

Successful Integration? Media and Polish Migration in the German Empire at the Turn of the 20th Century

For some time now, German politicians have claimed that their country is cosmopolitan, that it open-mindedly accepts immigrants of foreign descent and culture and encourages their integration into society. Such claims have become popular since politicians discovered that Germany has been a country distinguished by immigration for years and since they discovered their country's need for immigrants in order to maintain its economic and political position in the world despite a blatantly low birth rate. Current proclamations of German willingness to and capacity for integration often cite Polish migrants as a perfect example. In the decades prior to World War I, these people emigrated to the growing industrial region along the rivers Rhine and Ruhr, and their descendants today may, at best, be recognized by their Slavonic last names. But is this really an appropriate example? An answer may be found by looking at the role that the media – at that time, primarily the press – played in the development of the relationship between the German majority and the Polish minority in society.

1. Theoretical background

In his seminal work on the Polish population (Kleßmann 1978) in the Rhine-Ruhr area from the 1870s to 1945, social historian Christoph Kleßmann focuses his analysis on the integration of the Polish minority. In addition to factors beneficial to integration – in particular, the fact that the so called *Ruhr Poles*, many of whom did not emigrate from a foreign country, but from the Eastern regions of the then German Empire, were of German citizenship – Kleßmann also notes an impressive number of circumstances and tendencies detrimental to integration, such as Polish nationalism, which was fueled by territorial divisions and the lack of statehood during the 19th century. But Kleßmann restricted himself to an analytical classification of integrative and adverse factors, without considering the success or failure of this integration process. The approach here is more practically oriented and is concerned with the following issue: With regard to the Polish minority, is it apt to talk about a process of successful integration? Statistics on the number of Polish migrants and their descendants who remained in Germany will be one crucial criterion. Further considerations raise an issue that is of special significance for media

practice today: If the history of the Poles in the Rhine-Ruhr area is to be thought of as a case of successful integration, principles and practices might be found in both the mainstream and ethnic press of the time that might be worth emulating today. But if that history proves to be an example of an unsuccessful integration process, we should focus on structures and practices that journalism and the media should avoid if they are to encourage and further the integration process.

Within a tradition stemming from Émile Durkheim's influential work (Durkheim 1977, 306-316), *social integration* forms the basic concept for our understanding of integration: It is a desired social process that links the segments of a society (individuals, institutions, groups) by means of their particular awareness to a united societal whole, in which both similarities and unity on the one hand, and differences and conflict, on the other, are of importance. It can readily be seen that this definition, not concerned with cultural differences among the various parts of the societal whole, differs fundamentally from the concept of *assimilation*, which asserts cultural homogeneity as a precondition for societal unity. This difference becomes even more evident with the concept of *intercultural media integration*. For here, the intensity and content involved in communication between the different cultural segments of a society, the knowledge – as a result of this communication – which different societal sectors have of each other, participation in societal institutions, and the acceptance of basic cultural values serve as indicators of successful integration (Geißler/Pöttker 2005, 41).

This definition is not only in contrast to the concept of assimilation, but also to ideas that with regard to migrants and ethnic minorities are not concerned with the issue of societal unity, but, instead, focus on (individual or cultural) identity. As the concept of intercultural media integration consciously focuses not on homogeneity, but on mutual knowledge and communication about differences, high priority is assigned to discovering what makes society possible without questioning the identity of the individual or group. Behind this idea is the premise that societal structures which destroy the identities of individuals or groups cannot themselves persist for a long period of time.

Within the scope of the approach described in this article, research methods are closely related to the specific research issues. Section 2 is designed to determine the degree of success in the integration of the *Ruhr Poles*. Thus, data, documents, and literature are subject to analysis here. The two following sections (3 and 4) deal with reports in the German local press and in the Polish ethnic press (in the selective translation by the monitoring German authorities) and summarize the tentative findings of our ongoing quantitative and qualitative analysis of the specific historical newspapers. Finally, the last section contains an interpretation of these findings and applies a perspective of

interaction theory to the initial assessment of the *Ruhr Poles'* integration process.

2. Polish migrants in the Ruhr area – an example of successful integration?

From the establishment of the German Reich in 1871 to the beginning of World War I, the amount of black coal mined in the Ruhr area increased tenfold, while the personnel of the mines increased sevenfold. This seemingly miraculous growth in industrialization would have been impossible, if hundreds of thousands of Poles had not emigrated from the four eastern provinces of the then German Empire – Posen, Silesia, Eastern and Western Prussia – to the mining region in Westphalia in hope of enjoying a better standard of living. Much like today, even at that time an exact count of ethnic minorities and migrant groups was difficult, simply because an exact definition of who is a “migrant” or “person of migration background”, is not at all self-evident. More than 99 percent of the Polish migrants back then were German citizens. Apart from their own – or their parents’ – place of birth, and apart from somewhat imprecise and variable criteria such as language or religion, the two groups of German majority and Polish minority did not exhibit much divergence. In accordance with the German and Polish seminal works on the subject by Christoph Kleßmann and Krystyna Murzynowska (Murzynowska 1979) – which essentially refer to the same historical sources – one can draw the following approximate picture:

Year	People of Polish origin	Polish-Speaking People (Kleßmann 1978)	Polish-Speaking People (Murzynowska 1979)
1870	10		
1880	40		
1890	122	32	36
1900	333	127	143
1910	497	274	304 (Prussian statistics) 406 (Provincial statistics)
1912			457

Table 1: Poles from the Eastern German Provinces in the Ruhr area (in thousands). (Kleßmann 1978, 37, 260 and Murzynowska 1979, 25, 30-31)

Around 1870, about 10,000 migrants from Eastern Prussia lived in the Ruhr area; by 1880 this number had increased to 40,000. In 1890 there were about

120,000 migrants; by the turn of the century there were about 330,000 to 340,000. Shortly before World War I, the number reached its peak of 500,000. Figures for Polish-speaking people are lower. According to Kleßmann, they amount to 127,000 in 1900, 274,000 in 1910 (Kleßmann 1978, 37, 260), whereas Murzynowska makes use of the official Prussian statistics (143,000 in 1900, 304,000 in 1910), but also refers to provincial statistics (406,000 in 1910 and 457,000 in 1912) (Murzynowska 1979, 30). Taking the migration movement of the years 1910 to 1914 into account, the number of people of Polish migration background in the Prussian provinces *Rhineland* and *Westphalia* amounted to between 450,000 and 550,000 right before the beginning of World War I.

The regional distribution of Polish migrants in the Ruhr area was not uniform. The city of Bottrop was the center of the earliest Polish worker migration in the 1870s. Later on, the Polish population was concentrated in the regions around Dortmund, Bochum, Gelsenkirchen and Essen, whereas the proportion of Poles in the corresponding rural districts was always higher than in large cities.

	1890	1890	1910	1910
	absolute	%	absolute	%
Recklinghausen City	716	5.1	12,404	23.1
Recklinghausen County	3,988	5.8	40,847	15.7
Dortmund City	626	0.7	9,722	4.5
Dortmund County	1,699	2.2	26,024	12.2
Bochum City	1,120	2.4	6,269	4.6
Bochum County	2,038	2.7	10,834	9.0
Gelsenkirchen City	1,930	6.9	15,065	8.9
Gelsenkirchen County	7,964	7.1	25,383	17.7
Herne City	2,121	15.2	12,364	21.6
Hamborn City	27	0.6	17,432	17.1
Essen City	211	0.3	3,805	1.3
Essen County	1,887	1.2	17,699	6.4

Table 2: Polish population (except Masurians and bilinguals) in Ruhr area districts with the highest Polish population density. (Kleßmann 1978, 267)

As to the social structure of the Polish minority, it is noteworthy that, in the beginning, primarily unmarried young men or miners unaccompanied by their families migrated to the Ruhr area. The rapid increase in the number of women shows that many men were soon followed by their wives and families (Kleßmann 1978, 41). By the time of World War I, the numerical proportion of men and women had almost reached the same level, the proportion of

women increasing from 40% in 1890 to 80% in 1910 (Murzynowska 1979, 36). At the same time, the proportion of Poles who were born in the Ruhr area increased to one third (Murzynowska 1979, 33). Much like the demographic trends among ethnic migrants today, the birth rate – which was higher than average in the German Empire among miners in any case – was especially high among the Polish and the Masurians (Kleßmann 1978, 42).

Year	Men	Women	Women per 100 Men
1890	25,539	10,145	39.5
1900	88,745	53,969	60.8
1905	120,266	84,421	70.2
1910	171,892	131,930	76.7

Table 3: Numerical proportion of men and women among the Polish population in the Ruhr area. (Murzynowska 1979, 36)

The overall picture that these statistics present indicates that the majority of *Ruhr Poles* did not intend to return to the Eastern agrarian areas, which were characterized by large land holdings, rural stagnation, and large-scale unemployment. Instead, the migrants desired to seek their fortune in the prospering mining regions along the Rhine and Ruhr. A willingness to integrate was especially high among the Protestant, mostly conservative and monarchist Masurians from Eastern Prussia. But it also seems that many of the predominantly Roman Catholic immigrants from Posen, Western Prussia and Silesia were just as determined to make their living in the industrialized West.

Most of them put this decision into practice, but many did not settle permanently in the industrial region along the Rhine and Ruhr, as the statistics demonstrate. According to Kleßmann and Murzynowska, who again made use of the Prussian statistics, the number of only or mostly Polish-speaking migrants in the Ruhr area sank significantly from 304,000 to 82,000 between 1910 and 1925 (Kleßmann 1978, 261). This cannot exclusively or even to a great extent be attributed to the acquisition of the German language in the meantime. In the same period, the number of bilinguals only increased by 29,000, from 25,000 to 54,000, whereas the number of people exclusively speaking the Polish language dropped dramatically from 249,000 to 15,000, almost tenfold the increase in bilinguals.¹

The number of people of Polish migration background in the Ruhr area had decreased significantly by the mid-1920s, although exact specifications on the extent of migration, further migration, and return to the homeland are “virtually impossible” (Kleßmann 1978, 152) due to the discrepancies, even

1 Calculations on the basis of statistics from Kleßmann 1978, p. 261.

contradictions, between the statistical sources. Restitution offered by the Polish state is often seen as a major reason for the return to the homeland of many Poles who had settled in the Ruhr area and were, for the most part, willing to become integrated: Poles of German citizenship who were older than 18 years old were guaranteed a right to Polish citizenship. The time period for exercising this right expired on January 10th, 1922. Those persons who had decided to take up residence in Poland by then were allowed to relocate with their movable estate free from duties (Kleßmann 1978, 156).

Both German and Polish sources estimate that between 300,000 and 400,000 people of Polish migration background lived in the Ruhr area in 1921. Officials in organizations of the *Ruhr Poles* estimated that about two thirds of them would make use of this right to Polish citizenship (Kleßmann 1978, 157). De facto, according to the Polish embassy, the total number of Poles in the Ruhr area had decreased to 230,000 by 1923; the Polish consulate estimates the number to have sunk to 150,000 by 1929.² But the return to the homeland facilitated by the right to Polish citizenship was much lower than had been expected by either the Polish or the German authorities. According to statistics cited by Kleßmann, a total number of 30,000 to 40,000 people in the entire Ruhr area made use of this privilege, a relatively low figure that “might be traced back to the Polish government’s request to only opt for Poland if one intended to actually return to the country by January 10th, 1923; all others were advised to keep their German citizenship” (Kleßmann 1978, 159). Incidentally, the Polish government did not provide much support for returning migrants, so that their number was actually lower than the number of people who had exercised their right to Polish citizenship.

Year	Polish Population in the Ruhr Area	Migration until then	Further Migration to the Polish Homeland	Further Migration: to France Britain, U.S.A
1914	500	50	20	30
1921	350	150	80	70
1923	230	270	70	200
1929	150	350	40	310

Table 4: Migration of the Polish Minority from the Ruhr Area in the 1920s (in thousands). (Estimates according to: Kleßmann 1978, esp. p. 161-168)

The rapid decrease in the number of *Ruhr Poles* in the 1920s seems to have been caused primarily by the migration movement of discontented miners and

2 Kleßmann 1978, 156: With a view to these statistics, one should keep in mind that by the 1920s “criteria on who is a Pole, a Masurian, or to be considered a German”, had begun to blur both on the Polish and on the German side.

their families. Many of these people moved to Lorraine and other mining areas both in France and Belgium. Others, whose numbers can hardly be reliably estimated, went to the United States. In light of Kleßmann's stipulation that the number of well-integrated Poles remaining in Germany was only one third of the pre-war figure (Kleßmann 1978, 193), one can conclude that during the 1920s an estimated 250,000 Poles migrated from the Ruhr area to other highly industrialized countries such as Britain, France or the United States.

Several factors appear as possible causes of this further migration: the overall dire macroeconomic situation in Germany, the mining crisis, the Ruhr occupation, and the active recruitment by French mining syndicates which, under the auspices of the French military in the Ruhr area, had their own recruitment office in Duisburg in 1921 (Kleßmann 1978, 162). Yet, there were already "about 12,000 Polish miners from the Ruhr area in the cities of Barlin, Lens, Lalange, Dechy and D'Arenberg in northern France prior to World War I" (Kleßmann 1978, 161) – that is, at a time of economic growth which was not beset by the dire circumstances that prevailed in defeated post-war Germany. Hence, there must be other reasons for the widespread further migration among the *Ruhr Poles*, qualified miners who were not readily replaceable in the short term. Kleßmann provides a significant clue when he notes a "fatal circular mechanism" related to the successful recruitment efforts of the French mining syndicates: "Apparently, the hostility experienced in interacting with the German population led numerous Poles to give way to the campaigning of the occupying powers, and every single case of further migration which became known simply reinforced the general feeling of distrust towards the Poles" (Kleßmann 1978, 164). The portrayal of the Polish minority in the German press prior to World War I and the response in the Polish ethnic press can shed some light on the reasons for this distrust on the part of the German population.

3. The Polish minority in the German local press prior to World War I

No comprehensive systematic analysis exists of the image of the Polish minority communicated to the German majority by German local and regional newspapers. Whenever such sources are cited in historical studies on the *Ruhr Poles* (e.g., Burghardt 2000), only individual articles serve to illustrate specific aspects.

The *Recklinghäuser Zeitung* lends itself well to an exemplary systematic content analysis, for Recklinghausen was the city with the largest Polish minority in the Ruhr area. The newspaper was published daily by the company

J. Baur. If the Polish minority was to be a topic for the local press at all, this would certainly have been the case in Recklinghausen.

There are no exact figures on the circulation of the *Recklinghäuser Zeitung* during this period; an advertisement from November 1912 mentions a total of 12.516 subscribers (*Recklinghäuser Zeitung*, vol. 82., 16th November 1912, p. 1). How many of these subscribers were of Polish descent could become apparent when the Baur archives have been made available, but it can be assumed that the number was low, as the migrants had established a press of their own in the Polish language. According to the advertisement mentioned above, there was only a low amount of mail delivery in the predominantly Polish neighborhoods such as southern Recklinghausen and the mining settlement of “König Ludwig”. The *Recklinghäuser Zeitung*, which claimed to be the most widespread newspaper of the region, was more or less frequently and intensively read by at least one third, but no more than half of the 250.000 German residents of Recklinghausen. For the process of integration as defined above, the newspaper’s reports on the Polish part of the population – as a basis for the German majority’s knowledge of and attitude towards the *Ruhr Poles* – are of fundamental significance.

In the context of our research, the *Recklinghäuser Zeitung* has now become the subject of a systematic and precise content analysis. Even the acquisition of the historical newspaper material ensures that we are the first to undertake this task, for the Baur publishing company in Recklinghausen has a very restrictive policy on providing access to the historical material (although the period in question is not generally considered to be controversial). The required volumes from the turn of the century were not – as might have been suspected – to be found at the Institute for Newspaper Research, but, instead, in the Baur archives in Recklinghausen. They were filed on microfilm and could not readily be printed out, which presented significant obstacles to analyzing such an extensive amount of material. For a first analysis of the material acquired under great technical difficulties, we can take recourse to a randomly selected 30-day period in 1912, a year which was not yet dominated by dramatic developments in domestic or foreign affairs. To determine whether or not journalistic coverage related to the *Ruhr Poles* was beneficial to that group’s integration process, reports affecting everyday life would seem to have the greatest relevance – the everyday life of both the Polish minority and the German majority, as well as the professional everyday life of the journalists.

The most significant impression to be gained from this analysis is that the Polish minority – despite its size of 20% of the total population – is only rarely a topic in the voluminous local section of the *Recklinghäuser Zeitung*. Apart from the occasional appearance of obviously Slavic names in news about accidents and crime, there is little mention of the Polish minority in the newspaper’s

local section City and District Recklinghausen. To cite an example, news from January 18th can be briefly quoted here:

Waltrop, January 18th. At the coal mine Waltrop, miner Karl Zicharski had an accident at work yesterday. He broke his leg and had to be hospitalized.

The sources show no journalistic coverage of problems related to the Polish minority, nor is even the presence of the minority a topic. In the same issue, the reader could learn from the local part of the newspaper:

König Ludwig, January 19th. Sources have said that on Sunday, January 21st, there will be a large gathering of adherents of the Roman Catholic faith in the hall of “Haus Hartmann” (guesthouse “Glückauf”). Information will be presented on the most pressing social problems. There will also be a discussion on how underprivileged families can achieve success, prosperity, and personal fulfilment. A competent guest speaker has been engaged for this occasion. As these issues are especially significant, it is expected that no Roman Catholic man, woman or girl will miss this important meeting.

Since four fifths of all miners at the coal mine “König Ludwig” were of Polish descent, some readers will have presumed from this news that this was a gathering of Polish people (regardless of whether this was actually the case). It seems that here the description “Roman Catholic” was being used as a substitute for “Polish”, that journalists undertook every effort to avoid mentioning the ethnic designation. Reports on events from the southern – and predominantly Polish – area of Recklinghausen frequently made use of the word “Catholic”, without explicitly mentioning the Polish minority, so that readers could only infer the ethnic background of the people involved when, for example, a new children’s home was opened (*Recklinghäuser Zeitung*, vol. 82, 3rd April 1912, p. 2), or the training ground of a fire brigade was made accessible for sporting activities “on Sunday afternoons for the Catholic youths’ club” (*Recklinghäuser Zeitung*, vol. 82, 3rd April 1912, p. 2). For journalists, direct mention of the ethnic background seems to have been taboo.

The migrant group was only immediately recognizable if this was unavoidable, as, for example, in news from the civil registry office, or the semiofficial and voluminous coverage of the city council’s meetings, or of committee elections, in which Poles competed with their own candidates. The civil registry office in Southern Recklinghausen reports the following births on April 3rd, 1912:

A son: Railway worker Andreas Zalcsinski, Miner Wilhelm Jentoch, Miner Aegidius Lurzak, Miner Adalbert Kowalzewski, Miner Johann Matcia, Miner Johann Madry, Bookseller Stanislaus Starkiewicz;

A daughter: Miner Vinz. Garca, Woodworker Johann Janczyk, Railway worker Peter Reckhemke, Painter Rudolf Kieszlich, Miner Joh. Machinski, Locksmith Wilhelm Koch, Miner Josef Giezek, Miner Joh. Elsner, Miner Franz Szudra, Miner Franz Stachorski, Miner Andreas Bartkiewicz.

This official piece of news accurately reflects the ethnic composition of the district, whereas such accuracy was lacking in other journalistic coverage of the time. A further example has to do with elections:

On December 6th and 7th of last year, elections were held for all of the assessors to the mining court of Eastern Recklinghausen. Voter participation among workers was about 50%. Among the workers who were elected, five were from the German Miner's Alliance, three from the Polish Alliance, and one from the Christian Alliance. None of the court's former assessors was re-elected. (*Recklinghäuser Zeitung*, vol. 82, 3rd April 1912, p. 3)

But the direct reference to Polish migrants usually went no further. The refusal to explicitly specify the involvement of Poles in local reporting extended to descriptions of alleged criminals, accident victims, and suicides, without clarifying ethnic or migrant backgrounds and, in this way, helped perpetuate a German tradition in journalism. Reports on crimes, then, rarely mentioned Poles in any direct way. This could be interpreted as having been beneficial to the integration process. Still, in many cases the question remains whether readers were able to infer from contexts that Poles were indeed the group being reported on.

At the turn of the 20th century, film emerged as a new medium, and printing techniques facilitated the incorporation of graphics and photography into texts. Increasingly, visualization played a role in sources of public information and entertainment. For this reason, our analysis of the *Recklinghäuser Zeitung* also takes visual features into account. Perhaps this would be where Polish migrants made their appearance. The *Recklinghäuser Zeitung* did not print photographs in 1912, but all of the sections, especially the one on "International Politics", included graphics and drawings. In the 24 issues³ of the 30-day period in 1912 analyzed here, 95 drawings, 14 maps, and a total of

3 The *Recklinghäuser Zeitung* appeared six times per week.

109 illustrations could be found, an average of 4.5 visual elements per issue. None of these illustrations dealt with issues concerning the Polish segment of the population or with Polish migration as such. Hence, the refusal to mention the group also extends to the visual elements of the newspaper. The only exceptions were advertisements, in which Slavic names occasionally appeared. Thus, journalists themselves did not violate the taboo, although perhaps they should have – to facilitate transparency and promote societal communication, which could have furthered the integration process. Instead, if the taboo was ignored, this was done by the administration, by political institutions, and by some of the migrants themselves, who were interested in buying publicity to further their economic interests.

In light of such meagre findings, it seems necessary to look for reports of events in which some mention of the Polish minority was practically inevitable. Among these events were the “Riots of Herne”, during which in June 1899 Polish miners were among the protesters against an increase in miners’ insurance premiums which would particularly affect young, unskilled workers. Other such events include the large-scale miner strikes in 1889, 1905 and 1912. In 1889, still at an early phase of migration in which Polish nationalism had not yet developed among the migrants from the Eastern provinces, the *Wochenblatt für den Kreis Recklinghausen* (the weekly predecessor of the *Recklinghäuser Zeitung*) published reports in language that tended to malign the Polish minority and to provoke feelings against them. This might have been related to the subject matter, as the newspaper reported on conflicts between Polish workers who were on strike and German strike breakers:

Bottrop, May 8th. Close to the new pit of the coal mine “Prosper”, there has been a row between miners. While returning from their shift, twenty of the local miners were assaulted by about 80 Polish workers who were loitering. (*Wochenblatt für den Kreis Recklinghausen*, vol. 55, 11th May 1889, p. 3)

Four days later, a similar report appeared:

Bottrop, May 12th. A number of German miners was attacked by a large group of their Polish colleagues on a countryside road. The Poles were outraged because their German colleagues had not immediately joined them in their strike. An attacker identified by the name of Bernatzi was shot in the back, but was not critically injured. A landowner who lived nearby had fired off his shotgun to alarm the military. (*Wochenblatt für den Kreis Recklinghausen*, vol. 57, 13th May 1889, p. 2)

This early connection of violence to an immigrated minority in the local press is noteworthy, as the connection was taken up again and expanded during the “Riots of Herne” ten years later. At that time, the regional and national press, in particular the conservative *Rhein-Westfälische Zeitung*, warned against a “foreign infiltration” and a threat to German orderliness by the allegedly strike- and crime-affiliated Polish migrants (Kleßmann 1978, 75-82). Regional and national newspapers could afford to treat the Polish minority as a subject involving political conflict. In contrast to the *Recklinghäuser Zeitung*, such papers did not have to serve a large audience composed of several, if not all, social classes. This may be the main reason for the omission of the conflict-laden topic in the local reports of the *Recklinghäuser Zeitung*.

4. The press of the Ruhr Poles and its instrumentalization by the German administration

Polish migrants in the Ruhr area could choose from many different Polish-language newspapers, most of which were published in one of the four Eastern provinces and then mailed to their readers. In Rhineland-Westphalia, the *Gazeta grudziadzka* from Graudenz was the most frequently read newspaper, which in 1911 had 5,000 subscribers in the main postal district of Dortmund alone. Other Polish papers with a high circulation were published in the Ruhr area itself, such as the oldest and most important among them, the *Wiarnus Polski*, which was published in Bochum. Kleßmann describes the paper as the “central organ and organizational focus of Poles in the Ruhr area” (Kleßmann 1974). Another radical paper with Polish nationalist tendencies was the *Narodowiec*, with 2,700 subscribers and a total circulation of 3,000. Also, there were religious newspapers with a strict Roman Catholic orientation, such as *Tygodnik Maryanski*, and trade union papers, such as *Glos Gornika*. It is noteworthy that there was a definite lack of a unionist, social democratic tendency among the newspapers that were published in the Ruhr area, as well as among the miners themselves.

At the dawn of World War I, the total circulation of newspapers for Polish readers in the Ruhr area amounted to between 50,000 and 70,000. For a total Polish population of about 500,000, this number seems small – compared to the German segment of the population, in which case there was one newspaper for every third person. Yet, this number should be seen in light of the fact that the migrant population was mostly of rural background and often had only little formal schooling. Apparently, among Polish migrants there was a strong need to communicate in their familiar language – a need which certainly contributed to the formation of a culturally defined group identity.

Still, language itself was not the most salient issue, as attempts on the part of German publishers to set up a Polish-language newspaper demonstrated. The preference for the established, radical Polish press as opposed to these German attempts at Polish-language publications can be seen, for example, in the history of *Wiarus Polski* and the paper modeled after it, the *Narodowiec*, which not only outlasted World War I, but also followed the mass of Polish miners who migrated further to industrial regions in France and Belgium. Apart from an interruption because of the German occupation, the *Wiarus* was published in Lille from 1923 to 1961 (Kleßmann 1974, 397); the *Narodowiec* followed migrating Polish miners to Lens, where it continued to be published up to the end of the 1970s. When so many migrants leave a country, not in order to relocate in their homeland, but to move to another foreign country, and their newspapers (are forced to) follow them, it is certainly not appropriate to speak of a minority's successful integration into the society at large.

Title	Place of Publication	Frequency	Tendency	Circulation	Subscriptions
In the Ruhr Area					
<i>Wiarus Polski</i>	Bochum	daily	radical nationalist	9,000	8,500
<i>Tygodnik Maryanski</i>	Bochum	weekly	religious	5,000	4,500
<i>Głos Gornika</i>	Bochum	2 x per month	unionist nationalist	30,000	
<i>Gazeta Gornicza</i>	Bochum	weekly	unionist social dem.	3,000	
<i>Narodowiec</i>	Herne	daily	radical nationalist	3,500	2,700
From the East					
OPD DO					
<i>Gazeta Grudziądzka</i>	Graudenz				5,200
<i>Postęp</i>	Posen				400
<i>Katolicki</i>	Posen				500
<i>Sokol</i>	Posen				1,000
Total of subscriptions DO/MS/D					21,200

Table 5: Large-scale Polish Newspapers (“Ethno-Press”) in the Ruhr-Area, 1911. [OPD = Oberpostdirektion Dortmund]. (Source: Kleßmann 1978, p. 280f., 282)

But just as certainly, the ethnic newspapers mentioned above did not contribute to the integration process of the *Ruhr Poles*. They campaigned against almost any aspect of intercultural integration: against learning the German language, buying goods in German shops, interethnic marriages – especially

between Polish men and German women, subscribing to and reading German newspapers. In a word, they were against all the various forms of intercultural communication and contact between the Polish minority and the German majority in everyday life (Cf. *Der Polizei-Präsident*, Abt. II.: Übersetzungen aus westfälischen und anderen polnischen Zeitungen. Jg. 1912, No. 41, 11. Oktober 1912, p. 383ff).

Moreover, their reporting provides further substantiation that there was a significant amount of further migration of Poles to Lorraine prior to World War I. On October 9th, 1912 the *Viarus Polski* published the following “warning”:

Many Poles, especially from Silesia, leave their homes for France without prior information. But what is waiting for them there is misfortune, as the French mines only employ workers from the Rhineland and Westphalia. Salaries are not higher than in Westphalia. But, since we are allowed Polish teachers and Polish pastors, freedom of speech is granted. Also, the clubs are allowed every freedom they require. (...) Work is not so harmful to health, as the coal is free of gas. But the salary fluctuates. (*Der Polizei-Präsident*, Abt. II.: Übersetzungen aus westfälischen und anderen polnischen Zeitungen. Jg. 1912, No. 41, 11. Oktober 1912, p. 388)

This quote clearly indicates that the further migration of Poles to France and the failure of their integration into German society were linked to the pressure to assimilate that they had had to face in Germany. The Roman Catholic Polish nationalism of the newspapers mentioned can also be understood as a reaction to the pressure to assimilate brought forward from the German side.

It is not without a certain irony that in German-language research contexts all of the statements about the Polish ethnic press – those made by Christoph Kleßmann and others, and even the assertions in this paper – are based on the historical translations of the German authorities. These translations were probably not inauthentic, although this possibility should also be taken into consideration.

What is more disturbing than the philological accuracy of the texts is their selection. It is possible that the apparently strong nationalist tendency of the successful Polish newspapers *Viarus Polski* and *Narodowiec* would prove to be less prominent, if recourse were taken to the Polish originals instead of to the selective translations. In this regard, a great amount of intercultural content analysis remains to be done.

5. Conclusion: Why did the integration of the Ruhr Poles fail?

The analysis of both the German majority newspapers and the Polish minority newspapers indicates that the Polish ethnic identity, which was linked to the Slavic mother tongue, the Roman Catholic faith, and to Polish national history, was not accepted in the German majority culture. Indeed, it seems that the existence of this ethnic identity was hardly noticed. Apparently, the dissatisfaction that led many of the Poles to migrate further was less a matter of salary and economic affairs than of obstacles to their customary cultural practices in their new environment. In the case of the *Ruhr Poles* prior to World War I, cultural differences between the ethnic minority and the majority were ignored by local newspapers like the *Recklinghäuser Zeitung* on the one hand, and explicitly denied by political parties, authorities and the regional and national press on the other. The effect was the same. Disregard for the collective minority identity evoked counter-reactions, as had been the case with the press of the Polish minority: adherence to a cultural identity which had been declared illegitimate was proclaimed; the ignorance exhibited by the majority culture was interpreted as an attack from external sources and thus reinforced the communicative barriers between majority and minority.

These barriers and the resulting alienation of the minority, and the eventual failure of the integration process, certainly were effected by interdependencies between the actions of both the majority and the minority. Yet, which of the phenomena was the initial one is a debatable matter: the pressure to assimilate and Germanize the *Ruhr Pole* minority or their Polish nationalist separatism. All of the known sources indicate that no political nationalism among the Polish migrants existed during the first decade of migration from the East to the industrial region in Rhineland-Westphalia. Indications of organized Polish nationalist movements first emerged in the 1890s, approximately at the time when German authorities started to monitor the Polish ethnic press in the Ruhr area. Both the German (local) press (e.g., *Recklinghäuser Zeitung*) and the Polish ethnic press (e.g., *Wiarius Polski*) contributed to the failure of the process of integration. To further intercultural integration, the German local press should have taken note of the Poles in the Ruhr area, informed the majority about their particular way of life, and thus prepared the way for public acceptance of this lifestyle. The Polish ethnic press, on the other hand, should have helped interest its readers in the German majority culture instead of promoting uncompromising and exclusive positions. Neither of these developments actually took place. Hence, the effect of the media on the process of intercultural integration was detrimental rather than encouraging.

The question remains, what media and journalism might learn from this historical counterexample in terms of a possible contribution to the process of intercultural integration. Any generalizations that could be drawn from this example would perhaps be very limited: Poland's territorial divisions and the lack of a national government for more than a century provided fertile breeding ground for separatist and nationalist tendencies in the Polish migrant community. Under more favorable conditions, the detrimental effect on integration could have been less serious. On the other hand, this historical example also involves positive factors, such as the German citizenship of many of the migrants. At least this combination of both positive and negative factors would seem to make generalization to a certain extent justifiable.

In this sense, then, the largely unsuccessful integration process of the Ruhr Poles can be instructive for the media in two ways. First, the example demonstrates that if the media ignore immigrant communities and their ethnic differences, this will not promote integration. On the other hand, it is apparent that intercultural integration is furthered if journalists take their job seriously and comprehensively report on the everyday life of ethnic minorities with accurate and authentic material. Second, it is detrimental to intercultural integration if ethnic media only perceive hostile elements in the majority culture and attempt to prevent their minority audience from communicating and interacting with the majority in positive ways. Moreover, journalists working in ethnic media can contribute to integration if they make sincere efforts to provide publicity for their audience's concerns. For migrant audiences, this also means that the accommodating society should naturally have a place in this media constellation.

6. References

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