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**MIGRATION AND LANGUAGE IN THE AMERICAS AND EUROPE  
20<sup>TH</sup> AND 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURIES**

**Abstract:**

International migration usually implies crossing language borders by migrants. It raises the question of linguistic communication between migrants and the host country population and institutions. Language also plays a role in determining destination of migration. Presence of migrants generates the question of their integration/assimilation (including linguistic) into the host society versus retention of their culture and language. Besides, presence of migrants and their languages in public spaces may generate negative reactions and anti-immigration attitudes of the local society.

The two main destinations of international migrations implying crossing established linguistic borders in the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries were the Americas (Latin America, USA, Canada) and (Western) Europe as well as Australia. The role of language as a factor determining destination of migration and life conditions of migrants as well as language policies of immigration countries regarding

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immigration and immigrants changed from country to country and from period to period.

In the old immigration countries (the Americas and Australia) immigrants were expected to accommodate to local language environments with more or less pressure by language policies to master and use the local language, with periods of policies of forced linguistic assimilation of immigrants and using of language as a criterion for selection of immigrants.

Europe as destination of migration appeared only after the WW2. In this period language policy regarding immigration and immigrants oscillated between linguistic assimilation in a hope that it would facilitate their cultural, economic and emotional integration into the host society, and non-intervention in the name of multiculturalism. After 2001 language policy is often used to integrate immigrants and to decelerate inflow of undesirable migrants. The recent (2015 and 2016) uncontrolled migration to Europe generated a new function for language: that of distinguishing between political refugees eligible for protection, and illegal economic.

**Key words:** language, migration, language policy, assimilation, multiculturalism, America, Europe, EU.

### Introductory remarks

Migration has long been a hot political issue in immigration countries like the USA and West European countries, as well as in emigration countries like Mexico and Poland, and in transit countries like southern and central-eastern European countries. The last presidential election in the USA, when one candidate (Donald Trump), who finally was elected president of the USA, promised to deport millions of illegal immigrants and another one (governor of Florida Jeb Bush) during the campaign spoke Spanish to acquire votes of immigrant citizens<sup>2</sup>, the immigration crisis in Europe where in one year (2015) more than one million refugees and immigrants from Middle East and Africa came by Mediterranean Sea breaking border controls and immigration procedures causing serious political crisis in the EU, terrorist attacks in Europe (France, Belgium, Germany) in 2015 and 2016 committed by immigrants or their descendants from Muslim countries as well as the decision of Britons in the June 2016 referendum to leave the EU largely motivated by the desire to stop immigration or to get rid of migrants from other EU countries (mostly

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<sup>2</sup> See: Gov. Jeb Bush has released a Spanish-language Internet ad, in which his Mexican-born wife makes her first appearance of the campaign to deliver a halting, accented and simple English pitch, while he speaks happily in confident Spanish. Munro, Neil, 2015 "Jeb Bush speaks good Spanish, his wife speaks poor English", Breitbart, 15 September 2015 <http://www.breitbart.com/big-government/2015/09/15/jeb-bush-speaks-good-spanish-his-wife-speaks-poor-english-in-new-video/>, access 11 December 2016 Interestingly, wives of both Donald Trump and Jeb Bush were born abroad, in Slovenia and Mexico, respectively.

from Poland) are just a few evidences of the political significance of migration.

Two kinds of international migration can be distinguished: an “ordinary” and a “special” migration. This distinction is not generally used in migration studies, but, in opinion of this author, it can be useful in analysing the issue of language and migration. The former kind is crossing international borders by people (non-citizens of the destination country) for a permanent (or long-term) stay. From the socio-cultural (including linguistic) point of view it is irrelevant whether people crossing borders are asylum-seekers or economic migrants, although it can be relevant from the legal and political point of view. The latter kind of migration consists in moving of international borders making (usually a part of) inhabitants of the territory in question non-citizens, *de facto* migrants, without changing the place of living.<sup>3</sup>

International migration is often related to the language issue. There are various forms of relations between migration and language. These relations appear as a natural, spontaneous outcome of encounters of people of different native languages and thus shape

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<sup>3</sup> This kind of migration happened in recent decades in Eastern Europe, especially on the territory of the former USSR where due to the dissolution of the USSR and emergence of new independent states many Russian speakers found themselves in the position of foreign migrants in these new states. Interestingly, two scholars, Andrew Geddes and Peter Scholten (Geddes and Scholten 2016), in their in-depth analysis of migration in Europe include the case of Russian speakers in these countries (in Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania) as a case of international migration.

their attitudes, but also are influenced by language policies of governments or other institutions. In any case, these relations are of great importance and deserve an analysis. This paper is an attempt of such an analysis. Its aim is not, however, to give a comprehensive review of the literature on migration or sociolinguistics.

### **Migration and the language barrier**

There are various forms of language barrier and its effects on migration (understood as a process and people engaged in it, both migrants and local populations). The first distinguishing criterion of language barrier is the strength of the barrier, or possibility of mutual communication between people, usually between migrants and locals (inhabitants and functionaries) but sometimes also among migrants themselves (when a group of migrants is composed by people of various languages). Another criterion is possibility of identifying people as foreigners for their language or accent by other people, which can generate various reactions of both sides. The above two criteria point to the role of language as an active factor, or factor influencing behaviour of people participating in interlinguistic communication. There is also another aspect of the migration – language relationship, namely the influence of migration on languages, otherwise extensively investigated by linguists and sociolinguists, but this aspect is not dealt with in this paper.

As regards the strength of the language barrier, two extreme situations can be distinguished: a) the hard or absolute barrier when no linguistic communication can be possible (without translation or interpretation), and b) the soft (relative) barrier when people (usually the local population and migrants) can understand each other without misunderstandings (due to the similarity of their languages or due to mastering of the local language by migrants, or vice versa) but migrants are recognizable for their accent, not perfect command of the local language, etc. Between the two extreme cases there can be a large range of situations of imperfect understanding. As to the identification of people as foreigners due to their language or accent, two “pure” situations can exist: a) identification of people simply as foreigners or people coming from a foreign country or region without specifying from which country or region they are coming, b) identification as people coming from a specified country or region, or ascribing people to a concrete country or region. Of course, the ability to ascribe people to a country (region) for their language or accent, can be different depending on knowledge and experience of those who make such ascriptions, but we can assume that this ability is proportionate to the intensity (frequency) of contacts with a given foreign language or accent.

Language barrier can have various effects on people, both migrants and the local population. Several kinds of effects can be

distinguished: socio-cultural, economic, psychological and political ones.

The socio-cultural and economic effects of the barrier can take over one of the following forms:

- total exclusion of migrants from the local society, making them dependent on external help (e.g. social security schemes, charity, family members, other members of the given ethno-linguistic group)
- partial exclusion/inclusion of migrants from/in the local society: migrants are admitted to less language-intensive sectors of the economy which are usually associated with less-paid and unstable jobs (blue collar workers, “precariat”) which leads to their territorial separation – “ghettoisation” (for cheaper housing, network of mutual help, etc.) (Examples and in-depth analysis of the above two types of exclusion can be found in Geddes and Scholten 2016)
- a special case: “elitist exclusion” – members of the international business community using English in their activity, often living in separate sectors of urban areas (expensive housing) – given that this type of exclusion does not cause socio-political problems (at least for the time being), it will not be analysed here.

Socio-cultural and economic effects of the language barrier may affect in a different way different sectors of the immigrant population.

For instance, women in traditional patriarchal families are usually more exposed to be isolated from the local society by the language barrier than men. It is also important to note that language may be not the only factor of the ghettoisation and that the effects of ghettoisation may last even when the language as the initial cause of the isolation ceases to exist. What is especially important, these effects can be inherited, transmitted from generation to generation. The most relevant socio-cultural and economic effects of the language barrier are worse attainments in school education, worse access to labour market, etc by immigrants in comparison with the local population.

The psychological and political effects of the language barrier are related to the above mentioned socio-cultural and economic effects. The psychological and political effects may affect both immigrants and the local population. Disadvantageous economic situation of migrants (or their descendants) resulting from difficult access to better jobs and socio-economic promotion due to the not full command of the local language or “bad” accent, or simply due to the “bad” address (living in an immigrant ghetto), may generate frustration, and in extreme but politically sensitive cases, political radicalisation. Recent examples of terrorist attacks in France and Belgium (2015, 2016), and earlier in London (2005) and Madrid (2004), committed by immigrants or people of immigrant background, confirm the possibility of the evolution from dissatisfaction to

frustration and political radicalisation. Of course, political radicalisation of migrants and their descendants depends on many factors, not only economic and linguistic ones, and not every immigrant community is equally predisposed to radicalisation.

As mentioned earlier, the psychological and political effect of the language barrier may also affect the local (indigenous) population. It is not as much related to communication problems as to the very presence of immigrants considered by the locals as undesirable, and language used by immigrants serves only as indication that a given person or institution is immigrant or represents immigrants.<sup>4</sup> In some sectors of the local population frequent meetings with people speaking an incomprehensible language may cause a feeling of unease, which can develop into anti-migrant sentiments and actions.<sup>5</sup> Intolerance towards languages of immigrants can take various forms,

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<sup>4</sup> American sociolinguist Selma Sonntag mentions that for US border guards and other functionaries fighting illegal immigration from Mexico speaking English with Mexican accent is an indication that a person can be illegal immigrant (Sonntag 2015)

<sup>5</sup> One of reasons of voting for Brexit in June 2016 was the anti-immigration phobia of a part of the British society addressed against immigrants from other UE member countries, mostly against Poles who in great numbers came to the UK after Poland joined the UE in 2004. For many Brexit-voters the very presence of the Polish language was a problem. In the extreme cases of anti-Polish attitudes only hearing this language was enough to attack and kill people. The case in point is the recent (end of August 2016) attack on two Polish men in the UK by a group of teenagers. One of those Poles was beaten to death and the other was severely wounded. The only reason for the attack was that they spoke Polish among themselves. See: "Six teenage boys have been arrested in the Essex town after Arkadiusz Jóźwik, 40, was killed on Saturday night. His brother said he had been heard speaking Polish" Halfon, Robert "Horror over killing of Polish man in Harlow." The Guardian, August 31, 2016. Accessed September 1, 2016 . <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2016/aug/31/mp-horror-over-killing-of-polish-man-in-harlow-robert-halfon>. It was only one of many instances of attacks on Poles in the UK, recognized as Poles for speaking Polish.

from physical attacks on people speaking a foreign language, to pressure to getting rid of them, to organised actions to assimilate immigrants so that their languages disappear from public spaces. The pressure on assimilation can be covered or justified by benevolent motivations of integration of immigrants with the society at large, their economic advancement etc.

The strength and character of language barrier for migration and responses of language policies to this barrier changed over time and space. Beneath is an outline of review of language policies regarding immigration in old immigration and new immigration countries in the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries. The selection of this period, and leaving behind earlier centuries, is due to the fact that in this period the analysed countries had established (although changeable) territories and national (official) languages and therefore the newcomers can be easily identified as immigrants confronted with the language barrier and language policy of recipient countries. (In earlier centuries, especially in the Americas, the newcomers were often conquerors who later established states and shaped language situation in these countries). The review enables to detect the main relationships between language and migration.

### **Immigration and language policy in old immigration countries**

By “old immigration countries” here countries of the Americas and Australia are understood. By the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century

these countries, after centuries of massive immigration mainly from Europe and political dependence from European empires, had established territories and language situation in which languages of former colonial empires (practically Spanish, Portuguese and English) dominated marginalising indigenous and other immigrant (mostly European) languages. A common feature of these countries, apart from the fact that their dominant languages were de facto immigrant languages, was ignoring other immigrant languages (according to the *laissez-faire* principle) and, at times, deliberate actions against them.

From the point of view of the relationship between immigration and language policy, these countries can be divided into three groups: 1) most Spanish speaking countries (including Mexico) with negligible amounts of foreign-language speaking immigrants, 2) Latin American countries with considerable numbers of immigrants speaking foreign languages (Brazil, Argentina, Chile, Uruguay), 3) English speaking countries (USA, Canada, Australia) with even greater streams of foreign-language immigrants.

In the first group of countries immigration of foreign language speakers was rather low. There were waves of immigration from Spain, for instance after the civil war in this country in the 1930s or economic immigration from Spain to Cuba before the 1950s or to

Venezuela in the 1950s and 1960s.<sup>6</sup> In this case it can be said that the common language, beside historical ties and other factors, determined destination of migration of Spaniards to Spanish speaking countries. This immigration, of course, did not cause any language problems. There was also an immigration of foreign-language speakers, but usually they were individuals (mostly male) and not collective migrations of whole families. These individuals predominantly did not form compact communities and were integrated into the local Spanish-speaking communities.<sup>7</sup> Language policy in these countries was almost entirely preoccupied with the relationship between Spanish (Castilian) and local indigenous languages motivated, on the one hand, by the need for nation-building and retention of cultural and political ties with other Spanish speaking countries, and, on the other hand, by socio-political considerations to satisfy demands of local indigenous communities or by a desire to preserve cultural-linguistic richness of the country<sup>8</sup>. (A different situation is in Paraguay for the strong position of guaraní).

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<sup>6</sup> For instance, Gonzalo Hernández Sánchez from La Palma (Canary Islands) mentions massive migration from this island to Tenerife (another island of the archipelago) and to Venezuela in the 1950s and 1960s. (Hernández Sánchez, 9)

<sup>7</sup> One of such individuals was an outstanding Polish writer Sławomir Mrożek, who spent several years in Mexico with his Mexican wife Susana Osorio. On Mrożek's stay in Mexico see the interview with Susana Osorio for Polish magazine *Tygodnik Przegląd*: Lisińska-Kozioł 2004

<sup>8</sup> For the case of Mexico see for instance papers: Días-Couder 1997, Nalasco 1996, Pallicer 1997, Skrobot 2014.

In the second group of countries, or countries in the south of South America, the situation is different due to the presence of communities of immigrants speaking other languages than the official languages (Spanish or Portuguese) apart from communities speaking local indigenous languages. Immigrant communities mostly came from Europe and speak German, Polish, Italian, Ukrainian etc., often in non-standard varieties already extinct in their countries of origin. Speakers of these languages now live predominantly in rural areas where they form compact communities sustaining internal ties and transmitting language from generation to generation. In urban areas they usually have been assimilated to the mainstream languages.

Until recently policies regarding these communities and languages oscillated between ignoring them and persecution. The policy of ignoring meant that these communities could use their languages in the private sphere (family, neighbourhood, church, ethnic organisations, etc.) and partly in the public sphere (schools run by ethnic communities) but not as official language in local, let alone in regional or national, governments. Retention or abandoning of immigrant languages largely depended on local conditions, among other things on ways of provision of social services: communities depending on mutual help of co-ethnics tended to preserve their languages, especially if they lived in isolated areas with a church as the centre of community life, while communities depending on services delivered by the state (within the policy of welfare state) used to lose

internal cohesion and language<sup>9</sup>. Persecution of immigrant languages took the form of removal of these languages from the public sphere, mainly from schools. Such policy, in the name of promotion of national identity and unity was carried out, for instance, in Brazil under the nationalist government of Getúlio Vargas (1939-1945)<sup>10</sup>. In recent years in Brazil, in conformity with the global trend of appreciation of cultural, including linguistic, diversity other languages that the national one are regarded as elements of cultural richness of the nation. Several languages were declared official at local level and activities have been undertaken aimed at their promotion in the public life. This policy concerns indigenous languages and those immigrant languages which spoken for generations.<sup>11</sup>

As regards the third group of old immigration countries mentioned above (USA, Canada, Australia), in the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> century

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<sup>9</sup> Caroline Grabowska, herself daughter of Polish immigrants in Uruguay, points out to differences in the way of providing of social services as a factor explaining retention for several generations of Polish in the USA (in Polish ethnic quarters in Chicago for instance) and relatively fast linguistic assimilation of Polish migrants in Uruguay (despite retention of Polish ethnic identity and some elements of Polish culture) (Grabowska 1998).

<sup>10</sup> In this period, in the name of building Brazilian national unity there was attempt of unification of language, culture, traditions and cult. The main area of action were schools. Ethnic schools (schools run by immigrant communities) were shut down, didactic materials were being destroyed and teachers arrested (de Almeida Silva Pereira 2006, p. 44 [http://www.maxwell.vrac.puc-rio.br/9612/9612\\_3.PDF](http://www.maxwell.vrac.puc-rio.br/9612/9612_3.PDF) [http://www.maxwell.vrac.puc-rio.br/9612/9612\\_1.PDF](http://www.maxwell.vrac.puc-rio.br/9612/9612_1.PDF)).

<sup>11</sup> The main among these immigrant languages are Hünsrikisch and Pomerano (Pommersch) - both varieties of German, Talian (a variety of Italian), Polish and Japanese. More information on immigrant languages in Brazil can be found e.g. in publications of the Fórum Permanente das Línguas Brasileiras de Imigracao, and of the Instituto de Investigação e Desenvolvimento em Política Linguística (IPOL, Florianópolis, Santa Catarina, Brazil) <http://e-ipol.org/>. The issue of co-officialisation of immigrant and indigenous languages is dealt with in: Morello 2015.

they, together with Western Europe, were the main destinations of international migrations. A common characteristic of these countries in the field of language policy towards migration and migrants was a kind of “market liberalism” combined with institutional and political pressure for assimilation into the dominant language (in the case of Canada – into two dominant languages: English and French).

In the USA, by far the biggest migration destination among the mentioned three countries, after the period of liberal or no language policy towards immigration and immigrants in the 19<sup>th</sup> century when several immigrant languages, the main being German, were widely used in the public and private sphere, at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> and the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century the policy and the general mood changed in favour of a more restrictive policy towards immigrant languages. This policy and general atmosphere escalated during the first world war and in the interwar period when speaking other languages than English was considered as manifestation of lack of loyalty towards the US nation (Judd, Lacorne 2004). The main victim of this policy was German (otherwise language of the main enemy of the USA during the war) whose presence in both public and private life was considerably reduced (closing down of German-language public schools, firing of teachers for speaking German in schools, ban on speaking German in public places, voluntary avoidance of using

German in public, etc.)<sup>12</sup>. This policy known as “English only” policy was in line with the then popular in Europe and elsewhere policy of nation-building (“one state – one nation – one language”). The nation-building aim of this policy was best expressed by the president Roosevelt: „We have room but for one language here, and that is the English language, for we intend to see that the crucible turns our people out as Americans, of American nationality, and not as dwellers in a polyglot boarding-house”<sup>13</sup> Restrictions on using immigrant languages strengthened the already existing mechanism of language shift – from immigrant languages to English – which makes that grandchildren of foreign-language immigrants are monolinguals in English.

After the Second World War the popular attitude and official policy towards immigrants and their languages changed. Speaking other languages than English was no more considered as

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<sup>12</sup> See: “Antagonism toward Germans and their language resurfaced in the Midwest in the late 1880s and early 1890s, and again across the country during and after World War I. Between 1917 and 1922 most of the states dropped German from their school curricula. Nebraska's open meeting law of 1919 forbade the use of foreign languages in public, and in 1918 Governor Harding of Iowa proclaimed that “English should and must be the only medium of instruction in public, private, denominational and other similar schools. Conversation in public places, on trains, and over the telephone should be in the English language. Let those who cannot speak or understand the English language conduct their religious worship in their home.” (*New York Times*, 18 June 1918, p. 12). Such attitudes had a chilling effect on language use. As many as eighteen thousand people were charged in the Midwest during and immediately following World War I with violating the English-only statutes. (Crawford 1989, 23.)” (Baron).

<sup>13</sup> This statement is frequently quoted. This quotation can be found for instance on the webpage of US-English movement, an organisation promoting English as the only language of the USA.

manifestation of disloyalty and was not persecuted. Some languages, especially Spanish, were introduced into education system (usually in schools whose main purpose is to prepare students to join the mainstream English-language education) and as auxiliary languages in some local communities populated by large numbers speakers of these languages. A special interest for (some) immigrant languages, for their maintenance and use was expressed by business community (for promotion of exports to such markets like China) and, particularly, by the Ministry of Defence (Sonntag 2015). It must be said, however, that this new attitude and policy don't change the general picture of the language situation in the USA characterised by the absolute dominance of English in all spheres at supra-local levels and by the vast majority of English monolinguals who regard using other languages in the public sphere as at best wasting money. Representative for this way of thinking are various organisations and movements, like the aforementioned "US-English movement", aimed at defence of English and linguistic assimilation of immigrants. Now the main threat to English, according to this movement, is Spanish which has replaced German as the most widely used immigrant language (Bimer). The hottest debate concerning the presence of Spanish takes place in California where the mechanism of language shift (grandchildren of immigrants speak only English) in recent decades stopped working and Spanish-speaking (mostly Mexican) immigrants transmit their language to younger generations. It seems

that it is a result of high spatial and social concentration of immigrants and the related high rate of Spanish monolingual marriages there rather than a result of deliberate opposition to assimilation into the English language and US society (Lopez 2004)

In Australia until the 1960s an immigration policy called “white Australia” was carried out which gave preferences to Europeans, especially to Britons and English speakers. This policy was combined with language policy aimed at strengthening the position of English, especially in education and as the official language. The concept of “white Australia” was officially replaced in the last quarter of the 20<sup>th</sup> century by the idea of multiculturalism implying more chances for non-Europeans to migrate to Australia, more respect for immigrant languages, including in schools, and more space for immigrant communities to establish and run institutions using their languages (Smolicz, Nical, Secombe 2002, Extra, Yagmur 2002). However, this new approach did not undermine the dominance of English and did not stop the process of language shift from immigrant languages to English which started in the period of “white Australia” (Judt, Lacorne 2004). In recent years Australia tightened again its immigration policy, whose main aim is to prevent irregular immigration. Although it is not aimed at a particular racial or linguistic group, its main objective are people from south-east Asia who form the overwhelming majority of irregular immigrants coming usually by boats, than detained and sent

back or located in camps in neighbouring countries and islands (Papua New-Guinea, Nauru)<sup>14</sup>.

Canada distinguishes itself from the remaining old immigration countries for having two official languages: English and French. Analysis of relationships between these two languages exceeds the scope of this paper, although both languages are in fact immigrant languages<sup>15</sup>. As regards the language policy addressed to other immigrant languages, it is similar to that in the USA and Australia: immigrant communities may use their languages in the private sphere and in their ethnic institutions but not as official languages. Until a few decades ago immigrants all over Canada used to join the English speaking community, given the greater “market value” of English than French and due to the freedom of choice of language of education and professional carrier. In recent years the language policy of the predominantly French-language province of Quebec forces non-English speaking immigrants from outside Canada to send their children to French-language schools in a hope that in such a way they would join the French-language community of Canada.

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<sup>14</sup> Australia does resettle thousands of refugees each year, but has taken a tough line on spontaneous arrivals since a surge in boat people from South-East Asia three years ago. The navy now intercepts all asylum-seekers at sea and either sends them back to their port of departure or directs them to detention centres in Papua New Guinea and Nauru. In: Looking for a home. Special Report on Migration. “The Economist” May 28<sup>th</sup> – June 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2016.

<sup>15</sup> For details see for instance McRoberts 2004, Dumas 2002, Cardinal 2015.

## **Language policy towards immigration and immigrants in Europe (after the Second World War)**

Large-scale immigration to Europe, and to its individual countries, started after the Second World War. Earlier it was Europe which sent its inhabitants to other parts of the world. The phenomenon of immigration for the most post-war period took mostly place in Western Europe, therefore language policy of these countries is in the focus of the analysis. There have been several models (approaches) to this policy, differing from one type of countries to another, and from one period to another. As to changes in time, three periods can be proposed, the turning points being beginning of the decade of 2000 (2001 and later) and the year 2015. Both turning points are related to the general changes in immigration policies and situation around immigration. The first turning point was connected with terrorist attacks (WTC 09/11, Madrid 2004, London 2005) resulting in less liberal policy towards immigration, the other was connected with the uncontrolled waves of immigration to Europe from Middle East and Africa.

### **4.1 Immigration and language policy until 2001: the two models**

In this period two opposite models can be observed: the French model of assisted integration-assimilation of immigrants, and the north-western European model of *multi-culti* or *laissez-faire* approach to immigrants.

**The French model.** Its fundamental characteristics were linguistic and cultural integration (assimilation) according to the Nation-State ideology (one nation, one state, one language) and the *jus soli* principle of citizenship. This policy, was ideated during the French revolution as the Jacobin concept of the unity of the French nation (“one and indivisible”) which equated citizenship with nationality and considered ethno-linguistic deviation from the standard French model (the so called republican ideal) as symptoms of backwardness and potential threat to nation’s unity. It started in practice in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, especially the Third Republic by the end of this century. It was addressed both to “old” inhabitants of the French state and to newcomers. From the point of view of integration (assimilation) of immigrants, of special importance was the *jus soli* principle of citizenship which made all persons born in France French citizens (the French) and facilitated naturalisation and gave protection to parents of children born in France.<sup>16</sup> Very important was also the universal, compulsory and free education (in French).<sup>17</sup> This model worked smoothly as long as the inflow of migrants was small, the cultural distance between the migrants and the local population was

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<sup>16</sup> In practice both the principle of *jus soli* and the regulations concerning nationality and naturalisation underwent several detailed changes depending on the attitudes of French governments to inflow of migrants and their integration, but the core principle remained. For more information see Geddes and Scholten, *The politics of migration and immigration in Europe*, 61).

<sup>17</sup> See Garcia, 2015. This article provides also a rich literature on the subject of education in France

modest (the immigrants usually came from the neighbouring countries like Italy, Spain, Portugal, or were mostly political immigrants, often aristocrats, from central and eastern Europe), and migrants did not form compact settlements. Such immigrants quickly entered the mainstream French society without reproducing the social status of immigrants. Former president Nicolas Sarkozy, son of a Hungarian aristocrat, is a perfect example of the success of this model. This model stopped working when the inflow of migrants was large, the cultural distance was big and the migrants lived in compact separated areas and started to “reproduce” themselves. One of factors of socio-territorial segregation was language: not perfect command of French and/or foreign accent, alongside with “bad address” (living in immigrant suburbs of big cities) and Arabic sounding names, for many people turned out to be obstacles for economic and social promotion. This, in turn, created fertile ground for political radicalism. The best example of the failure of this model were terrorist attacks in Paris in 2015, in Nice, and elsewhere in France in 2016, committed by immigrants or their descendants from Muslim countries. The French model of integration of immigrants may be effective in linguistic integration (assimilation) of immigrants, but by no means can be assessed as effective in social, cultural and emotional integration of immigrants, despite the fact that many of them really found their places in the French society.

**The *multi-culti* or *laissez-faire* model.**

It consists in a lack of obligation for assimilation of immigrants, as well as in lack of a legally binding right for retention of migrants' original culture and language. It was upon to immigrants whether to learn the local language and join the local community, or not, to stick to their home language and culture and form compact immigrant communities in European cities or to leave them. This model was mostly practiced in North-Western Europe.<sup>18</sup> It was based on the assumption that all cultures are morally equal and, consequently, the host society has no right to impose its culture and language on migrants. Additional reason for such an approach was the expectation that immigrants (mostly unskilled male workers) would stay for a short time and return home replaced by another short-term immigrants. At the same time they, unlike legally recognised national minorities or ethno-regional groups, had no legal protection of their languages and cultures.<sup>19</sup> The assumption that foreign workers would return home after a short time turned out to be untrue, what is more, they started

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<sup>18</sup> There were some differences between countries fulfilling this approach as regards its details, declared objectives and rhetoric. For instance, in the UK in the 1960's British multiculturalism was defined by a minister (Home Secretary Roy Jenkins) "as 'not a flattening process of assimilation', but 'equal opportunity accompanied by cultural diversity'" (Geddes and Scholten, *The politics of migration and immigration in Europe*, 40)

<sup>19</sup> Compare the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages, 1992, which explicitly states, that its provisions did not apply to languages of immigrants). The Charter states that the definition of regional or minority language "does not include either dialects of the official language(s) of the State or the languages of migrants" (Part I, article 1) <https://rm.coe.int/CoERMPublicCommonSearchServices/DisplayDCTMContent?documentId=0900001680695175>

to bring their families and form compact ethnic settlements semi-isolated from the host society, characterised, among other things, by limited skills in local language, especially among immigrant women-housewives. This model was as long accepted by both sides (immigrants, and local populations and governments) as long both sides did not perceive serious problems. The local populations and governments did not see problems because immigrants did not cause troubles, immigrants did not see problems because they were satisfied with their improved living standards compared with living standards in their native countries. Problems appeared when migrants or their children, started to compare their situation not with their past lives in countries of origin but with living standards of the host countries and conclude that they were discriminated against. At the same time local societies and governments started to note appearance of dissatisfaction and growing criminality among young people of immigrant background. A more detailed insight into some non-European immigrant communities revealed presence of practices not acceptable in modern European societies (like honourable murders). This posed the question whether all cultures are really equal and deserve equal respect.

#### **4.2 Immigration and language policy 2001–2014: deceleration of immigration, acceleration of integration**

The French approach to immigration and language policy in this period did not change. What did change in France were the growing problems with cultural-emotional integration of some categories of migrants, as described earlier. Considerable changes happened in countries practicing the *multi-culti* or *laissez-faire* model, especially in such countries like the Netherlands (once leader of the idea of multiculturalism), Germany, Austria, Denmark and, to some extent, in the UK and Sweden. It should be underlined that this change regards policy towards immigration from non-EU countries, as policy towards immigration within the EU, including language policy, is largely determined by EU rules of free movement (of people, goods, services and capital). The main change was the active role of language policy. Language was to fulfil two functions: instrument of integration of immigrants, and filter and deterrent of immigration.

**Language policy as a policy of integration.** Migrants were forced to learn the local language (and encouraged to abandon their original languages). This policy was related to the crisis of the *multi-culti* model and realisation (after September 11, 2001 attacks) that many migrants or their descendants (it relates first of all to Muslim migrants) were not integrated with the local society, occupied lowest positions in the economy, had poor perspectives for socio-economic promotion and were frustrated thus becoming susceptible for radical

ideologies. It was also discovered that some Muslim institutions using immigrant languages in their activities (quranic schools, mosques) propagated anti-Western and terrorist ideologies. To change this situation encouraging or forcing immigrants to learn the local language became central element in the policy of integration of immigrants. Receiving the right for permanent stay and social benefits for migrants (asylum seekers) became conditional, among other elements of the so called "civic test" (first introduced in the Netherlands), on attending language courses and mastering of the language (Geddes and Scholten 117, Truchot 67). Differences among countries and governments related to whether states financed these courses or immigrants themselves had to pay for them. There were instances when migrant school children and their parents were encouraged and rewarded for speaking in the local language not only at school but also at home, within family. This policy was carried out in such countries like Germany, the Netherlands and Austria. As mentioned earlier, this policy could be addressed only to non-EU citizens. It sparked controversies, e.g. between Germany and Turkey and between the Netherlands and Poland (when the Dutch government wanted to apply it to Polish citizens). Generally speaking language behaviours (language use and learning) ceased to be a private problem of immigrants. This policy was addressed to real migrants, in other words to people who were already in.

**Language policy as a filter and deterrent for immigration.**

Knowledge of the host country language has become a criterion for admission of migrants. Candidates for migrants must pass language tests before entering the destination country. In some countries knowledge of language formed one of elements of the points-based system (together with age, health, qualifications and other elements) decisive for granting a would-be migrant the right to come in or not. This policy can be applied only to non-EU citizens. It is criticised among others by human rights activists because it creates obstacles for family reunification (when e.g. migrants' wives still living in a country of origin are required to pass language tests to reunite with their husbands in the EU). This policy has triple aims: to decelerate immigration, to improve the "human capital" of migrants, and to make them better prepared for integration.

**4.3 Europe 2015–2016: challenges of the uncontrolled wave of immigration and the role of language**

The dramatic influx of immigrants and refugees (asylum-seekers) from Middle East (and to lesser extent from North Africa) to Western Europe (mainly to Germany) via the Balkans or via Italy in 2015 (more than one million) which lasted in 2016 (several hundred thousand), broke all formal institutional, and often also physical, barriers. Knowledge of the host country language and culture ceased to be any criterion for admission of immigrants. The role of language

did not diminish but changed and strengthened. It played a “new” triple role: of instrument of communication between immigrants and local authorities in the migration route, of identification of migrants and of determinant of destination of migration. Additionally, given the dramatic increase in the number of new comers, the “old” functions of language – integration of immigrants and security concerns – got a new, higher, dimension. It should be kept in mind that the years 2015–16 were also period of dramatic terrorist attacks in Europe, mainly France and Belgium, but also in Germany, in which migrants or their descendants, were involved. This fact pointed to another role of language: as instrument of security.

**The vital role of *linguas francas* and of translation/interpretation in the route of migration.**

*Linguas francas*, mostly English, played a vital role in the communication between migrants, and authorities and populations of the recipient and transit countries. Those migrants who could communicate in English or other *lingua franca* served as intermediaries between the local authorities (or population) and other migrants from these intermediaries’ ethno-linguistic groups. Very often such intermediaries were, however, absent, and the contact was possible, if it really was, due to translation and interpretation. This

way of communication raised, again, many problems related to socio-linguistic issues<sup>20</sup>.

**Language as an instrument of identification.**

Given that identity of many migrants was unknown or they declared a false identity to be eligible for the status and benefits of refugee, authorities of recipient countries used several methods to determine country of origin of migrants, among other things by checking their languages. It must be added that only immigrants from some countries (Syria, Eritrea) were regarded as eligible for the status of refugee (asylum-seeker) and that many immigrants from other countries (from Africa, Asia and the Balkans) joined the big stream of migrants heading to Germany (and some other North-Western European countries) in a hope to receive the same status or, at least to receive benefits in the period when their application of asylum are processed.

**Language as a determinant of destination of migration.**

Language mastered by migrants, or a language presenting small barrier to migrants, is one of factors determining the choice of country

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<sup>20</sup> See for instance an opinion on the problem of translation for young refugees: "Another issue during interviews is the role of interpreters. On the one hand, requesting an interpreter may considerably delay the date of the interview (during the waiting period for social assessment, in most cases, children have to provide for themselves). On the other hand, the young people consulted stated that the quality of interpreters was poor (on some occasion an interpreter is appointed without real proficiency in the native language of the young person) and that they felt that occasionally their translations were partial, interpretative and biased (Bailleul and Sendovilla Hernandez, "How Can a Judge Reject a Child Without Even Seeing His Face? Failures in the Interpretation and Implementation of the CRC Best Interests Principle Regarding Unaccompanied Minors in France", 140).

of immigration. This is best visible in the provisional camp of migrants in Calais in France (the so called “jungle”) waiting for an opportunity to get in to the UK<sup>21</sup>. This factor is also one of reasons of the low popularity of the countries of central-eastern Europe for migrants from Middle East and Africa. The high number (nearly 1 million) of Ukrainians in Poland as migrant-workers can also be partly attributed to the linguistic factor (small linguistic barrier).

**Language and security.**

The involvement of migrants (of the first or second generation) in terrorist activities in Europe poses a challenge for security services, including the linguistic aspect (mastering of languages of immigrants or recruiting speakers of these languages by security services).

**Language and integration in the new conditions.**

In the short period of less than two years there came more than one million immigrants (including asylum-seekers) to Germany, and hundreds of thousands to other North-West European countries. The problem of their accommodation and integration in the labour market is aggravated by the language problem. The problem of language in the labour market is now even more serious than in the past because the present labour market in Germany, and other highly developed

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<sup>21</sup> The location of this camp was due to the vicinity of the tunnel connecting European mainland with Britain. In 2016, before its eviction, the number of its inhabitants was assessed at more than 5 thousand. The “Calais Jungle” became so notorious that it was even described in Wikipedia: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Calais\\_Jungle](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Calais_Jungle)

European countries, doesn't need low-skilled workers with little competence in the language<sup>22</sup>.

### **A special case: "migration" without crossing borders**

Disintegration of some states (the USSR, Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia) in the 1990s made that some people found themselves in the *de facto* position of migrants. The new situation had also a language dimension.<sup>23</sup> There were several ways of dealing with the language and citizenship issue:

- the change of the language situation (demotion of the then dominant official language to the position of a minority language and promotion of the local language as the only official language) and requirement of proficiency in the new dominant language as a precondition for citizenship. This happened in Estonia and Latvia, which made many Russian speakers non-citizens or „migrants“. Similarly to "classical" migrants in many countries they had to master the language of the country where they lived in. (During the Soviet times

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<sup>22</sup> Compare: *All refugees are entitled once their claims has been approved. Access to the labour market is of little use if migrants cannot speak the language. That mattered less for the Turkish and Moroccan guest-workers who manned Dutch and German assembly lines in the 1960s and 1970s. But today even basic jobs require fluency, if not only to understand health and safety rules, so most governments lay on language classes for newcomers. That delays entry into the labour market. A bigger problem is that refugees have tended to flock to countries with little need for low or unskilled labour. "Looking for a home", The Economist May 28<sup>th</sup>-June 3<sup>rd</sup> 2016*

<sup>23</sup> Szul, "The Politics of Language in Contemporary Europe. Between Nationalism, European Integration and Globalisation"

Russian speakers in these countries did not need to do so as they had the full range of institutions working in Russian, and the contact language between them and the local population was Russian)

- the change of the language situation and granting citizenship to all inhabitants without language requirement but exerting assimilationist pressure on non-speakers of the new dominant language. Lithuania denying several linguistic rights for Polish minority (e.g. the right to use personal names in original spelling, to have bilingual place names and especially to use minority language in public administration even in areas where the minority forms a vast majority) and to a lesser extent Ukraine (imposing Ukrainian as the only official language in written documents also in areas where Russian speakers predominate) represent this type of making its inhabitants *de facto* migrants.
- no change (*de facto* or *de iure*) of the language situation and no language requirement for citizenship. This was the case of most countries of the region. It does not mean that language was not an issue during the disintegration conflicts. On the contrary, it was a sensitive problem, especially in some post-Yugoslav states, but this problem is too far from the here analysed problem of migration and language

- agreement on non existing of language barrier between Czechia and Slovakia. It was officially agreed before the “velvet dissolution” of Czecho-Slovakia that Czech and Slovak were mutually fully intelligible and both languages can be used in both countries (without interpretation or translation).

### **Migration and language: some conclusions**

International migration usually implies crossing language borders by migrants. It raises the question of linguistic communication between migrants and the host country population and institutions (including security services). Language also plays a role in determining directions (destination) of migration. Presence of migrants generates the question of their integration/assimilation (including linguistic) into the host society versus retention of their culture and language. Besides, presence of migrants and their languages in public places may generate negative reactions and anti-immigration attitudes of the local society.

In the old immigration countries (the Americas and Australia) once languages of former colonial metropolises became dominant and official, immigrants voluntarily or under a pressure used to accommodate themselves linguistically to the local environment acquiring the new and abandoning the old language, sometimes retaining their original languages in the private sphere for a time. Now the only exception to this rule is the relatively strong position of

Spanish in the USA. In the post WW2 Europe language policy towards immigrants oscillated between linguistic integration (assimilation) in a hope that it would facilitate cultural and economic integration of migrants and thus prevent them from political radicalisation, and non-intervention in the name of multiculturalism. Language requirements sometimes have been used to decelerate inflow of undesirable migrants. The recent (2015, 2016) uncontrolled migration to Europe generated a new function for language: that of distinguishing between political refugees eligible for protection, and illegal economic migrants, and posed a new demand on linguistic communication between migrants and local populations, institutions and labour markets. Language requirements in the European Union cannot be applied to citizens of other member states as it was assumed that there is no “migration” between EU member states but “mobility”. Nevertheless, the high inflow and presence of citizens of other member states, expressed also in the form of presence of their languages, as in the case of Polish in the UK, may generate negative reactions, including deadly attacks on persons speaking a foreign language and desire to leave the EU (as in the case of Brexit).

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