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<1>Returnees: unwanted citizens or cherished countrymen

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<2>Introduction

There is considerable interest among European Union (EU) policymakers in social security portability, especially in EU mobile citizens' access to benefits in receiving countries. Historically, the portability of social security rights was the strategy adopted to organise the social security of mobile workers between two social security schemes of sending and receiving countries (Avato et al, 2010). Further development of portability regulation was a response to the challenge that migration poses to welfare states, being designed to secure the social citizenship of migrant workers. Portability is defined as 'the ability of migrant workers to preserve, maintain, and transfer benefits from a social security programme from one country to another and between localities in a country (spatial portability), between jobs' (Taha et al, 2015: 98). The portability of social security rights in the EU for EU citizens is highly regulated; however, in short, social security benefits must be paid in whichever member state the EU citizen resides (Carmel et al, 2019a). In this context, immigrants' access to welfare is highly politicised and occupies a significant space in political and policy discourse on migration (Balch and Balabanova, 2016). One of the most dominant discourses on migrants' access to welfare is anti-immigrant discourse (Van Dijk, 2018), which often portrays immigrants as a burden on receiving countries (Richardson and Colombo, 2013; Bocskor, 2018), especially in the context of the welfare state and immigrants' access to social security rights. The modern othering and racialisation of the migrants is captured well in Barker's (1981, 2001) theory of new racism, which shows how neo-racial political discourse focuses on cultural and economic rather than physical difference. Also, today's racism is linked with classism, where 'poverty is the new Black' (Sivanandan, 2001: 3). For example, migrant workers with irregular and low-paid employment are othered by the modern sate and often denied access to social security (Carmel and Sojka, 2018). Also, analysing discourses of the othering of returnees and their access to social welfare requires reflection on the roles of nationalism, culture, national identity and belonging as elements of today's 'xeno-racism' (Sivanandan, 2001, 2006). This article explores the othering of returnees in political and, in particular, policy discourses on returnees and their access to welfare in Poland and Estonia. This exploration allows us to look at the changing notion of belonging in relation to returnees' participation in welfare.

This article examines Polish and Estonian social policy experts' narratives on returnees and their access to welfare. We examine discourses on migration by drawing on in-depth qualitative interviews with 14 Polish and Estonian social policy and welfare experts. We use discourses as a way of understanding return migration and national attitudes towards return migration. Consequently, our analysis provides new insights into the discursive construction of an ideal returnee. Unlike much of the existing literature that explores returnees' perspectives on return, including their decision-making as regards their return, we explore policy experts' viewpoint on return migration. Although return migration has long been subject to various analyses, most of the literature focuses on who returns, when and why (Dustmann and Görlach, 2016). Our article contributes to the literature on return migration by exploring social policymakers' perspectives on returnees.

Welfare state and unwanted citizens

Welfare states are involved in the processes of othering as they privilege some social/economic/political groups and create hierarchies of conditional belonging and insiderness (Morris, 2002; Anderson, 2013; Carmel and Paul, 2013). At the centre of the concept of othering more generally lies the idea that each state defines itself via deciding 'what it is not' (Sibley, 1995). As such, othering serves the purpose of creating a common identity via the reinforcement of shared values, culture and so on, which are defined as superior to those of the opposed group. By default, othering simplifies both the self and the other by representing those categories through sharply opposed, polarised, binary extremes, such as good–bad, civilised–primitive and so on (Hall, 1997). Such ideas of the self and the other are especially prevalent in defining the nation, where the use of outside groups such as migrants has been relatively common (Brubaker, 2004; Anderson, 2006).

Most of the literature focusing on othering in the context of nation-states seems to assume the existence of one predominant other, for example, in the case of Estonia, this is ethnic Russians, while in the case of Germany, it is often Turkish immigrants. Petersoo (2007) has suggested widening the concept of the other and posits that each state has multiple others, such as negative and positive others, as well as internal and external others. She further argues that in its discourses of identity, the self is continuously negotiating several identities simultaneously. She therefore challenges Triandafyllidou (1998), who has suggested that even though each nation-state goes through multiple others throughout history, at any given time, there is only one significant other for each nation-state that affects the formation and

transformation of its identity. Petersoo (2007) suggests that national identity formation should be seen as a complex interplay between the nation-state and various others.

What we find useful in Petersoo's (2007) approach is the notion of internal others. The suggestion that each nation-state can also identify an other within agrees with our findings from the interviews with Estonian and Polish welfare experts. Furthermore, we also consider the idea of multiple others useful as we suggest that in addition to looking at the ethnic dimension – which is where othering is usually used – one should also focus on other potential fields of othering. Hence, we argue that defining internal otherness solely based on ethnicity does not take into account the strong development of the welfare state during the last 50 years. Marshall (1963) has defined social citizenship as comprising civil, political and social rights. If we only focus on political citizenship, we can indeed define immigrants as the other; however, if we pay attention to more symbolic, as well as value-laden and welfare-related, aspects of citizenship (social rights), we can widen the concept of the other. Selectivity over who is the other and who is not takes place within institutions, usually those of nation-states (Wieviorka, 2010). Those institutions then govern the state in ways that define the obligations, rights and entitlements of citizens. One of the central pillars of the welfare state governed by these very institutions is its social policies. It is important to look at the welfare state in the context of the development of idealised citizens as welfare states organise social groups, often by excluding individuals based on socio-economic characteristics and behaviours. Therefore, the welfare state decides who is unwanted and undesirable by privileging chosen groups who are perceived as belonging. This is organised through the regulation of social rights, which governs who is entitled and consequently who is not (Carmel et al, 2019a). Moreover, this perception, which is embedded in social policy, is used to advance dominant ideologies and expose the nature of nationhood favoured by policymakers; as such, it is present in the wider discourse on social security rights and nationhood. Therefore, it is important to look into social policy experts' perceptions of the other.

In today's Europe, the national level of social security management intervenes in the EU level. EU social coordination is complex and provides common rules to protect EU citizens' social security rights when moving within Europe. Like the conditionality of social security more generally, assumptions of inclusion, exclusion and stratification are embedded in EU social security coordination as well. The portability of social security rights is 'the ability to preserve, maintain, and transfer vested social security rights (or rights in the process of being vested), independent of profession, nationality, and country of residency' (Holzmann and

Koettl, 2014: 14). Therefore, 'portability regulation' offers selective openness to particular migrants (Ferrera, 2005) and thus embeds contingent selectivity. Consequently, EU social security coordination also employs processes of othering by promoting and recording certain types of behaviour (Carmel et al, 2019a, 2019b).

Furthermore, since the social security benefits are to be paid by whichever member state the EU citizen resides in (Pennings, 2012), the topic has become increasingly politicised, with migrants facing accusations of welfare tourism (Ehata and Seeleib-Kaiser, 2017). However this politicisation has mostly been studied from the perspective of receiving countries and very little is known about the sending countries, even though migration is often temporary, especially in the EU context (White, 2014, 2017; Wahba, 2015).

There is a significant body of academic literature regarding the discourses of migration and return migration that focuses on migrants' narratives on return (Ní Laoire, 2008), or cultural identity and ethnic policies related to returnees (Kuscu-Bonnenfant, 2012). Additionally, Horváth (2008) has proposed the idea of migration cultures, suggesting that certain regions in Europe have developed cultures where migration is seen as a normal part of becoming an adult. However, there is a lack of consideration on the welfare state in the current idea of cultures of migration. Instead of migration cultures, we therefore focus on migration discourses and suggest that such discourses are strongly influenced by ideas of deserving and undeserving citizens. To explore the connections between ideology, the welfare state and discourses of migration, we now turn attention towards the development of national ideologies in Poland and Estonia.

<2>Polish and Estonian welfare states

Cerami (2005) has criticised many scholars for assuming similar experiences across East and Central Europe, also stressing that the transitions during the 1990s were carried out dissimilarly across the region. These transitions were mostly linked with a shift from a planned to a market economy (Atas, 2018). Both Poland and Estonia were faced with the need to re-establish their nationhood. Even though Poland was officially not part of the Soviet Union, the 1990s were understood in Poland as a time for recovering sovereignty and the reconstitution of the independent state (Buzalka, 2008). However, unlike in Estonia, Polish independence also included negotiations over the role of the Catholic Church, which had held the dominant role under communism (Eberts, 1998; Ramet, 2017). Whereas a lot of Estonian politics during the 1990s was focused on distancing the state from Russia, which was

perceived as the key enemy, Polish politics concentrated on trying to establish a balance between the Church and the state (Buzalka, 2008).

Estonian nationhood is said by many authors to have been constructed in opposition to their Soviet past (Vihalemm and Masso, 2003). From the perspective of social policy, the attempts of othering from Russia were perhaps of instrumental importance as Estonia chose to adapt the neoliberal ideology. Compared to other former socialist countries, Estonia is said to be the most neoliberal country in the 'East'. During the 1990s, self-sufficiency and entrepreneurship were encouraged as important values in Estonian society (Bohle and Greskovits, 2007). Kalmus and Vihalemm (2006) have also noted that people used self-sufficiency as a way to deal with abrupt changes and to protect themselves against feelings of insecurity and a lack of control. Even though Estonia has lately moved somewhat towards more social-democratic policy, its welfare regime can still be identified as neoliberal. Some examples of how neoliberalism is embedded into Estonian social policy are, for instance, low unemployment benefits that are also limited to only one year, as well as generally quite low child support (Aidukaite, 2004). One exception to such a low level of social support is parental leave, which is one of the most generous in Europe, being directly connected to the former salary of the individual and granted for one-and-a-half years. However, as the ceiling for maximal parental leave is extremely high, even this generous benefit can be seen as carrying some traces of neoliberal ideology.

While Estonian social policy can be described as more of a case of pure liberalism, the Polish case is a bit more difficult to pin down. The Polish modern welfare system was created through the gradual privatisation of many areas of social life (Żuk and Żuk, 2018). Today, Polish social policy is described as a hybrid system that combines elements of the liberal, conservative and social-democratic welfare types (Perek-Białas and Racław, 2014). The social-democratic element is reflected in the attempt to cover all individuals; while the liberal element comes out, for instance, from the fact that in order to receive unemployment insurance, one had to earn at least the minimum salary. Such a mix of different welfare regimes could be indicative of other discords in society. According to Zubrzycki (2002), Poland is struggling between adapting either ethnic or civic nationhood, and has not decided on either. Whereas those in favour of strong Catholicism are clearly in favour of defining the Polish nation according to ethnic-religious lines, they were political outsiders for a long time as the elites promoted a legitimate counter-discourse, though this had little support in wider society (Zubrzycki, 2001). The interference of the Church in politics in Poland is especially visible in the case of family politics and the recent discussions around abortion. In terms of

social welfare, as we demonstrate later, there is a strong belief in the family as of outmost importance. The differences in terms of the approach towards the family and community between Estonia and Poland were also illustrated by a European values survey, where Estonians clearly preferred values such as success and self-sufficiency, whereas Poles rooted for more communal values. For Poland, the family is at the core of the nation and welfare state, which reflects strong traditions of social Catholicism and its political expression in Christian democracy (Zuba, 2010). This is because Catholic social teaching emphasises communal living and the role of the family within the community. In turn, increasing people's self-sufficiency and the individualisation of civil society has become more and more important in Estonia, where individual self-realisation is one of the main objectives.

<2>Our data

The material is drawn from data collected during the 'Mobile Welfare in a Transnational Europe: An Analysis of Portability Regimes of Social Security Rights' (TRANSWEL) research project[1] examining mobile EU citizens' access to social security rights in the EU. We interviewed 13 policy experts, officials from ministries, policy advisors and senior legal experts to gain insight into their interpretations, experiences and understandings of the EU regulation of social security rights of mobile EU citizens and its intersection with their national context. The selection criteria for participants was policy relevance, seniority and, of course, availability. It was decided to maintain the anonymity of all participants in order to encourage openness and a higher degree of trust between the participant and interviewer in each case. We asked experts about their reflections on the relationship between mobility and the regulation of social rights in their country, as well as their interpretation of the nature of the wider institutional, political and social context within which the relationship between mobility and the portability of social rights is framed. Participants were also asked about the characteristics and purposes of any reforms (recent or proposed). Our fieldwork was undertaken in Poland and Estonia from June to September 2016. We used instructions regarding the protocol for interviewing senior policy experts, as well as ethical requirements for the project regarding anonymity, the storage of data and informed consent. Although we asked the same questions of Polish and Estonian experts, we received very different answers. Given the specificity of our policy domain, with its small number of specialist experts across the EU, and with regard to the contentious and, in some cases, politicised nature of the subject matter of the interviews, our participants' potential reputational vulnerability seemed both particularly important and, in some cases, possibly difficult to protect. Therefore, in order to

avoid inadvertently revealing participants' identity through descriptions of their institutional role, we asked them to offer descriptions of their role in this policy field, and it is these that we use in our analysis.

All interviews were transcribed in Polish and Estonian, respectively, with transcription being a first step in qualitative data analysis as it involves ad hoc judgements and reflections on what have been transcribed. In other words, the transcribing process involved the close observation of data through repeated careful listening. Furthermore, transcriptions themselves are not free from interpretations of data as they include non-verbal communication, such as pauses, laughter, emotions and so on. The expert interviews were analysed using critical discourse analysis (Fairclough, 2013). The next section presents those very discourses.

<2>Poland and its focus on the family

The interviews with Polish experts were characterised by their concern over Poland's future, especially what they perceived as a demographic crisis. In fact, according to one expert, dealing with the demographic crisis has been one of the priority areas for Polish welfare policy: "In recent years, one can see a strong focus on two issues in Polish welfare politics: improving the demographic situation (extension of maternity leave, the introduction of paternal leave, providing pre-school care for all the children); and to improving employment services" (Ministry of Family, Labour and Social Policy). According to the expert, many reforms that have been made are to encourage women to have more children. However, this is only part of the solution; in fact, most Polish experts also lift the topic of migration up as a societal and demographic problem. For instance, "Another controversy is related to the demographic problem. Poland has one of the lowest replacement rates in Europe, ie, the fertility rate is 1.3. It is pointed out that mainly young people of reproductive age emigrate, which deepens the demographic problem in our country" (expert, EU Committee member). According to this expert, the most important issue surrounding the emigration of young people from Poland is the low fertility rate. The falling birth rate is perceived as an important issue as a growing population is good for the economy. However, this particular expert continues:

<start quote>

'Those who could improve this situation have kids abroad, eg, in the UK. This argument, in turn, is often raised in discussions about the Polish demographic policy. It is pointed out that it is wrong because people who have migrated decide more often to have children than those that have been in the country.' (Expert, EU Committee member)

This expert first paints a picture of Poland as facing a huge demographic problem that only people of child-rearing age can solve. It should be noted that as she speaks about the Polish demographic problem, she makes no reference to the size of the Polish population at all, but rather chooses to use fertility rate numbers. She then goes on to exclude migrants as not belonging to the Polish state anymore. Rather, for this expert, Polish nationals are defined as people living in Poland. Those who migrated are othered through the idea that even though they hold the key to improving what is perceived to be the difficult demographic situation in Poland, by leaving, they choose not to do this. The reasoning as to why migrants should not belong to the Polish state anymore is given by another expert: "Polish women prefer to have children abroad because they feel safe there. But this is huge loss for Poland and for future of Poland. These children will not have Polish roots, Polish culture, and will most probably never be back, so they are lost for us" (National Advisory Committee member). This interviewee sees Polish roots as something that can be obtained solely through living in Poland and not through ancestry. Hence, outmigration from Poland is considered to be a sort of 'turning one's back on the state'. In this quote, the children of migrant families are referred to not only as lacking of Polish roots, but also as having little or no connection to Poland. Furthermore, the quote also indicates that there is a lot of attention on the future – imagining the future Poland that should be created by these very children that migrate. Hence, the emphasis is not so much on the present, but on the future of Polish nationhood, which is assumed to continue only if there are enough nuclear families to carry on traditions. Several experts stressed the importance of nuclear families, as can be seen in the following:

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'The main problem associated with migration to other EU member states is called "Euro-orphanhood". This situation leads to multiple pathologies mainly related to family breakdown and weakening ties with their parents. It is pointed out that these children do less well in school and create behavioural problems. It is too early to indicate long-term consequences of this phenomenon, or it can be assumed that such children will also have impaired vision of the family, which may cause in the future many social problems.' (Expert, EU Committee member)

<end quote>

This quote from an EU Committee member illustrates very clearly the othering not only of families with one parent, but also of the children growing in these families. According to this expert, these are pathological cases that not only should be avoided, but also have a negative

effect on the Polish nation as a whole. Rationality is used by the expert to motivate such a position by pointing out the problems that these children have in schools or potential behavioural issues. By using rationality to justify their position on non-nuclear families, the expert aims to point out that it is not solely their personal emotionally motivated position, but rather an impartial concern for the country. However, through this quote, everyone who is a member of a non-traditional family becomes the other.

There is a stress on the family as the centre of the nation across all interviews with Polish experts, reflecting strong traditions of social Catholicism (and its political expression in Christian democracy). These narratives expose the ways in which migration is seen as a reason for breaking family ties and as a source of social pathology. Shared cultural values provide the basis for nation-based belonging. Thus, diminished family ties challenge belonging to the nation. In this light, migration is seen as an important factor in loosening ties with nation-states:

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'One cannot underestimate the role that the Catholic Church plays in social policy in Poland. Not only does the Church carry on direct activities, but it also affects the public debate. Churches' voice was especially strong during the discussion on the problem of euro-orphans and the impact of migration on the family. The Church criticises emigration and sees it as "chasing money", indicating that it contributes to breaking up families and its costs face mainly children.' (Expert, EU Committee member)

<end quote>

This quote furthermore exemplifies how Catholic values play an important role for influencing both Polish welfare policy and its idea of a good citizen and the other. The expert extenuates that the Church has criticised migrants as being motivated by their individual and solely material gains. In addition, the breaking up of 'families' shapes children's vulnerability as children left behind are perceived as being disadvantaged because they are denied the right to grow up within Polish families who reside in Poland. Through this, materialism is opposed to traditional family values, as is migration. Migrants are seen as lacking in strong values by the Church. The interpretation given by the Church of migration, as well as its consequences, translates to how migration is opposed to national values, by politicians as well as experts in social welfare. Such a tension between national and individual interests is also brought out by the next expert:

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'Social cost related to migration is huge, they are…. Even issues of broken families, or issues related to, related to demography and so on. So, I do not think that something bad happened. But this has consequences, long-term consequences. These consequences can be negative but from individuals' [migrants'] perspective, nothing happened. Moreover, it is good that they were able to make their decisions [to migrate] by themselves, even though this is not welcomed by many, but that is how it is.' (National Advisory Committee member)

<end quote>

First, the issue of broken families and its relation to migration is again taken up by this expert, who also argues that even if the long-term consequences of migration were caused by individuals themselves, they should be handled by the state. Hence, there is a tension between state interests and the interests of the individuals apparent from this quote. Even though the expert does not personally criticise migrants, they refer to the fact that there is a public discourse that is casting migrants as irresponsible and not really interested in the state's concerns. However, even those migrants that do decide to return are seen as problematic, as witnessed by the next quote:

<start quote>

'This will be really difficult [the return of children from the UK] as, since ten years, they lived in the UK. Why suddenly could they be denied the right to residency? They do not have anything to do with Poland. But we hear about these sorts of problems from the UK, and this worries us. But such voices have sprung up … that these young people did not contribute to the UK's budget, so they should go back to Poland. But they do not have roots in Poland anymore.' (Government official 1)

<end quote>

This particular quote relates to Polish children who had been living in the UK for ten years. These children are perceived as lacking ties with Poland. This perception contradicts the experts' emphasis on the importance of families, and especially children, explained earlier. In this light, children who reside abroad for long periods of time are perceived as the other. Furthermore, adult returnees are othered too, and return migration is problematised in general. This is because returnees are perceived as a burden upon the Polish welfare state. The concern about the inclusion of returnees to the Polish welfare system was expressed by several experts as they stressed that the Polish welfare system functions not based on citizenship, but rather based on residency. Thus, people that have once decided to leave Poland should not be covered as they have freely decided to abandon their rights in Poland and hence are now the concern of some other state.

As such, the narratives on return migrants in Poland are highly connected to concerns over the demographic situation and the perception of Polish society as based on the centrality of the family unit. However, such family units can only work if smaller nuclear families stay together and take care of the maintenance of the nation. In the case of migrants, these people – so the narrative goes – have already abandoned their duties as nationals once and should therefore be treated with caution. Furthermore, they are also likely to introduce anomalies, such as broken families, which challenge the unity of the nation.

Estonia and its focus on self-sufficient individuals

What can be noticed throughout the interviews with Estonian experts is the dominating narrative of self-sufficiency that appears in subtle and less subtle ways. However, there is one crucial difference between Polish and Estonian experts, namely, the latter seemed to, on occasion, distance themselves from the discourse and even question the discourse, whereas there was more naturalisation by Polish experts. One of the examples of, on the one hand, idealising the self-sufficiency narrative while, on the other, also making it clear that it is a matter of preferences is illustrated in the following:

<start quote>

'One's view on social benefits depends on world views. Some think that developing and supporting the economy is a good way to increase people's well-being. Others think that we should borrow money from other states and pay social benefits. I support the liberal world view. I think that one should focus on the economy and then people will want to live in Estonia. I am not sure that there is a point in increasing social benefits to attract more people here. For instance, Spain has really generous social benefits after losing work for one year. People there do not want to go to work.' (EU Committee expert)

<end quote>

The expert clearly favours a neoliberal approach with respect to their attitudes towards social justice. She also ridiculed her opponents on several occasions during the interview by expressing the opinion that overly social-democratic views can lead to huge national debts or even people who do want to work anymore. Furthermore, she also does not see that there is much that the state can do about emigration, besides strengthening its economy. Hence, in her opinion, higher salaries would be the primary and only reason for people to consider returning. Similarly, she later expresses the opinion that migration is mostly economic. However, she is also clear that her opinion represents her personal world view and hence shows some distance from the dominant narratives.

Similar kinds of concerns about the economy and wages were also expressed by other experts:

<start quote>

'I think the biggest problem is low wages. People are working hard all day long and then get a ridiculously low salary for that. When it comes to benefits … those that are already sleeping on park benches, well, they do not know how to ask and they cannot be helped. They are ignorant, they do not care. The ones who ask are receiving.' (EU Committee expert 2)

<end quote>

This expert also shows a very similar kind of attitude to the first one, pointing out that the state should foremost care about people who are working hard but still receive a very low salary for their work. People who are 'sleeping on park benches' are described as lacking the initiative to do anything about their life, and should not therefore be a concern for the state because they do not want to help themselves. Furthermore, a dual distinction is made between people who are either hard-working (even though struggling because of low wages) and people who are perceived as ignorant and seemingly lazy. Hence, the first category of people deserves to be helped and could be helped through an increase in their salaries, whereas the latter does not even deserve help.

As with the first expert, several other experts used more 'social' systems in other countries as negative comparisons:

<start quote>

'The UK has put itself into a complicated position. They have this family benefit system, which is so generous. They have a huge problem in their country with people who have no motivation to go to work. They just live out of benefits. So, their main problem is not with migrants, but locals that are unwilling to work.' (Expert from Social Ministry)

<end quote>

In this quote, the UK's social system is criticised because it allegedly allows people to choose not working instead of working. Work comes out as a central element in many of the interviews with Estonian experts, whereas social benefits and the importance of those is either minimised or antagonised. People relying on social benefits are considered to be either deceiving the state or just not knowing how to take care of themselves. It should be noted that in the previous quote, the expert not only criticises those using unemployment benefits, but also negatively describes a generous family benefit system that, in her opinion, decreases the motivation to work. In this quote, taking care of children is not considered work, nor is it considered reason enough not to enter the labour market as an employee. This brings out another aspect of the Estonian attitude to self-sufficiency, namely, that women who have

small children are expected to work. Hence, there is no gender difference in this set of expectations to be fully employed. Furthermore, other conditions, such as disabilities, that might hinder either finding work or working are minimised:

<start quote>

'We are making a reform for disabled people. Most Western countries have the same system. The slogan in Netherlands is that all people who can, must work. The other slogan is that most people are capable to work. Even those that sit in the bed are capable of doing some kind of work, well unless they are in a coma.' (Expert from Social Ministry 2)

<end quote>

The attention here is clearly towards pushing most people into the labour market and hence decreasing the number of dependants. In this case, the state decides which people are unable to work and should rely on state help. However, even in the conditions where the state decides who can and who cannot work, there is an attitude of mistrust from one of the experts towards people who rely on social welfare: "When we had an economic crisis, we could see. When people stopped receiving unemployment benefits, so many people started receiving disability pensions. Masses … it needs to be changed. For some reason, in certain areas, all people have disabilities and are really, really sick" (expert from Social Ministry 2). In this quote, the expert is showing suspicion with regards to the justified use of disability pensions or, in a more general respect, social benefits. She points out that it is not believable that all people receiving benefits are actually eligible for this, thus representing these people as misusing the state's support. It should be noted that the people who registered themselves for disability pensions after being unemployed for a long time are represented not as potential victims struggling to find work in their place of living, but rather as active agents who have decided to deceive the state instead of being self-sufficient and working.

In this section, we have demonstrated how the desired Estonian citizen is presented as self-sufficient and working. Hence, this creates a category of other that has come out of several quotes: the non-working, dependent citizen.

It should be noted that unlike in the Polish case, migration was not debated or questioned. This comes out from the following quote:

<start quote>

'Estonia regards the free movement of people as extremely vital. In the EU direction, Estonia has always said that free movement is something we support. This is the official standpoint of the country and looking at the demographics, and then we should be worried that people in

the working age are going away. This is contradictory…. However, Estonia has never backed down from the position that they support the free movement.' (Expert from Social Ministry) <end quote>

Official Estonian policy towards migration is hence positive and migration is presented as something beneficial for the state. The expert suggests that this policy is contradictory, indicating that the Estonian state should be more worried about the outflow of people, but also points out that there is very little discussion on the negative effects going on at the policy level.

Not only is the negative effect of migration hardly discussed, but there is an intricate relationship between Estonia's positive attitude towards migration and its ideal of self-sufficiency. In fact, such a positive view is informed by the idea that people should take care of themselves and not burden the system. Hence, emigration is seen as a way for people to be self-sufficient and to not lean on the Estonian system. Such a discourse appears, for instance, in the following quote:

<start quote>

'I think the UK's attitude against migration is unreasonable. I think the UK's economy has won a lot from Polish people who work there. The whole point of free mobility is that people migrate for economic reasons, that people go where they can find work. This is the whole point. Of course, then the hosting state also needs to consider that, at some point, these people might become unemployed.' (Expert from Social Ministry 2)

<end quote>

Sippola (2013) suggests that Estonia's official policy is that it is a duty of citizens to find ways to support themselves if the state is doing badly. Even though no expert directly represented such a view, one can see from the previous quote that the attitude towards migration is very favourable and such an attitude is well connected with the idea of self-sufficient individuals who are willing to travel to another country in order to find work. If we connect this idea to the fact that, for instance, people in Southern Estonia receiving disability pensions, potentially because they struggled to find work, were othered and used as a negative example, then we can see how migration is seen as a route to self-sufficiency. Therefore, Estonian citizens working abroad become more favourable in the eyes of the state than citizens living in Estonia but not working. This illustrates how the idea of the negative other informs the discourse and state's official policy towards migration.

<2>Conclusion

The aim of this article was to analyse the discourses around migration othering in two states – Poland and Estonia – via the concept of the desired citizen. First, we argued that the concept of the other should be reconsidered in terms of not only being applied to 'cultural and ethnic' others, but also taking into account welfare states and the distribution of welfare. We presented this argument by showing how ethnic Russians in Estonia and Ukrainians in Poland were othered based on their ethnicity, while Estonian returnees were othered based on their ability to be self-sufficient, and Polish returnees were othered based on their economic status and ability to reproduce Polish culture and national values. Due to the strong presence of welfare states in Europe, we suggest that the idea of desired and undesired citizens motivates many welfare and social policy-related decisions at a national level. We therefore urge research to take into account welfare inclusion and exclusion when talking about the national belonging of returnees. As shown, the othering of returnees includes assumptions about the inclusion and exclusion of particular groups of individuals who are perceived as non-belonging based on the attributes and experiences that mark returnees' biographies. Consequently, individuals who do not meet assumptions about a 'good returnee'/desired citizen are othered.

Furthermore, in what constitutes our main contribution, we posit that othering in relation to welfare can help us to better understand national discourses around migration and return migration. In our case, Poland and Estonia have adopted different attitudes towards return migrants. While Estonian policy experts stressed the positive nature of migration, with migrants largely seen as successful individuals who had taken control over their lives, Polish narratives around migration were much more negative, drawing attention to the 'social costs' of migration, such as broken families. This resulted in Polish experts questioning the potential belonging of return migrants and seeing them as a burden on the welfare state, whereas Estonian experts saw return migration as mostly positive and a sign of loyalty.

We suggest that such different migration discourses might have an effect on return migration, that is, Polish returnees may be less likely to return in comparison with Estonian returnees. Of course, decisions to return are complex and include, among other factors, immigrants' experiences in the host countries; however, the discourse on returnees in countries of origin may play a role in the decision-making process as well. As mentioned earlier, national discourses around return migration are rarely discussed and even less often seen as having a potential impact on return migration. This article presents how these discourses could provide a helpful lens for understanding return migration, as well as perhaps potential migrants. In relation to the Estonian discourse of self-sufficiency, potential migrants from Estonia might

view their migration in a vastly different manner than migrants from Poland, where the family plays such a huge role. More specifically, while Estonian migrants might perceive their migration as a temporary livelihood strategy, Polish migrants might be more careful around migrating, and when making a decision, be more likely to become permanent migrants. At this stage, this is naturally a hypothesis that requires further investigation; however, it nevertheless demonstrates the potential use of understanding national discourses around migration.

<EH>Note

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