labor mobility was, for a long time in the EU, a source of optimism related to prosperity and political consolidation. The meanders of introducing TVC evolved, in time, towards a positive as well as counterproductive direction. The former is exemplified by establishing a European post-graduate TVC studies program, whereas the latter, negative tendencies, can be exemplified by the growth of vocational counselling geopolitics in the context of prefix cultures and international competition on labor markets. The paper also discusses Polish hopes and fears regarding TVC, specifically certifying migrant qualifications as well as Brain-Drain and Brain-Gain.

**Keywords:** transnational vocational counselling, interculturalism, prefix culture, vocational counselling geopolitics

### **Introduction**

Even though the very beginnings of vocational counselling can be traced back to the roots of western civilization, some of the directions of its intellectual progress have a relatively short history. These fairly new notions in vocational counselling include transnational and intercultural counselling. They reflect the vitality as well as continuity of counselling in the ever-changing world of today. Transnational vocational counselling (TVC) and intercultural vocational counselling (IVC) entered the world stage in the second half of the twentieth century as a result of an emerging new international order, which eventually took the form of a globalized world.

From the moment of TVC's emergence as a semantically separate being (Plant, 1990) the concept has been systematically evolving as part of the social policy and labor market. The name TVC later on changed into "transnational career counselling", but the original term will be used throughout this article (Plant, 1990). It

gradually cemented its position in the world of vocational counsellors changing the fields, content and forms of its activities. According to Plant (1990), the spark that enabled the development of transnational vocational counselling came from the dawn of digital civilization and the globalization tendencies that came with it. Together with the emergence of new civilizational contexts of the digital age, and the homogenization of the world in the economic sphere, national labor markets started to interrelate and blend together. These tendencies were welcomed enthusiastically and with great hope in the field of vocational counselling, since they were viewed as a sign of the times, which would eventually render national vocational counselling programs obsolete. As it turned out, optimistic visions of national vocational counselling programs merging and integrating have not entirely panned out, despite the fact that objective reasons behind this process have become even more serious.

The trajectory of TVC's further development is drawn now not just by visions of the future without a future in the minds of intellectual elites at the helm of vocational counselling, but also by variables and unpredictable environmental factors of the past several decades. The most significant contexts demarcating the evolution of TVC's concept include the disintegration of universalistic culture in favor of prefixed multiple cultures (Giordano, 2010), the unwillingness of key States and economies to open their labor markets, the paradoxical blending of globalization and glocalization processes (Kowalik, 2015), the increase in work mobility and economic emigration that defied expectations (Okólski, 2012), the depopulation of specific regions and nations along with a huge population growth rate in other parts of the world.

The aforementioned changes in the general understanding of vocational counselling contexts meant, on the one hand, that visions of voluntary transnational counselling development could not come true in professional practices (Plant, 1993; Watts, 1999; Bańka, Ertelt, 2011). On the other hand, objective needs drove transnational vocational counselling processes to develop independently from major institutions aspiring to the leadership role, e.g. the European Union (White Paper, 1997) or the CEDEFOP (Plant, 1990). Contrary to initial expectations and hopes, the changes in the external environment of vocational counselling stimulate the evolution of TVC towards national programs that retain their international aspect. The best example of this is the establishment – within the Polish national vocational counselling program – of the “intercultural vocational counselling” aimed at integrating the Polish Roma community with the local labor market (Bańka, Noworol, Trzeciak, 2014), and the strenuous process of emergence of vocational labour market reintegration programs for Polish re-emigrants.

This article will discuss important issues related to the evolution of transnational vocational counselling and intercultural vocational counselling, with a special focus on the changes taking place in the domestic labor market in an international context.

## **Transnationalism as a new context of career development and lifestyle**

The most characteristic trait of the last decade of the XX century turned out to be the transnationalism of the basic aspects of lifestyle and human development including vocational counselling (Plant, 1990, 1993; Bańka, 2004b, 2006b). It is related to the growth of global organizations that exceed the boundaries set out by national cultures and local organizational cultures (Bańka, 2007). The transnationalisation of labor markets determines the tendency to plan and execute careers – not only within national economies but also in a transborder, international and intercultural context. This process entails significant changes in the mobility of workforce, occupational mobility, transitioning from an education market to a labor market, in an individual's psychological identity development and the definition of adulthood. The partial blurring of geographical, national and cultural borders is also a part of this process (Giordano, 2010).

Transnationalism is a term closely tied with globalization and was adopted in Poland from the German language at the turn of the century (Bańka, Ertlet, 2004). However, currently, in the nomenclature of phenomena related to a post-national culture it has been replaced by the term “transnational” (Mobility in Europe, 2006). In the definition of transnationalism the key meaning resides in the prefix *trans*, which is used to describe many different ideas and notions, such as: a specific type of social morphology, a social consciousness type, a kind of social reproduction, the path that social capital takes, the place of political engagement or the reconstruction of “place” and loyalty (Vertovec, 1999; Giordano, 2010). The use of the prefix *trans-* suggests that an individual can be above and beyond social conditions that try to contain the individual in strict boundaries and norms, in prefigured identities and fixed behavior models. The adjective *transnational* implies the ability of an individual (but not exclusively) to cross cultural and state borders, as well as to freely fluctuate between affiliations and identities. It is the individual who chooses to which social group they belong and which identity they take.

In a broader meaning transnationalism refers to the multitude of relationships and interactions that link people across state borders (Vertovec, 1999). As a network of relations cultivated over long distances, transnationalism obviously existed in the past. However, the phenomenon took on the particular significance with technological advancements in the field of telecommunication, allowing fast and much more frequent human interactions (Appadurai, 1996). Transnationalism refers to the phenomenon of cultivating relations in spite of long distances and real-life international borders.

Such understanding of transnationalism includes individuals, relationship networks, social relations, communities and broader, institutionalized structures such as governmental and non-governmental organizations. However, the most important aspect of transnationalism is that it is a product of individuals' activities and their initiative, not that of government agencies or other formalized institutions

(Portes et al., 2000). Despite the existence of some strands of transnationalism sponsored by transnational organizations, such as “euro-counselling” (Plant, 1993; Bańka, Ertelt, 2004) or funded by the nation states (Smith, 1998), which aim at supporting their “own” expatriate communities, these are treated as secondary to individual initiatives. In this context, transnational counselling was an activity funded or organized by states to provide support to native expatriates in a transnational, social and economic space.

### **Transnational economic migrations as a cause and a result of career transnationalisation**

It is commonly known that people migrated since time immemorial. However, contemporary migrations have a certain specificity, because they focus on more varied criteria. The migrations of today and those of the past differ in many aspects, such as: cultural and economic motivation, intentionality of departures, attachment to the place, family status and, finally, differences in lifestyle. Economic emigration ceased to be the dominating motive, and even emigration ceased to be the dominating type of going abroad. Most migrants leave just to return later, however, many of them, both in the past and today, become accidental or coincidental emigrants. Who, then, goes abroad today and what type of migrations are prevalent?

Various researchers point to different aspects and sources of spatial mobility, however, all of them emphasise the cultural motive. Zygmunt Bauman (2000) identifies two types of migration, i.e.: modern (pilgrim) and postmodern (tourist and vagabond). The vagabond is described as someone lacking freedom of choice. He/she does not have a home port, does not travel, but is rather forced by circumstances into the world, to search for temporary space, constantly looking for his/her place on Earth. This category is close to the category of cultural homelessness, whereas the tourist is an individual who makes free decisions regarding the places he/she visits, and who regards spatial mobility as most important and most precious. For the tourist the destination is not as important as travelling itself. Bauman analyzes these two identities as opposite ends of a continuum.

On the other hand, Ward and his colleagues (Ward et al., 2001) identify five types of spatial mobility and migrants: tourists motivated by cognitive, recreational and aesthetic considerations; sojourners, exemplified by international students (Tharenou, 2003) and other non-immigration groups such as military personnel on foreign missions, expatriates from finance and diplomatic circles; business sojourners exemplified by voluntary and involuntary corporate expatriates (Adler, 2002); immigrants that include individuals “pushed into the world” by economic reasons and a motivation to settle permanently in a different location; lastly, refugees whose prime motivation is saving their own life. These are marked by a pre-emigration

trauma related to such perilous events as war, some natural disaster, genocide, imprisonment and torture.

There are several important dimensions of an “average” international migration related to the transnationalisation of professional careers in the European economic space: migration motivation, attachment and engagement in home versus destination country issues, and finally, family status. These dimensions comprise a set of middling lifestyles of European migrants. Following this chain of thought, we can identify three primary motives for spatial mobility: 1 – a motivation to realize one’s life and career path in a non-linear model, not considering fixed borders; 2 – a motivation related to preferring a lifestyle that is more creative, varied and unmonotonous, 3 – a motivation related to having interesting interpersonal relations that a transnational environment provides. In the case of the first type of motivation, there is a tendency for individuals to move away from planning and executing a career in predictable sequences of life cycle changes. The second type can be additionally characterized as realizing professional and life goals in places where opportunity to meet these goals arises, not where an individual happens to be born. The third type of motivation is defined by self-realization through interpersonal bonds in a vast frame of reference, exemplified by a career in science or art, where the optimal stage is an extensive international network of contacts.

In the second dimension of emigration determined by specific lifestyle preferences, three basic forms of attachment to country of destination can be identified. The first form of attachment is permanent or lifelong attachment. It demarks a whole-life perspective of attachment to the destination country on three levels – emotional, normative and continuative. The emotional bond of attachment expresses itself in the feeling of satisfaction stemming from one’s role in life, people and the meaning of self-worth. The normative bond is a need for having a link with the destination country as a result of socialization processes – learning and upbringing. Normative attachment expresses itself through a position of engagement, solidarity and internalized beliefs of an individual in the need for loyalty towards the new country. The continuative bond is a feeling of permanence expressing itself through a position of loyalty to the new place of living as a result of investments already made, e.g. purchasing a house, which one cannot simply abandon without incurring significant costs. The second type of attachment is circular or undefined attachment. It expresses itself through an alternating, reversible and indefinite attachment to the destination country, which results in constant leaving and returning.

In the third dimension of emigration related with perceived attractiveness of a new home, four types of family statuses can be identified. First status is a childless family, either as an “empty-nest” family or married couples that chose not to have children (yet). Second status – families with pre-school or school children. Third status – singles or singles with a partner. Fourth status – multi-lingual families (international).

A combination of aforementioned dimensions and subdimensions of transnational migration creates a complex matrix of career lifestyles and types of migration (Bańka, 2008, 2009a). The first type is a *family expatriate professional*. He/she is a type belonging to an elite form of expatriation, where high social standing is associated with international employment. These are most often employees coming from higher social classes working in international corporations. The second type is a so-called “job Odysseus”, a nomadic employee oriented at using employment abroad as a springboard in his/her career. It is a type represented by well-educated professionals, possessing a certain seed mobility capital such as experience and reference letters from being employed in a multinational company. The third type is a voluntary nomadic employee, often represented by a young university graduate trying their luck internationally and in a borderless career. Contrary to the “job Odysseus”, voluntary nomadic employees do not demonstrate an excessive professional attachment and are open to a borderless career, i.e. in fields unrelated to their education and qualifications. Fourth type is an involuntary and desperate nomadic employee.

Such an individual is represented by people who found themselves in a situation with no way out and are willing to emigrate to secure the existential needs of themselves and their family. This type does not demonstrate professional attachment and has no ambition to work in the fields that would secure his/her career capital. What matters most are work, earnings and employment. Fifth type is an international settler, represented by individuals who are focused on building their identity through culture consumption, vagabonds with no professional attachment and with no desire to assimilate into society. The sixth type is an international settler assimilator, who enters the social structure of a destination country through marriage. A detachment of individual identity and national identity can be observed in this type of migrants (Bańka, 2010b).

### **Prefix cultures as a globalizational context of vocational counselling evolution**

The turning point in the development of modern vocational counselling is related to the migratory tendencies described above as well as globalizational changes on the labor market induced by technological advancements that push humans out of work processes (Deloitte, 2016).

The most important issues related to vocational counselling appear when its centuries-old tradition meets globalizational processes, which results in the emergence of vocational counselling on a transnational scale. The problems of deteriorating old and recognizing new forms of vocational counselling stem from amending the traditional definition of national culture as new forms of culture determined by prefixes enter the world stage (Giordano, 2010).

Traditional vocational counselling was and is a result of traditional culture's growth, in which culture was defined as a "... comprehensive entirety including knowledge, beliefs, art, morality, law, customs and other abilities and habits demanded from an individual as a member of society" (Taylor, 1871, quoted after Giordano, 2010). Taylor's prototypical definition held strong for decades in the western world by highlighting two elements. Firstly, it proclaimed mental unity of human kind, which each member of a society needed to achieve through socialization. Secondly, it assumed an organismic entity with internal unity despite consisting of varied specific elements, conflicting but being part of a coherent system. Such understanding of a holistic culture was static in the short-term, but dynamic in the long-term.

A deconstruction process, started in the 80's of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, undermined the classic definition of culture, understood as a mental wholeness and a holistic system. The old definition of wholeness gradually shifted away to make room for cultural complexity (Giordano, 2010) that questioned two elements. Firstly, it challenged the idea that a human being is a sort of a robot, who – through learning and socializing – acquires norms and social requirements in accordance with socially determined models. Secondly, another notion was also questioned – the idea of culture as a comprehensive entirety (e.g. national culture), with scholars leaning in favor of cultural diversity. Scholars, such as Wallerstein (2004), highlight a point stating that in modern technological and economic globalization, migration and professional mobility process dynamics are so complex that examining a culture as a fixed, isolated entirety no longer makes sense. Ideas of the State and a nation are particularly undermined as they have the strongest ties with the notion of a comprehensive culture. The change in phrasing, shifting accents from cultural comprehensiveness towards cultural diversity, caused culture to become something singular, processual, relational and created individually, i.e. by individuals, or collectively through persistent negotiations, interactions, transactions, tensions, conflicts and even very tragic events.

These changes are not irrelevant to the advancements in the theory and professionalization of vocational counselling. They are particularly significant because the problem of culture in vocational counselling not only does not disappear, but dangerously transforms together with the dawn of a new era of the prefixes that represent, realistically or postulatively, the cultural diversity (Giordano, 2010). Prefixes that demark a new era of thinking about cultures and modern societies in general, as well as about functions and tasks of a modern state in vocational counselling in particular are: *multi-*, *inter-*, *trans-* and *pan-*. These prefixes, present in: multiculturalism, intercultural communication or transnational counselling, are currently used much more often than the simple term "culture". There are similarities and significant differences between the terms determined by prefixes *multi-*, *inter-* and *trans-* that are not readily distinguishable at first glance. However, they potentially have a large significance for the theory and practice of vocational counselling.

The prefix *multi-* in the notion of multiculturalism underlines the importance of cultural differences and the boundaries associated with them. Thus, *multi-* in multiculturalism indicates ethnocultural groups as separate entities, at the same time as it ties them together, relativizes and merges them. Following this logic, the prefix *multi-* in social policy may serve to generate the notion of social identity as something parallel to the notion of a nation, like in Great Britain, Canada, the USA or Australia. Generally speaking, the prefix *multi-* has different meanings in different historical contexts, world regions, language traditions and its connotations undergo constant transformation. Hence, for example in Germany, the prefix *multi-* in the second half of the last century was highly regarded, only to acquire a negative connotation in the social consciousness along with the term *MultiCulti*, which started to denote multi-ethnic coexistence. However, in Switzerland, the prefix *multi-* is a revered pillar of a multicultural state, for over five hundred years being the celebrated “constitutional multiculturalism” of five autonomous *Völkerschaften* (Giordano, 2010).

Yet another context is present in post-colonial societies where the prefix *multi-* is a synonym of pluralistic communities, in which distinct national, cultural and ethnic groups are merged into one State. In this case the national ideology is based on the prefix *multi-* as a factor legitimizing actual differences in the public realm. Moreover, in countries like Malaysia or Singapore the prefix *multi-* readily accentuates ethnic differences as a basic diversity trait in national customs, local multicultural rituals or specific folklore festivals. Contrary to the prefix *multi-*, the prefix *inter-* underlines universalistic and voluntary world view. Hence, the prefix *inter-* lifts all social boundaries that would otherwise limit individuals in their choices and activities in any way. From this point of view, the prefix *inter-* suggests more of an integration and dialogue between cultures rather than focusing on the differences that divide them.

Finally, the prefix *trans-* is simultaneously a relay of free will, progressivism and transgression. Generally speaking, the suggested status of voluntarism implies a certain utopian meaning of its defined being, thanks to which an individual liberates oneself from external social determinants that force his or her behavior to be compliant with the norms and a socially predefined identity. Adjectives like *trans-cultural*, *translocal* or *transnational* are used mainly to suggest a possibility of transcending cultural and national borders as well as free movement between collective affiliations and identities. It is the individual or a defined community that have the ability to decide on the direction of social, ethnic and cultural relations. The prefix *trans-* undermines the reputation of group belonging implied in *multi-*, as well as highlights the constant and free movement between group affiliations. This, in turn, results in the emergence of hybrid identities characterized by multiple social affiliations. Hybrid identities resulting from globalization are described as *postethnic*, *postcultural* and *postnational*, and as such, express an optimistic conviction that nation states are becoming obsolete (Apparudi, 1996).

The conviction that both States and vocational counselling are coming to an end is explicitly expressed in the prefix *post-*, in terms such as postnational or post-sovereign. With the use of this prefix an opinion is being expressed that modern political and cultural formations rooted in a nation state are becoming pointless (Appadurai, 1996). Even though the neologism “postnational” is one of many terms signaling as well as searching for explanations in the mental state shaping the modern world, it is simultaneously the most far-reaching in heralding a dawn of a new era.

The last prefix that is worth noting in the context of vocational counselling is the prefix “*euro-*”. It is used in endeavors related to vocational counselling such as: eurocounselling, eurocompetences, eurotraining, *Euroguidance*, etc. Its substance is very similar to the prefix *trans-*, with the caveat that the idea of a postnational state is limited to the territory of the European Union. Its impact points towards integration processes in relation to an abstract community that is the European society, which is supposed to have the same consciousness and the same activity patterns both in work and employment, as well as in dealing with everyday problems.

The advent of the prefix era influences vocational counselling both positively and negatively. The spread of prefixes such as *trans-* leads to a conflict between the national and transnational state functioning. In vocational counselling it is exemplified by *Euroguidance*. In *Euroguidance* the prefix *euro-* expressed the political willingness to open every country in the Union to the needs of the Union’s citizens, while ensuring practical priorities of action towards their home populations<sup>1</sup>. Meanwhile, the pressure from transnational institutions on priority treatment of functions related to prefixes *multi-*, *inter-* and *trans-* lead to increasing tensions in State and international vocational counselling actions. Confusion and uncertainty, caused by prefixes spreading in countries’ social policies in the field of vocational counselling, are both a logical outcome of an imperfect effort to grasp the transformation of a collective identity and of attempts at subjectively identifying with those changes.

The main challenge of contemporary vocational counselling is the gradually increasing volatility coupled with blurred collective identity and authorities in the global era (Archaikas, 2016). This problem involves issues related to a changing geometry of identity on the “global society” – “national society” continuum. Position and scale of affiliation on this continuum is tied not only with how central the matter of nation state is in the social consciousness of citizens and people in power, but also with the matter of an individual’s loyalty to the State and to a global society. Global citizenship as an effect of identity in a nation state leads to an affirmation of people’s identity conformity not with the geographical and geopolitical country of origin, but with the present place of residence. Where one is becomes the figure,

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<sup>1</sup> This problem is discussed in detail in A.Bańkaś and W.Trzeciakś, *Rozwój myśli i profesjonalizacji poradnictwa zawodowego* (2017) p. 332 and onward.

while one's place of origin becomes the background. Postnational identity, a notion that encapsulates the problem of individual and social identification in the sense of professional identity, moves away from geographical compliance with national-territorial sentiments, drifting towards new communities, such as professional transmigrants (Appadurai, 1996). Drifting, in this context, means not fully controllable mobility inside one of three geometries of identity – multiscale geometry. The first type of identity geometry is national identity, the second type is global identity and the third type is indeed multiscale identity, which function can be characterized by affirming one's own identity. This type of identity stretches between two ends of the continuum, i.e. national citizen identity and global citizen identity.

In the newly formed type of multiscale identity two things occur – firstly, the disconnection between group affiliation and the feeling of responsibility for the group; and secondly, the disconnection between socio-territorial affiliation and the rights that are associated with a given social and territorial space. It means that in a postnational society (Habermas, 2001) various geometries of citizen identities happen to coexist – ranging from extreme nationalistic all the way towards extreme postnational. Habermas (2001) indicates that postnational identity undermines current rules that governed a participatory society. The change in rules of democracy consists in shifting them towards new, yet undefined rules of a postnational democratic society. These operate using vague categories of civic solidarity, ability to “self-legislate” or perform “social intervention self-consciously”.

In a reality marked by the prefix *trans-* the issues of needs as well as the idea of vocational counselling far outreach the usual patterns of a nation state and traditions of democracy, civic solidarity, national framework constants (e.g. qualifications) as benchmarks for adapting professional identity to the demands of the labor market. Blurring and transgression of borders between cultures and nation states translate into a necessity of transgressing additional borders of vocational counselling, like, for instance, geopolitical borders.

### **The birth and vicissitudes of transnational vocational counselling in the European Union**

Workforce moves across national borders both in an unwelcoming, as exemplified by political refugees (Franzen, 1997), as well as welcoming way. In the latter case, transnational mobility can be supported by aiding specific countries on a national policy level as well as through transnational institutions like the OECD or the European Commission. Transnational mobility started to be perceived positively in the European Union particularly in the case of adolescents, since by the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century the unemployment amongst young people grew to alarming levels. This positive attitude toward transnational mobility was started by the “White Paper” issued by the European Commission (2001), titled “Towards the Learning Society”.

This document defined the primary condition in responsibility of individuals for their own professional qualifications. It points towards individuals' development potential derived from spatial and transnational mobility.

In its multiple documents published at the turn of the century, the European Commission (e.g. White Paper, 2001) postulates an increase in workforce mobility as an important contribution towards tackling unemployment, especially among young adults, as well as in the process of merging labor markets in Europe. Therefore, transnationalism became a reality in the EU, bringing in issues related education, information, law and counselling (Bańka, Ertelt, 2011; Bańka, 2014; Poradnictwo zawodowe na odległość, 2004; Zagadnienia mobilności w dokumentach unijnych, 2010). From that moment on, there has been a rapid increase in demand for information and transnational vocational counselling in relation to an increased mobility of people and companies (Flaszyńska, 2004). The EU formulated a clear and optimistic intent related to vocational counselling, stating that cultural diversity of Member States should not be an obstacle in accessing the labor market but a positive developmental value, which adds new professional competences.

Transnational mobility of young people caught the focus of national and international bodies due to the following reasons. First, because of the phenomenon's specificity in the context of national experiences and traditions, this happening despite globalization and European integration. Each country retains its character in terms of prejudices and stereotypes, which have to be read as facts and economic events. The second reason was the size of the workforce, specifically the ratio between young adults entering the labor market and the rest of the working population. During that time, a big part of Europe's workforce consisted of Poles, which was a matter for concern in Germany or Holland. Third, the attitudes towards transnational career in different countries varied greatly. The fourth reason was the more or less justified fears of "flooding the domestic labor markets" by foreign workforce. The European Employment Act, commissioned by the European Council as a way of tackling young adult unemployment in Europe, includes the memorandum "European Youth: Our Future", which presumes an integration of educational policy towards youth and employment on three levels: national, international and European.

Opening borders and enabling transnational mobility was perceived as key to ensuring that the youth has better perspectives in realizing their professional careers, as well as to creating a new "European identity". This memorandum (Ertelt, 2001) suggests that the ongoing specific actions aimed at student exchange and training programs, transnational youth exchange and business language courses are key elements of new transcultural competences. From the perspective of vocational counselling development, the most important decision of the European Commission was establishing transnational programs aimed at improving the quality of counselling on the national level, as well as forming the European Curriculum for vocational counselling, which provides guidance in the European context (Bańka, Ertelt, 2004).

The period of European integration at the turn of the century created several needs for European counselling related to shaping changes in ways of transitioning from school education into the labor market or conditions for effective transitioning between different work cultures. These new needs of transnational vocational counselling highlighted the necessity of establishing new concepts for counsellor staff preparation in the specialized profile of transnational services. However, raising the issue of international cooperation in turn brought everyone's attention to the problem that was already raised by Plant (1993) in relation to the necessity of synchronizing vocational counselling on the national and transnational level.

The logic of European integration creates a rational basis for new forms of vocational counselling. As a consequence, TVC got tasked with forming a new type of counselling aimed at supporting and promoting careerism on a European and global scale (Neault, 2005). We can distinguish between two approaches to transnational counselling. The first one is a reactive approach caused by transnational migration within the European Union. Increased mobility always causes a sense of danger, which in turn forces migrant assimilation by the so called European citizenship regimes (Launikari, Puukari, 2005). The idea of transnational vocational counselling derived from the reactive stream does not add anything new to the discussion, because it is a straightforward continuation of multicultural counselling founded in the USA as a tool for affirmative action and for creating equal opportunities for various cultural minorities. The second approach defines TVC from a perspective of anticipative actions aiming at preventing harmful, discriminatory occurrences on the labor market. In this iteration of TVC, it appears as a set of proactive measures targeted at prevention, intervention and promotion of desirable stances and competences from transnational adjustment's perspective (Bańka, 2005). This model is similar to an already known transnational personnel marketing and lies within the ideology of European integration, which seeks a synthetic European identity (McFadden, 1999; Bańka, 2006c). Looking from this perspective, it appears that TVC is a certain form of political idealism that aims at finding a new and better form of transnational social organization, transcending state borders and finding benefits in globalization (Faist, 2000).

However, implementing the noble TVC ideology turned out not to be such an easy task. Moving from the national to transnational level of counselling required a lot of new ideas: new intercultural terminology, new counselling practice models, new legal solutions embedded in international agreements or new institutions operating both on national and transnational levels. These newly emerged issues related to TVC's organization in Europe shed new, unknown light on the matter of multiculturalism. Traditionally, vocational counselling was integrated with national programs, where multiculturalism was tied to national, ethnic and immigrant issues (Fry, Hirasawa, 1997). However, the first novel EU recommendations regarding TVC focused not on minorities as special treatment groups, but on entire societies that differed in culture, traditions and resources. Because the classic model of

vocational counselling defined issues concerning education and labor market from the perspective of the State and national programs of counselling services, formulating a new TVC paradigm provided an impulse for seeking innovative solutions in the field of service organization on an international level (Watts, 2000).

Since it is impossible to effectively conduct TVC on a local and national level, expectations of united transnational labor market visionaries focused, for a time, on possibilities of entities providing consulting services on the margin of the so-called official institutions (Rozwój niepublicznego poradnictwa zawodowego, 2002), particularly in the private sector. These expectations for TVC's better adjustment to new tasks by these institutions did not pan out, or did so on a very small scale. Definitely, these positive prospects for growth were carried out by university consulting institutions, like for example "The Career Bureau". Their role grew in significance with a shift in attitudes and expectations among youth towards the process of transitioning from education to labor market in a broader, transnational context.

Hopes that efforts of non-governmental organizations benefitting transnational counselling will be more resilient to threats from the so-called "secondary discrimination" related to "affirmative action", meaning a better treatment of certain nationalities to the detriment of others within the concept of multiculturalism, proved to be unwarranted. In reality, these expectations fell short due to the following qualities of unofficial and private institutions: mercantile (profit-driven) nature of actions that were taken, many sources of financing activities, de-ideologization of services through making them independent from national state doctrines, creating a State within a State (as in the case of transnational corporations). The mercantile character of private organizations involved in transnational counselling has its disadvantages, due to concentrating on profit and ignoring the problems of ethical nature (Sampson, 1999). The functioning of vocational counselling in the private sector raises new threats that can be summed up by the term "pathology of professionalism", which manifests itself mainly through a constant pursuit of money at all costs (Bańka, 1996).

### **Transnational vocational counselling from the perspective of Polish realities and needs**

The sources of interest in TVC in Poland are of a slightly different nature (cf Bańka, 2006c). Traditionally, Poland used to be one of emigration countries, which means it "pushed" workers over the border. During the last two decades, Poland was a country with the highest transnational migration rate in Europe (Biela, 2007). From the Polish perspective, the problem of TVC could have been narrowed down to two main issues: securing both the interests of its own citizens and a good nation state brand. However, in reality, the actions aimed at safeguarding real and potential interests of economic emigrants were modest at best. Central state institutions

failed, whereas usually more operative local organizations, even though they were aware of the needs and expectations of young people, were unable to fulfil them. Even though conducting fully fledged transnational counselling on a local level is impossible, it is feasible to a limited extent. For instance, these possibilities were applied in the region of Polish Cieszyn and Ostrava in the Czech Republic by organizing information exchange about local labor market trends.

The Polish point of view on the matter of TVC was fully voiced at the time of formulating the program for European post-graduate studies on Transnational Vocational Guidance (Bańka, Ertelt, 2004). This program was implemented in partnership with the ministries, Public Employment Services and universities from Poland, Austria, Germany, Hungary and the Czech Republic. The initial concept of TVC still at the stage of devising the post-graduate studies evolved towards new objectives related to intercultural vocational counselling of European Union Member States. Both directions of work were definitely advantageous for Poland. On the one hand, they provided an opportunity for Polish counsellors to have access to the know how in the field of advanced counselling practices of EU Member States. On the other hand, focusing on aspects such as TVC, as well as on cultural differences and similarities between the Member States in the post-graduate studies Curriculum, defined the aim of counselling support for every EU citizen on equal terms. Thus, without doubt, the program gave Polish citizens who left the country to work in other parts of the EU a chance to shake off the stigma of being “economic emigrants”.

In the case of the European intercultural aspect, the Curriculum of the TVC post-graduate studies set out three goals. First, the goal of TVC was to help EU citizens that expressed their readiness to start an international career both with ad hoc and preventive aid. Its goal was, among others, to create in potential migrants an ability to cope in open labor markets of the European Union ruled by the same set of rules. Second, it provided intervention and preventive aid for people going abroad in overcoming the problems related to the migrant stigma. As is commonly known, migrating to a foreign country leads to creating stereotypes for the incoming guests by hosts (Howarth, 2002), which in turn forced a new objective, which was for trained counsellors to counter the potential negative effects of this process. The third goal was aiding people leaving the country in developing new identity competences related to traditions and day-to-day demands of living in the host country. The fourth goal of the intercultural TVC module was to help people that contemplated leaving in assessing their own ability potential to cope with having an international career. The fifth goal of the intercultural TVC module was “selecting” individuals that would clearly not deal well with a life in an open, international labor market. This did not mean banning someone from travelling, because that is impossible, but rather a proactive selection that lead to persuasion actions and raising awareness.

The starting point for a TVC education program was a 3-stage work on operationalization of TVC as an emerging profession and a new specialization within

vocational counselling. The first, research stage focused on analyzing the area of activity for counsellors in different European countries. As a result, the nature of vocational and educational counselling was defined in Austria, Germany, Hungary and Poland. At the same time, education programs and counsellor training systems were compiled for these countries. The second stage was about using the data gathered previously in order to analyze competences, duties and roles that together define a professional profile of transnational vocational counselling. A review of appropriate competency classifications and the range of professional profiles was done. Furthermore, an analysis of reports and tasks by euro-counsellors has led to defining a set of actions, duties and roles that are most distinctive for the professional profile of a transnational vocational counsellor.

Guidelines proposed in the TVC program in terms of education were intent on familiarizing vocational counsellors in the European Union with framework services that should be provided in Europe. Guidelines and recommendations included in the TVC Curriculum within the scope of training euro-counsellors defined their role in terms of TVC advice, trainings, research, practices and organization of economic life. The program of the TVC post-graduate education focused on multicultural contexts, since in the European transnational education or professional practice, all day-to-day actions are done by participants hailing mostly from two or more cultures. In the European economic space today, nationality and ethnicity, primary constructs of individuals' and groups' identities, became dynamic forces that require constant inclusion in everyday counselling practice on several levels: 1 – direct communication and cooperation; 2 – cooperation between every participant of a consulting case; 3 – client's local community; 4 – on a national and transnational level.

Educational and training guidelines in the TVC post-graduate study included the following elements: 1 – Ethical proceedings of a counsellor within TVC. 2 – Understanding and acceptance of specific cultural conditions of a client. 3 – Recognizing cross-cultural and cross-ethnic participation with other identity dimensions, such as – sex, age, religious/spiritual orientation, educational experience/achievements or socio-economic status. 4 – Knowledge of employer, government and transnational institutions roles that could potentially be a source of good practices. 5 – Practical actions focused on empowering positive cultural diversity between European societies.

The TVC framework pilot program realized under the LEONARDO DA VINCI program (Baňka, Ertelt, 2004) focused on transnational vocational counselling practices including teachers, students and policymakers in the service sector of vocational counselling. The European TVC post-graduate studies project happened at a very special time, characterized by increased efforts by the European Commission, the OECD, the World Bank, CEDEFOP, AIOSP/IAEVG and other international institutions, to reach a broader use of vocational counselling in supporting professional transformation of people at all stages of life. At that time, every

European country, experienced similar struggles related with a number of issues, such as: transitioning from school to work, reduction of unemployment, reintegration of people who fell out of the education system or labor market, return of women to the labor market after a period of pursuing family duties, supporting international mobility, creating equal opportunities in education and work (OECD, 2013). Unfortunately, as a result of not meeting the terms of agreement by the Polish Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, the established post-graduate training program for European vocational counsellors within TVC never came into fruition. An amazing opportunity, where everything had aligned to create an amazing atmosphere for a real, and not just superficial integration of national labor markets, was wasted. Sadly, such an opportunity will most likely not present itself in the foreseeable future. Secondly, an enormous effort of a large team of scientists and experts from a large number of countries was wasted and nothing indicates that in the future someone will pick up where they left off.

### **Development of transnational vocational counselling in the context of labor market geopolitics**

The tribulations presented above pertaining to the post-graduate TVC studies coincided with the emergence of a new phenomenon, which can be described as transnational vocational counselling geopolitics. This new notion regarding the development of vocational counselling is related to the replacement of previous, romantic ideas of integrating European labor markets with new ideas of international competition in a 'war' over the labor market (Clifton, 2011). *Brain-Drain* and *Brain-Gain* perfectly exemplify these new trends, which become the new contexts indicating the need to modify TVC development goals in current and forthcoming wars on the labor market.

The new international context for State labor markets functioning means that we are facing not only a new geopolitical division of the world in terms of international politics, but also a new one including matters of employment, as well as work and social policies in the field of vocational counselling (Ertelt, Górna, Sikorski, 2010). The emergence of this phenomenon on a wider scale initiated two counter processes. First, it gave an impulse to fund transnational research, programs and actions such as the program *Brain Drain- Brain Gain* (Ertelt, Górna, Sikorski, 2010), which, nominally, were to solve counselling problems in the field of work mobility defined by the prefix *euro-* (counselling). Second, including matters of vocational counselling in the orbit of geopolitics in countries like Germany, raised the awareness of the inseparability of a national community inside a state's territory with its transcending to other areas such community functions that were previously not included in the States' social policy.

New migration processes involving Polish people and the eventual depopulation of the country point towards new problems that require the State to find ways of dealing with the processes taking place in the transnational labor markets. These problems have been known in the USA for decades. However, in Europe they became, in a sense, a recent discovery, initiating revolutionary changes sparked by international human migration called the modern Migration Period.

The mass economic emigration from Poland, estimated by various sources to involve several million people, is balanced out on the labor market by a similarly massive immigration of Ukrainians seeking better paid jobs in Poland. From the point of view of vocational counselling, mass economic migrations in the last two decades can be analyzed in two ways. Traditionally, economic migration has been part of the Polish international mobility “tradition” and have partly been responsible for the country’s depopulation. Recently, economic migrations are connected to *Brain Drain* and *Brain Gain*, which means they are part of the war on the labor market, to which they contribute by draining the intellectual base of weaker economies and states (Clifton, 2011).

The mass economic migration from Poland in the last two decades can be seen as an extension of traditional, regular and large-scale waves of emigration that push people out of their home country in pursuit of an optimal form of employment (Okólski, 2012). The Polish system of vocational counselling did not react to the phenomenon of mass migration because of what seems to be two reasons. On the one hand, in planned and partly controlled modernization processes a planned emigration, relieving a densely populated territory, was treated as a desired result of a modernization impulse, related to a generally accepted accession to the European Union. Despite the massive scale of this phenomenon and the resulting effects, no remedies have been provided in terms of establishing a Polish TVC model that would be compatible with the new situation – as evidenced by the aforementioned indolence of the Polish Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, which has not introduced a new TVC post-graduate program. A naïve conviction that the brain-drain phenomenon is only temporary, and that it will produce no negative consequences in the long-term, caused a stagnation in the development of the national TVC program.

The situation in which Poland found itself after joining the European Union initiated processes that can be characterized by the following psychological mechanisms on an individual and society level: 1 – perceiving one’s personal situation on a global scale in terms of hope not danger; 2 – lack of awareness of a possibility for a serious social problem related to career globalization (Bańka, 2007); 3 – inability to diagnose the problem as a result of a programmed individual and social consciousness to notice only positive aspects of the situation; 4 – inability of state institutions to be flexible with regard to directions and rules that govern labor market policies in order to provide support in the most crucial areas, such as economic migration in the age of globalization. For two decades, a paradoxical situation was forming, with increasing deterritorialization of people’s professional careers and

simultaneously separation of their consciousness from threats and psychological costs that came with it. The atmosphere of enthusiasm for transnational processes lead to a “social coma” syndrome (Kowalik, 2015), accompanied by powerlessness in recognizing actual social problems on the nation state level.

Transnationalism as an equivalent to postnationalism in a broader sense refers to a multitude of bonds and interactions between people above nation state borders (Vertovec, 1999). As a network of long-distance relations, transnationalism as a phenomenon of international mobility has almost always been present. However, its current meaning is completely different with regard to the development of telecommunication technologies or the war on the labor market (Clifton, 2011). These new contexts form new demands in terms of TVC, including programs for eliminating effects of migration processes reactively and preventively, which means forecasting possible implications and remedies.

Today’s challenge is to create such TVC models that could provide tools for solving future migration problems. TVC programs cannot be employed only to react to the existing problems of imbalance on the domestic labor market, caused by demographic and emigration issues, but have to be treated as an equivalent to the American programs of expatriate management (Adler, 2002). For Poles, both at home and spread all over the world, it is important to establish a national TVC program that would be included in the so-called sponsored transnationalism mainstream (Smith, 1998). Its goal is to support “our” expatriate communities, as per the rule of helping: “first us, then them”. This type of transnational counselling can be treated as an activity sponsored or organized by the State, aiming to institutionalize support for own citizens in international social and economic space.

The new geopolitics of vocational counselling shifts state obligations over its territorial borders and, at the same time, makes the so-called rest of the world part of the state’s territory, thus its concern. Lack of efficient programs for those returning home in the last two decades created such dangerous and difficult social problems as the euro-orphanhood (Urbańska, 2010). New geopolitical state roles in the area of vocational counselling include not only the need to conduct professional orientation and career counselling for Poles born at home and abroad, but also everything related to preparing their return and subsequent readaptation. In a modern methodology of vocational counselling this process is referred to as *Brain Gain*, which means (re-)acquiring intellectual resources (Ertelt et al., 2010).

### **Hopes and concerns related to TVC’s development in the context of certifying qualifications**

The latest challenge for the development of TVC presents itself in the context of integrating vocational education with professional work on a national and international level, as well as in relation to own citizens and immigrants. This challenge is

connected to both great hopes and concerns for the way the opportunities of developing vocational counselling will be executed. In the context of the new issue – i.e. validating TVC competences – it is apparent how problems of traditionally internal labor market policy intertwine with problems of the State's foreign affairs. Transnational workforce mobility broadens the country's geopolitical function from local, confined by territory, to the one that also includes matters related to the diaspora. Furthermore, other ethnicities present within a State's territory (as exemplified by the Ukrainian immigrants) also become part of a broader set of interests. The seriousness of this problem can be seen alongside establishing and functioning of the National Qualifications Frameworks, as well as in identifying and validating non-formal and informal competences in the national and international context of qualifications frameworks.

Nowadays, people acquire new skills and competences not only traditionally, at school, but, increasingly, outside of it. An important element of the learning process takes place during employment periods abroad, through taking part in social groups, on-line communities, individually or as a group. Additionally, individuals arriving in a country as guest workers bring along formal and non-formal qualifications. In other words, migration of people brings about a migration of competences, which in the country's human resources pool should be balanced out.

These new trends in lifelong learning process force States to introduce qualification verification systems that give each citizen a chance to present themselves in terms of what they learned outside of school, and what part of their achievements they can use in their future professional and educational career. In a validation process of non-formal and informal education results, the competent institution confirms that a given person acquired certain qualifications (knowledge, abilities and competences), by verifying them against an appropriate set of standards. This approach lessens the burden on the traditional system, which emphasized the importance of "education investment", i.e. the length of the education process, type of institution and its reputation (defined by prestige and popularity rankings). Validation becomes the main motivator stimulating one's ambition related to the lifelong learning process.

Poland's biggest capital are Poles themselves, with their formal, informal and non-formal qualifications. Poles living in a diaspora are a great human capital, however, because of its dispersion it is not easy to utilize it for formal reasons and because of institutions certifying qualifications. For these reasons, the Polish State was unable to fully benefit from this capital. For example, scientific career steps differ in many countries from those in Poland, thus the inability to seamlessly move between university positions prevented the exchange of *know how*. Besides, Poles migrating for economic reasons acquire qualifications and professional competences abroad, but they cannot find an appropriate institution to validate and formalize them in case they wanted to go back home.

In new social geopolitics, where the most efficient countries try to utilize their vocational counselling agendas to their fullest extent to prevent brain draining, the matter of broadening the scope of currently functioning vocational counselling institutions in Poland to a transnational level is vital. The function of counselling extended to TVC should include, firstly, the matter of re-acquiring and incorporating Poles living abroad into the local economy. This way of overcoming borders by TVC can be called vertical overcoming. The other side of TVC's scope of operations includes overcoming horizontal borders that appear in an individual's development cycle in the form of internal emigration. This second issue has been defined by the European Commission (European Centre, 2008) in a form of a recommendation stating that by 2020 at least 50% of youth should achieve a state of educational and professional mobility readiness. The crux, however, is that people, especially young persons, when faced with a limit in their professional development, tend to take a passive stance towards professional education and, consequently, they stop learning. Later on, though, when their situation changes as a result of undertaking various jobs, a cummulation of informal and non-formal competences and professional qualifications takes place. Since a long professional life without certifying the qualifications creates barriers that make it nigh impossible, in the long run, to freely move in the open labor market, it is of utmost importance that validation and certification of qualifications and professional competences for an ever-growing group of people, who can be characterized by simultaneously having an interrupted education and a big accumulation of career capital (Bańka, 2006a) in the form of non-formal and informal competences, becomes a reality.

When it comes to economic emigration, it has been perceived solely positively for far too long. It took too long for people to realize that economic emigration was not only a source of free unemployment reduction (Okólski, 2009), but also a heavy personnel loss that translates into a loss of competences acquired both at home and abroad (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2012). These migratory theories, based on the modernization impulse hypothesis, underpinned such thinking (Okólski, 2011, 2012). Additionally, other side-effects of economic migration are the depreciation of the migrants' education, qualifications and professional competences (Brzozowski, Kaczmarczyk, 2014). Thus, economic migrants often have nowhere to return, even if they wished to do so. Until recently, the issues of brain drain and brain gain have been situated as a problem of highly-qualified employees. However, it turns out that "migration of wealth" includes the entire spectrum of migrants, and not only top professionals. When it comes to average migrants, validation and certifying qualifications with regard to TVC would include reacquiring of talents, competences and qualifications on a mass scale, which is simply invaluable (Ertelt et al., 2010).

In the newly emerging TVC geopolitics, the notion of "border" has not only a material, geographical or legal (when it comes to acknowledging diplomas or informal qualifications) meaning. Its second meaning takes on a virtual form demarcated by mental barriers, such as: reluctance to return, resignation from continuing

professional education or lack of willingness when it comes to hiring and remunerating workers according to their actual qualifications. In this context, vocational counselling in foreign and internal state policies has tasks to fulfil that were previously treated as independent and are now interrelated. The most important geopolitical function of TVC can be summed up in the question: how to unify scattered national community in one unit, when it comes to the criterion of professional competences. In the transnational dimension, this problem includes both a dual identity of those that left and are now coming back (Nowicka, 2006) and the notion of brain gain, i.e. reacquiring career capital developed abroad (Solga, 2016).

When it comes to economic immigrants, their social and macroeconomic situation at home is diverse (Solga, 2013). The competences of economic immigrants can and should be fully utilized under one condition – they will be in line with the needs of the host nation, not sparking conflict. The mass influx of economic immigrants treated so enthusiastically by some economists, as a theoretical compensation for all the Poles that left, can be a potential threat for a successful re-integration within the market of those that decided it was time to come back. As has been known for long, massive influx of migrants always heavily disrupts social ecosystems (Zelinsky, 1971). In a situation of a massive influx of immigrants and re-emigrants, making immigrants wait for their turn in the help line is not a discriminatory practice, but only an attempt at securing the social ecosystem's balance. Such approach to the problem is not discriminating, on the same premise that during flights there's an instruction for adults travelling with children to first put on oxygen masks themselves and only then put them on their children.

Mass economic immigration raises a temptation among employers to use it for low-qualified jobs, which may lead to a halt in modernization investments as well as reinforce unethical attitudes towards poverty, by exploiting the situation of the poor. As a consequence, a stagnation of the socio-economic ecosystem occurs and its international competitiveness decreases. Besides, intentionally keeping the costs of economic migrants' labor low is not a counterproductive measure in the efforts of trying to acquire the know-how of re-emigrants. Potential re-emigrants are often people that underwent second professional socialization in a different mental environment, and who have higher aspirations and salary expectations. Hence, they remain flexible when it comes to making a decision whether to remain abroad or come back home (PAN, Committee for Migration Research report, 2014). The clue of vocational counselling's geopolitical vision lies within a flexible approach towards validating and certifying professional competences both of the returnees as well as economic immigrants that come to Poland. As of now, there is a stark absence in the Polish institution system in terms of supporting the labor market and agencies that would specialize in either of those areas.

Thus, the key to an employment policy within the new vocational counselling geopolitics should be the development of vocational counselling specializing in labor mobility both inside a national community and in transnational career capital

inclusion. TVC defined in such a way becomes an institutionalized problem solver for transgression of qualification and competence borders in two dimensions: firstly, in the dimension of vertical border transgression between a national labor market and its international counterparts, exemplified by Europass; secondly, in the dimension of horizontal border transgression between competences as well as formal qualifications applicable in the Polish legal framework and non-formal and informal competences and qualifications. It is applied to both Poles returning home and guest workers coming to Poland.

In the first case TVC would be a consulting institution for recognizing competences and qualifications in a legally sanctioned system of qualifications, competences, diplomas and other certificates in accordance with Polish law. It pertains to what OECD (OECD, 2013) describes as inflow, which is an inherent part of “brain circulation”. The transfer of knowledge, skills and qualifications over borders creates deficiencies in the national and local labor markets, which can be remedied by return inflow to regain the equilibrium, destabilized by emigration labor markets. Even though return inflow aids the local labor markets, it is by no means an equivalent of knowledge transfer, especially when it is informal and non-formal by nature (OECD, 2013). The processes of knowledge and competences transfer, specific to local labor markets, have to be supported by codified TVC procedures.

In the case of formal qualifications and competences the issue of their transnational recognition is clarified in a number of documents and international treaties, especially in the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) and European Credit System for Vocational Education and Training (ECVET). In this arrangement, ECTS (European Credit Transfer System) can play an important role (KODE-NQE, 2014). In the case of non-formal and informal qualifications the situation is much different, though, because the recognition system is virtually non-existent. This is a worrying state of affairs, because they are the primary assets in the career capital of both returnees and economic immigrants coming from abroad.

In the case of Polish economic emigrants as well as returnees, it is definitely not an uneducated and incompetent group of people. The problem lies in that people who do not find employment on the domestic labor market travel abroad and start working in any job that meets their quality of life standards, regardless of their professional interests or level of education (Bańka, 2010b). This group suffers from two issues: firstly, the de-qualification of previously earned qualifications and competences; secondly, the acquisition of non-formal and informal qualifications that are not recognized on the Polish labor market. Going abroad and working in fields that do not match an individuals’ education and experience lead to two opposite results. On the one hand, it creates a loss of career capital by the depreciation of previously earned formal competences, and on the other hand, certain gains in professional resources and employment potential, however informal. The acquired competences and qualifications in a professional field abroad become just a potential when coming back home, because of a lack of appropriate TVC institutions that would

help transfer those qualifications into practice (Bańka, 2010a). It is a major loss of competences for the country, and it leads to frustration among individuals, as it produces a massive hindrance in their professional career development. Launching appropriate TVC agencies that tackle the problems of validation and certifying qualifications of economic emigrants returning home seems like the most important problem to solve when it comes to reforming the Polish system of vocational counselling, in order to adapt it to new demands and circumstances.

The problem also lies in the lack of procedures for formal validation and certifying qualifications and competences that would help assimilate guest workers into the domestic labor market, similar to what the Germans call controlled immigration (Ertelt et al., 2010). Currently, validation and certification of guest workers qualifications is done by employers and informally. They treat the phenomenon of economic immigration only as a source of easy profit. Only the State and its institutions can try to comprehensively tackle the question of whether the inflow of economic immigrants and re-emigrants is an immigration of poverty or of wealth (Ertelt et al., 2010).

If, in the new geopolitical formula of social policies, it is agreed upon that both re-emigration of Poles and economic immigration of guest workers can be a source of wealth, then it will mean that qualifications and competences of everyone who happens to reside in the Polish economic area should be utilized systemically. Firstly, the diaspora's capital is both a capital of both prominent and average Poles. All of them constitute a valuable capital that should be protected from brain draining and actively sought out and put into work for the common good (Ertelt et al., 2010). Secondly, human capital that is the basis for Polish economy includes both natives and guests, which means that counselling in the form of TVC has to coordinate and optimize the exchange of 'brains' in each group simultaneously. As claimed by Ertelt and his co-researchers (2010), TVC realized from a geopolitical standpoint has to tackle meticulously the utilization of guest workers on their actual levels of competency in relation to taking care of career capital resources of its own citizens, both on an individual level as well as on labor market level.

## **Conclusion**

The evolution process of transnational vocational counselling presented in this article encompasses just the last three decades, and it is important to note that because of this the outlined picture of the phenomenon is only partial. Taking into account the fact that TVC is integral to the international processes of labor mobility, it is impossible to neglect the fact, that in different periods and parts of the world one can point out past occurrences of this phenomenon that differ from what is presented in this article, and that had started to emerge in the European Union. It is actually

exemplified by the „Decree On State Placement Service and Migrant Care”<sup>2</sup> issued in Warsaw in 1919 by Józef Piłsudski. It is a prototype of sorts of Polish transnational vocational counselling. However, contrary to what was postulated in the preceding part of the article regarding TVC, the model of counselling presented in the 1919 Decree focused on reintegrating Poles scattered around the world. The need to reintegrate economic emigrants described in the article is entirely different, because it pertains to optimizing a narrow process of professional reintegration within the labor market.

Based on the example mentioned above, it is clear how universal the phenomenon of migration is, and that in different contexts it may lead to completely different requirements and concepts of solutions to the problems that come with it. Even though in the past one hundred years the nature of emigration has remained the same, the contexts of international mobility keep changing. Thus, the ways of experiencing separation from one’s home country have also changed, just as the prevailing interpretations of this phenomenon in the form of various models and remedies. What links both periods is the desire to return to normalcy through counselling, which does not mean that „normalcy” then and now was defined in the same way. In the notion of transnational vocational counselling presented in this article, the postulated model of establishing normalcy means two things. First, normalcy is respect for migrant diversity, thanks to which they have something that is now known as know-how, which is a type of competency that can be utilized for the betterment of themselves as well as the host country. Second, normalcy means respect to migrants as subjects of work. This respect is due regardless of one’s origin. The State’s duty, achieved through organizing labor market institutions such as vocational counselling, is to ensure that migrants are safe from exploitation.

However, the most important category of safety that has to be provided to migrants by the re-emerging notion of transnational vocational counselling is existential safety. It means something more than just making the workplace civil and safe from exploitation. It means creating conditions, also through the use of TVC, where people feel existentially safe, having a sense of stability and support in their long-term life goals.

*Translated from Polish by Jakub Ryniecki*

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<sup>2</sup> Zob. w: Bańka, Trzeciak (2017) s. 452–453.

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