

FORMS OF REFUGEE PROTECTION AND THEIR IMPACT ON THE SENSE OF SECURITY OF POLAND'S CITIZENS

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Abstract

The article focuses on the topic of refugees and their impact on society. It analyses both the refugee protection system and the scale of applying for and granting shelter to foreigners in Poland. Simultaneously, it draws attention to social attitudes and opinions on the reception of refugees and their possible impact on state security. The conclusions of the study point to a variety of perspectives and diverse approaches to this issue. The integration of refugees may bring opportunities for the country, but it also raises fears and controversies among the society regarding this topic. The article shows the complexity and multifaceted nature of the topic of refugees and their impact on the society. The theoretical analysis and empirical research provide valuable information that can contribute to a better understanding of migration and effective management of the refugee admission process in Poland. For the implementation of the research process, the following specific problems have been identified: 1) What is the theoretical basis for the refugee protection system? 2) What is the scale of applying for and granting shelter to foreigners in Poland? 3) What are the social opinions on the formation of a sense of security in connection with the presence of refugees on the territory of the Republic of Poland? Within the theoretical and cognitive methods, analysis and synthesis were applied, while for empirical research applied were the diagnostic survey method and inference.

Keywords: security, sense of security, migration, refugees, foreigners

1. Introduction

Nowadays, given global conflicts and crises, the situation of refugees around the world is becoming an increasingly pressing issue. Many people from different regions of the globe are forced to leave their homelands due to impending danger, political persecution or economic difficulties, seeking refuge in other countries. Poland,

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as a member of the international community, is not indifferent to this situation and has also faced the challenges of an influx of refugees. Migrants, foreigners and refugees are three different groups of people who move between countries, but they differ in terms of their legal status and reasons for migration: migrants are a general category of people who change their place of residence, foreigners are people who stay in a country but do not have citizenship, and refugees are people who seek refuge abroad because they fear for their lives, freedom or rights in their country of origin. In recent years, refugee issues have become the subject of intense social and political debate, but there is a need for a more comprehensive view of the problem. In this context, the aim of this research was to analyse forms of refugee protection in theoretical terms and to explore public opinion on the potential impact of refugees residing in Poland on Poles sense of security.

The article will analyse available data and documents on refugee protection in Poland. It will also present different perspectives and opinions on providing shelter to foreigners as well as the impact of the presence of refugees on the sense of security of the Polish society.

The research sample selection was non-representative using the purposive sampling method and consisted of a group of 60 respondents who were asked to complete an anonymous survey questionnaire. It contained a breakdown into five areas reflecting the formulated research problems. This paper presents only selected results of the research, collected for the preparation of the Master's thesis *The impact of refugees on the sense of security of Poles*.

The main research problem of the study assumed the question: What is the state of knowledge concerning the sense of security and the refugee phenomenon, and what are the public opinions on the potential impact of refugees residing in the territory of the Republic of Poland on the sense of security of the Poles? Within its decomposition, the following specific problems were identified:

1. What are the theoretical foundations of the refugee protection system?
2. What is the scale of applying for and granting shelter to foreigners in Poland?
3. What are the public opinions on the formation of a sense of security in relation to the presence of refugees on the territory of Poland?

A variety of methods, both theoretical and empirical ones, have been adopted to gather the necessary data to enable the research to be conducted. Among the theoretical-cognitive methods, analysis and synthesis were used, while the empirical research was based on diagnostic survey and inference methods. The article presents a significant scientific achievement, based mainly on the results of the empirical research carried out. In addition, a previous theoretical analysis has been carried out, based on selected literature sources, in order to better understand these results.

2. Refugee protection system – an overview

The problem of refugees has been the subject of interest and concern of the international community since the beginning of the second half of the 20th century. It was then that the definition of a refugee was codified in international law within the framework of the 1951 Geneva Convention. The beginning of the political transformation, initiated by the breakthrough in 1989, triggered an evolution related to the migration process, including refugees. The Republic of Poland began to transform from a state from which people were fleeing due to persecution into a safe state, ready to provide security and protection to those seeking it outside its borders. This section will discuss such forms of protection as: refugee status, subsidiary protection, temporary protection and other national forms of protection of foreigners that may be applied for by a foreigner staying in the territory of the Republic of Poland while fleeing from persecution to which he/she was exposed or suffered in the territory of his/her own country.

Under international law, the acquisition of refugee status takes place in two stages. The first one relates to the relevant facts affecting the individual's flight from the country. The second stage determines whether the definition of a refugee contained in the 1951 Geneva Convention and the 1967 New York Protocol can be applied to the facts so presented (Stawicki, 2019).

In the case of Poland, the position of a refugee depends on obligations that arise from relevant international agreements and domestic law. Within the borders of the Republic of Poland, foreigners may gain various forms of protection, for example against war or persecution. The basic form of international protection in Poland is the refugee status, apart from it there are also such forms of international protection as: subsidiary protection and temporary protection. In addition, foreigners may apply for forms of protection specified by national law, which include: asylum, a permit for tolerated stay and a residence permit for humanitarian reasons (Kowalczyk, 2014). The factors that influence the form of Poland's asylum policy are primarily its relations with the international community, from which certain minimum standards within refugee protection are derived. Poland's obligation to protect refugees largely stems from the 1951 Geneva Convention and the 1967 New York Protocol cited earlier, as well as other international agreements aimed at protecting human rights. In this respect, significant changes in the Polish law occurred in connection with Poland's accession to the European Union in 2004. Thus, our country undertook to introduce EU directives and regulations aimed at a certain integration of the asylum systems of Member States (Stawicki, 2019).

As mentioned in the introduction to this chapter, the Polish State acceded to the 1951 Geneva Convention as late as in 1991. Since then, Poland has been obliged to provide protection to refugees residing on its territory. This action was motivated by several considerations. Firstly, it was to take control of the

granting of refugee status by the UNHCR. Secondly, Poland was able to become a member of the Council of Europe (since 1991). Thirdly, having acceded to these two fundamental acts of international law, Poland was able to apply for and be a beneficiary of international funds intended to assist refugees. It is noteworthy, however, that the 1951 Geneva Convention defines only a minimum standard of protection for refugees. It allows states to introduce solutions (through national law), which are more favourable to refugees (Szwed, 2020).

The most important piece of internal Polish law giving the possibility of obtaining a refugee status is the 1997 Constitution of the Republic of Poland, under which, according to Article 56(2): “A foreigner who seeks protection from persecution in the Republic of Poland may be granted refugee status in accordance with international agreements binding on the Republic of Poland” (Polish Journal of Laws/Dz.U. of 1997, No. 78 item 483, as amended).

Pursuant to the applicable provisions of Polish law, a foreigner may apply for a refugee status in a situation where there is a justified fear of persecution in the foreigner’s country of origin due to race, religion, nationality, political opinion or membership of a particular social group, and where the foreigner concerned cannot or does not want to avail themselves of the protection of their country. Persecution as defined in Polish law covers various types of acts, which include (pursuant to art. 13 sec. 4 of the Act on granting protection to foreigners dated 2003): violation of human rights, physical, psychological and sexual violence or deprivation of the right to a court and the possibility to appeal against its verdict (Polish Journal of Laws/Dz.U. 2022, item 1264, 1383). It is clear that this type of action comes mainly on the initiative of the authorities of a given state, although it may also in some cases be the result of actions taken by specific social groups or other entities. The refugee status in the case of a positive decision concerning an application submitted by a foreigner is granted to him/her and his/her whole family, including minor children under the care of the refugee or his/her spouse (Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees, 1992).

A foreigner may be refused the refugee status if there is no objectively justified fear of persecution in the country of origin. This is also the case in a situation where there may be serious grounds to believe that the foreigner has committed a crime that would deprive him/her of the right to apply for refugee status. A foreigner may also be refused refugee status if he/she has acted contrary to the purposes and principles of the United Nations and if he/she is considered by the Republic of Poland as a person who has rights and obligations related to the possession of Polish citizenship.

If a foreigner has not been granted refugee status, he or she may apply for the so-called subsidiary protection when return to his or her home country would entail serious harm (this includes: the imposition of the death penalty or execution, torture and inhuman treatment, and threats to health and life resulting from widespread violence against civilians in the foreigner’s country of origin).

This form of protection, similarly to the refugee status, is tantamount to the Polish government's consent to the foreigner's stay on the territory of the Republic of Poland. An individual who has been granted both refugee status and subsidiary protection enjoys similar rights to those enjoyed by citizens of the Republic of Poland, and in many cases their rights are identical, for example: the right to work (Grzymała-Kozłowska, Stefańska, 2014). It should be emphasised, however, that a foreigner wishing to obtain refugee status has to meet more stringent conditions, which may be confirmed by the fact that the Head of the Office for Foreigners issues more decisions on granting subsidiary protection than on granting refugee status (Office for Foreigners, 2021).

The third possible form of protection granted to foreigners, under international protection, is the so-called temporary protection. It was introduced to the Polish legal order in 2003 and stemmed from the requirements of the Community law and applied to a situation in which foreigners could migrate en masse to the territory of Poland in search of a safe haven. In the case of temporary protection, the reasons for leaving one's country of origin may be: invasion, war (including civil war), ethnic conflicts or evident violations and infringements of human rights, regardless also of whether the foreigner's arrival was spontaneous or resulted from assistance provided by Poland or the international community (art. 106 of the Act on granting protection to foreigners dated 2003). The application of this form of protection is decided by the government of a given state or, if several EU states were to be covered by it, by the Council of the European Union. Temporary protection, unlike subsidiary protection and refugee status, has an "expiry date". It is granted until it becomes possible for the refugee to return to the country, but for no longer than one year, unless the reason for fleeing still remains valid. There is then the possibility of extending this protection for another six months, but only twice (Stawicki, 2019).

A significant development related to the issue of refugee protection at the international level was the adoption by the UN General Assembly in 2018 of the Global Compact on Refugees (GCR) document aimed at introducing solutions and mechanisms that are conducive for refugee protection. Poland, however, did not express support for the document, mainly due to concerns about attempts to pressure international organisations into joining global efforts to share responsibility for refugee protection, including accepting refugees through resettlement. In addition, the Polish policy emphasised a priority on the security of citizens, which conflicted with the approach promoted by the document. As a result, Poland chose a position of opposition (Grześkowiak, 2022).

On the other hand, referring to national forms of refugee protection, on the territory of the Republic of Poland and under its law, the following can be distinguished: asylum, a permit for tolerated stay and a residence permit for humanitarian reasons. In the case of asylum, it differs from international forms of protection. First of all, asylum has its origin in national law, and it can theoretically be granted to any foreigner regardless of the grounds. The political will of the state

authorities is sufficient, as stipulated in Article 90(1) of the Geneva Convention. It follows from the aforementioned article that any foreigner may apply for asylum if asylum will provide him/her with protection and if an important interest of the Republic of Poland is in favour of granting asylum to the given individual. The key premise is, in this case, "important interest"; this requirement stipulates that asylum is in fact granted very rarely and refers to few and important persons for the state, such as e.g. politicians or scientists (Chrzanowska, Gracz, 2007).

In turn, the permit for tolerated stay was introduced in 2003 and modelled on German solutions. Over the years and with the development of the Polish state, the Polish law, including refugee regulations, also kept developing. This gave rise to the need to separate from one form of protection, i.e. a permit for tolerated stay, to: a permit for humanitarian reasons and a permit for tolerated stay. These two forms of protection were regulated in the 2013 Act on Foreigners. They were originally granted when an individual could not be granted the refugee status, but such individual nevertheless required protection and could not be expelled from the territory of the Republic of Poland. As for a residence permit for humanitarian reasons, it is granted when the foreigner cannot return to the country because his/her return would entail a threat to his/her right to life and liberty. In comparison, a tolerated stay permit is granted when a foreigner cannot be granted a humanitarian residence permit (e.g. if the foreigner has committed a crime). In addition, this status may be granted if the foreigner cannot be sent back to his/her country of origin for reasons beyond the control of Poland or if he/she should be sent to a state to which his/her surrender is unacceptable (Klaus, 2017).

In conclusion, after the political reforms and accession to two fundamental acts of international law, i.e. the 1951 Geneva Convention and the 1967 New York Protocol, the process of dynamic development of the refugee protection system in Poland has started. Moreover, even if a given foreigner fails to fulfil the criteria enabling him/her to be protected in accordance with relevant international law, the Polish state offers him/her the possibility of benefitting from protection through solutions described in the domestic law. The national forms of protection of foreigners available in Poland (asylum, permit for tolerated stay and permit for humanitarian reasons), if the Polish authorities are in favour of a given foreigner, enable him/her to stay safely on the territory of the Republic of Poland and to exercise fundamental human rights and freedoms. This catalogue of forms of protection, described above, currently offers a wide range of possibilities to provide shelter and assistance to various categories of foreigners, including refugees.

3. Scale of application for and provision of shelter to foreigners in Poland

People migrate in search of refuge all over the world. A certain percentage of migrants reach the borders of the Republic of Poland for various reasons and take measures to make Poland a safe country for them. This subsection presents selected

statistics relating to: foreigners who have applied for international protection on the territory of the Republic of Poland; foreigners who have been granted international protection on the territory of the Republic of Poland, including refugee status; foreigners who have been refused international protection on the territory of the Republic of Poland; and foreigners who have been granted a permit for tolerated stay. In order to compare statistical data and attempt to identify possible trends or tendencies, a ten-year period (from 2010 to 2020) was selected for analytical research. It is pertinent to emphasise that the most up-to-date data found on the website of the Office for Foreigners (access: 20.11.2022) were used for the statistical analysis. In this case, the term “cudzoziemiec” (foreigner) means anyone who does not have Polish citizenship; this can apply both to a migrant and a refugee.

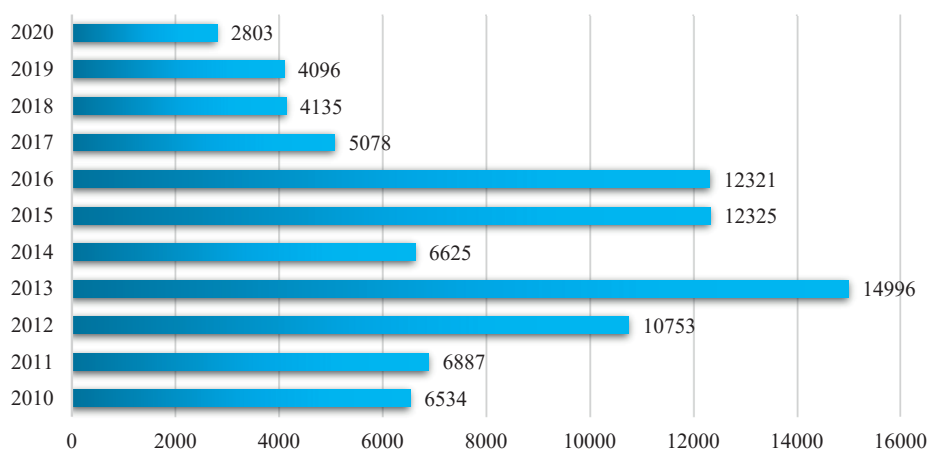


Figure 1. Foreigners applying for international protection on the territory of the Republic of Poland in the period of 2010-2020

Source: compiled on the basis of statistics from the Office for Repatriation and Aliens and the Office for Foreigners

The number of foreigners applying for international protection changed dynamically over the 2010-2020 period. A total of 86 553 persons applied for international protection during the entire period under study. The highest number was in 2013 – 14 996 persons, while the lowest was in 2020 – 2 803 persons. From 2010 (6 534 persons) to 2013 (14 966 persons), there was a marked increase of up to 129% in the number of foreigners applying for international protection, including refugee status. However, in 2014 the number more than doubled to 6 625 persons. After this the number of foreigners increased again between 2015 and 2016 (respectively: in 2015 – 12 325 applicants for protection and in 2016 – 12 321 applicants). Subsequently, the number of foreigners applying for safe shelter on the territory of the Republic of Poland began to decrease sharply. In 2017, 5 078 such persons were registered and their number was twice as low as in 2016. The following years (from 2017 onwards) saw the continuation of the downward trend until 2020 inclusive, in which the smallest number of persons of the entire analysed

decade applied for international protection, i.e. only 2,803 foreigners. In turn, the figure below illustrates how many foreigners were granted international protection (including refugee status) on the territory of the Republic of Poland.

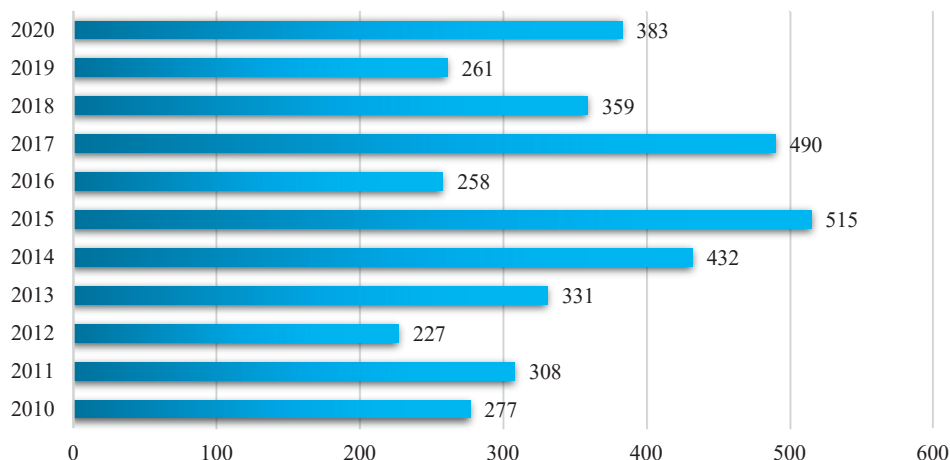


Figure 2. Number of foreigners who were granted international protection on the territory of the Republic of Poland (including refugee status) in the period of 2010-2020

Source: compiled on the basis of statistics from the Office for Repatriation and Aliens and the Office for Foreigners

The compiled data show that the number of foreigners who were granted international protection in Poland, including refugee status, in the decade under study was quite diverse, ranging from 227 persons (in 2012) to 515 persons (in 2015). A total of 3 841 foreigners were granted various forms of international protection. In 2011, an 11% increase in the number of foreigners granted this form of protection relative to 2010 is evident. After 2011, the number of such persons decreased by 26% (in 2012), followed by a renewed increase, on average by approximately 32%, in each subsequent year until 2015. In 2016; on the other hand, a sharp decrease relative to 2015 is evident, to only 258 foreigners granted international protection. While 2017 saw a fairly significant increase relative to 2016 (a 90% increase), in the following years the number steadily declined until 2019. In the last year under review, a renewed increase (at 47%) in the number of foreigners granted international protection in Poland is evident. As this category of foreigners seems to be particularly important, given the subject of the study, the results of the analysis of foreigners granted international protection on the territory of the Republic of Poland in terms of nationality and countries of origin are presented below.

Table 1. Foreigners granted international protection on the territory of the Republic of Poland (including refugee status) in the period of 2010-2020 according to their main country of origin

| Year | Country of Origin of Foreigners and their Percentage (%) | | |
|------|--|---------|--------------|
| | 2010 | Russia | Belarus |
| 77% | | 9% | 4% |
| 2011 | Russia | Belarus | Iraq |
| | 67% | 6% | 5% |
| 2012 | Russia | Belarus | Turkmenistan |
| | 67% | 6% | 3% |
| 2013 | Russia | Syria | Afghanistan |
| | 33% | 27% | 6% |
| 2014 | Syria | Russia | Kazakhstan |
| | 31% | 28% | 8% |
| 2015 | Syria | Russia | Iraq |
| | 39% | 24% | 9% |
| 2016 | Ukraine | Russia | Syria |
| | 26% | 26% | 16% |
| 2017 | Ukraine | Russia | Syria |
| | 52% | 18% | 6% |
| 2018 | Ukraine | Russia | Turkey |
| | 24% | 17% | 7% |
| 2019 | Russia | Turkey | Iraq |
| | 29% | 19% | 11% |
| 2020 | Turkey | Belarus | Russia |
| | 22% | 19% | 17% |

Source: compiled on the basis of statistics from the Office for Repatriation and Aliens and the Office for Foreigners

The compiled data shows that the main regions of origin of foreigners seeking refuge on the territory of the Republic of Poland are: Central and Eastern Europe and Eastern Europe, as well as the Middle East. Russians were the most frequent beneficiaries of international protection during the period under study, being the dominant group of refugees five times, and were invariably among the top three nationalities fleeing to Poland between 2010 and 2020. The large scale of forced migration of Russians to Poland is also evidenced by the fact that their lowest percentage was 17% in 2018 and 2020, meaning that almost one in five refugees in those years was Russian, while their highest percentage was as high as 77% (2010 data). Other nations frequently fleeing to Poland from the east were Belarusians,

Ukrainians, Kazakhs and citizens of Turkmenistan. It is impossible not to notice that, together with Russians, these were citizens of the former Soviet Union. In the context of the Middle East, on the other hand, Syrians led the way and were twice (2014 and 2015) the largest group of refugees in Poland. Turks, whose numbers have been steadily increasing since 2018, as well as Iraqis and Afghans, were also numerous groups originating from the region. In turn, figure 3 presents data on the number of foreigners who were refused international protection between 2010 and 2020.

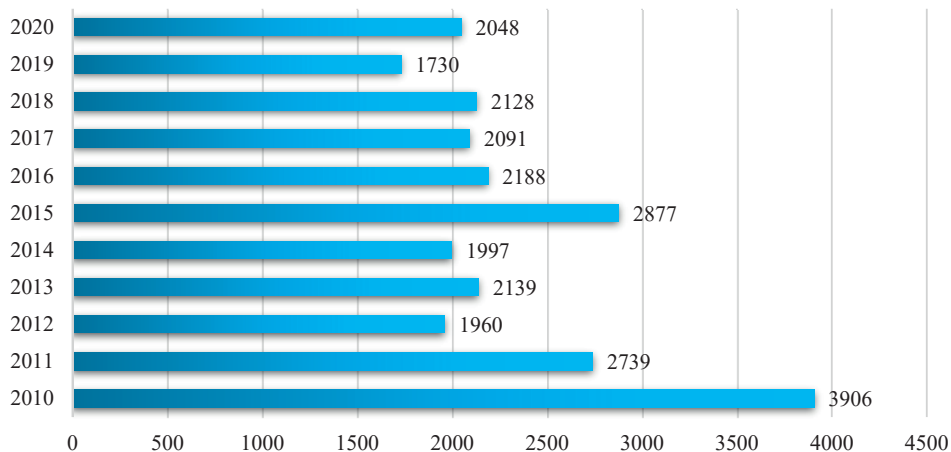


Figure 3. Number of foreigners refused international protection between 2010 and 2020

Source: compiled on the basis of statistics from the Office for Repatriation and Aliens and the Office for Foreigners

As can be seen from the above figure, the number of foreigners who were refused international protection on the territory of the Republic of Poland between 2010 and 2020 totalled 25,803 persons. The largest recorded number of such persons was in 2010, as many as 3906, while the smallest number was in 2019 – 1730, and that was a decrease of 56%. In 2010, 2011 and 2015 the number of foreigners who were refused international protection was higher than the average for the examined period, i.e. 2346 persons. It is worth recalling here that a foreigner is refused the status of refugee, inter alia, for the following reasons: there is no well-founded fear of persecution in the country of origin; there are serious reasons to believe that he/she has committed, for example, a crime against peace, a war crime or a crime against humanity under international law. In contrast, a foreigner shall be refused subsidiary protection, in particular if: there is a risk of serious harm or he/she has committed a crime on the territory of the Republic of Poland or has committed, outside this territory, an act which is a crime under Polish law. Figure 4 presents the number of foreigners who were granted a permit for tolerated stay between 2010 and 2020.

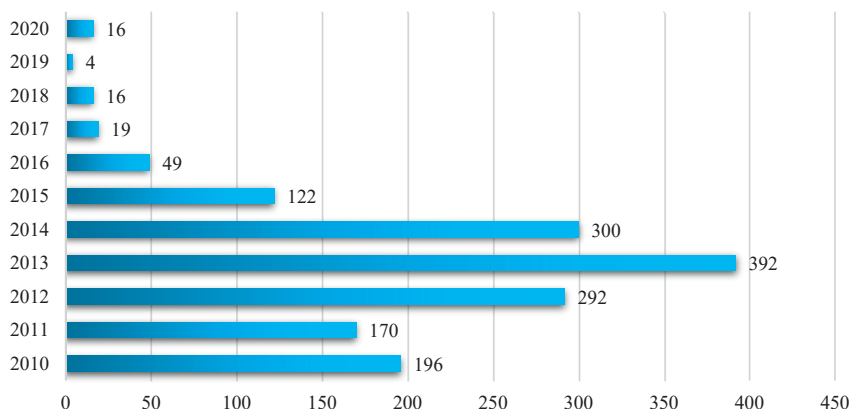


Figure 4. Number of foreigners who were granted a permit for tolerated stay between 2010 and 2020

Source: compiled on the basis of statistics from the Office for Repatriation and Aliens and the Office for Foreigners

A permit for tolerated stay in Poland was granted to 1576 foreigners in the analysed period. The largest number of such persons was recorded in 2013 – 392, while the smallest was in 2019 – only 4, which is 1% of the 2013 number. In 2010, the number of foreigners who were granted a permit for tolerated stay amounted to 196 persons, after which it decreased by 26 persons, i.e. by 13% in 2011 in relation to 2010. Then, until 2013, an increase in the number of such foreigners was noticeable, first by 42% in 2012 in relation to the previous year, and then by 26% in 2013 in relation to the previous year. Subsequent years were characterised by a steady decrease in the number of foreigners who received a permit for tolerated stay. From 2013 to 2019, the number decreased by as much as 99%. The last surveyed year (2020) was characterised by an increase – in relation to the previous year, by 12 persons who received this form of national protection.

In the surveyed years 2010–2020, in which foreigners were granted or denied international or national protection, a double appearance of waves of migrants may be observed. This prompts, therefore, the question: what was the reason for these migration processes? Answering this question, it can be noted that the first wave took place in 2012–2013. Its genesis can be traced to the civil war in Syria, which began in 2011. The second wave of migrants, on the other hand, took place in 2015–2016, when the refugee crisis occurred, as a result of which the countries of the European Union were flooded with foreigners arriving from various directions. While foreigners from the Middle East and North Africa fled to Western European countries, Poland became a safe haven for refugees from the East. In addition, 2015 and 2016 were also characterized by events such as the escalation of the conflict in Ukraine and the elections in Belarus, which also largely affected the scale of migration. In conclusion, it can be said that Poland, being an external border of the European Union and the Schengen area, as well as having an unstable neighbourhood, should be aware that every few years there may be

further inflows of migrants, including refugees. This stems in particular from the advancing processes of globalization, which facilitate movement not only between countries, but also distant continents.

4. The formation of the sense of security in relation to the presence of refugees on the territory of the Republic of Poland

Nowadays, due to the dynamically changing political, social and economic situation, the issue of migration and refugees is becoming more and more topical. In Poland, similarly as in many other countries, there is a lot of controversy surrounding the reception of refugees and migrants, and the sense of security is one of the key elements shaping public opinion on the subject. Therefore, the question of how refugees are perceived by Poles and what are their opinions on the formation of the sense of security arising from the presence of migrants on the territory of our country is becoming increasingly important. In order to solve another research problem, respondents were asked the following question: who, in your opinion, can be considered as a refugee? The distribution of the answers given is illustrated in figure 5.

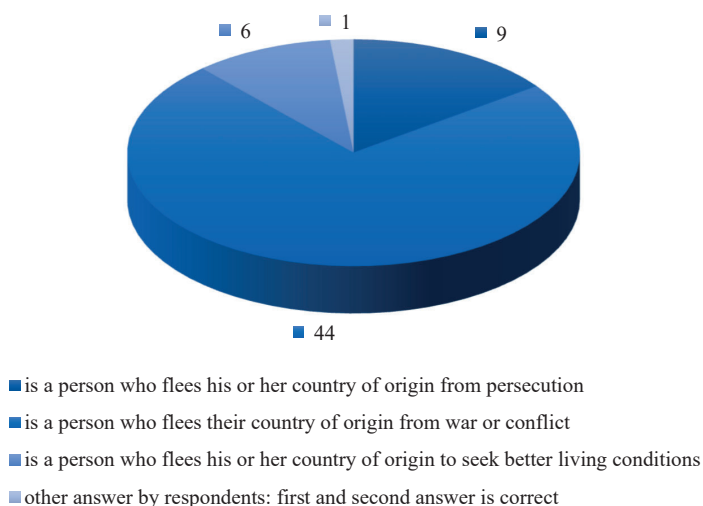


Figure 5. Interpretation of the term refugee

The compiled data show that a refugee was most often perceived as a person fleeing war or an armed conflict in their country of origin (44 indications). This may be due to the fact that in recent years many armed conflicts around the world have led to an exodus of refugees. 9 respondents expressed the view that this is a person fleeing persecution from their country of origin. In contrast, 6 respondents described a refugee as a person who flees his or her country of origin

in search of better living conditions. Only one respondent gave his own answer, stating that both of the first two answers were correct. Respondents were then asked to rate the impact of refugees on Poland's security (1 – do not present any danger, 5 – present a very high risk).

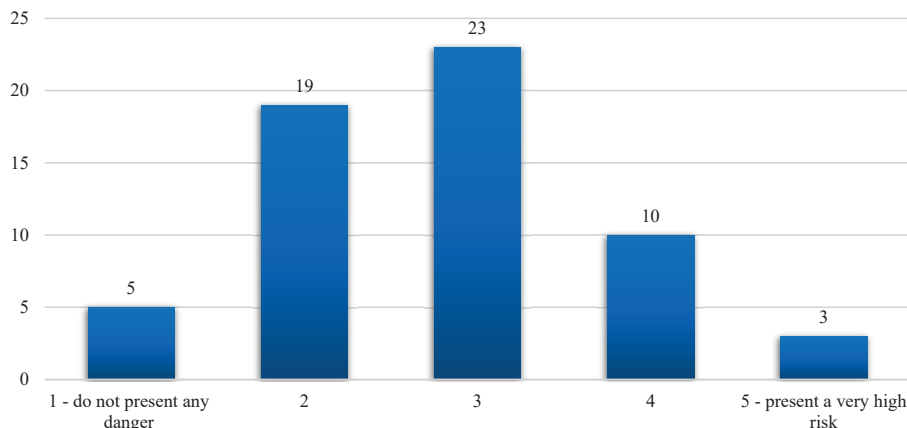


Figure 6. The impact of refugees on Poland's security

Most respondents – 23 people – rated the impact of refugees on Poland's security at 3 points, suggesting that refugees, in their view, do not pose a significant threat to our country's security. Less than a fifth of respondents (19 people) felt that refugees pose a certain threat, but not a very serious one. In addition, 10 respondents rated the surveyed relationship at 4 points, which allows the conclusion that in their opinion refugees posed a serious threat to the country. At the same time, 5 respondents were convinced that refugees posed no threat at all. In turn, according to 3 people, refugees posed a very serious threat to our country. The intention of the survey was also to diagnose opinions on how Poland should treat refugees.

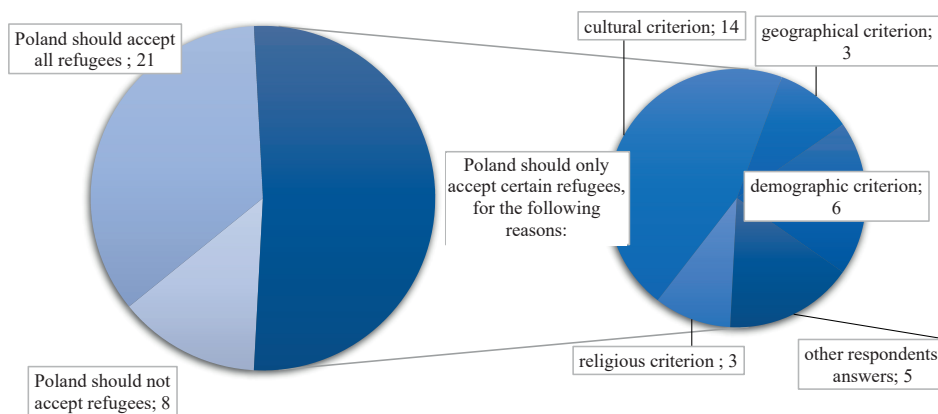


Figure 7. Opinions on how Poland should treat refugees

The figure consists of three parts, each representing a different response option for respondents. 8 people were in favour of Poland not accepting any refugees. However, 21 respondents held the opposite view, namely that Poland should accept all refugees. On the other hand, a third group consisted of respondents who believed that Poland should accept refugees, but only some of them. All of these respondents indicated the cultural criterion as one of key importance, 6 respondents indicated the demographic criterion, 3 respondents indicated the religious criterion and 3 respondents indicated the geographical criterion. In addition, 5 respondents suggested their own criteria, such as war, security, financial situation, economic suitability or authenticity of refugee status. The obtained data allow the presumption that the respondents had different approaches to the issue of migration and refugees. At the end of this component of the survey, respondents were asked to indicate whether they would feel safe in their place of residence if Poland accepted more refugees.

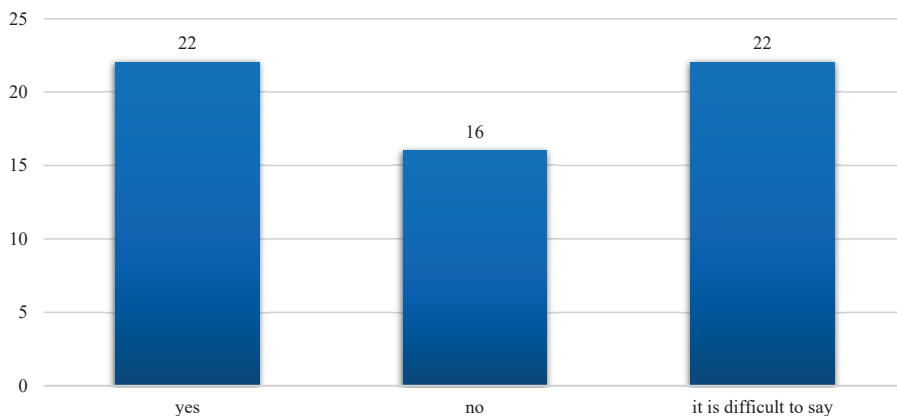


Figure 8. The level of security at the place of residence in case Poland accepts more refugees

The above figures indicate that 22 respondents said they would feel safe if Poland took in more refugees. 16 respondents said they would not feel safe in such a situation. Furthermore, 22 respondents were unable to clearly define their position in this regard. The responses provided by the respondents confirmed considerable differences in attitudes adopted towards accepting refugees by Poles.

In summary, respondents had different attitudes toward refugees and migration. They most often associated the term refugee with people who are fleeing their country due to war or armed conflict. However, a clear division emerged on the question of the impact exerted by refugees on Poland's security, with some respondents convinced that refugees pose no threat, while others said they pose a serious threat. As regards the question of how refugees should be treated, on the other hand, there were also different approaches, but most respondents were of the opinion that Poland should accept only certain refugees, with various criteria for

their selection, ranging from cultural to economic ones. In terms of safety where they live if Poland accepts more refugees, assessments also varied, with some respondents feeling safe and others feeling the opposite.

5. Conclusions

The research topic undertaken with respect to refugees and their impact on society is extremely important from a number of perspectives. First of all, as a member of the European Union, Poland has a moral and legally binding obligation to comply with relevant international conventions and agreements on human rights and refugee protection. Given the global migration crisis, this is an important shared responsibility to provide protection and assistance. The refugee issue also touches on fundamental human rights, such as the right to life, liberty and security. In this context, Poland, guided by humanitarian values, should show empathy and solidarity towards refugees who seek safe haven on its territory.

Hosting refugees also has an impact on the host society. Integration of refugees can create opportunities for mutual understanding, cultural exchange and building a society based on diversity. However, adequate support from local communities and building bridges of understanding and intercultural dialogue are essential. Nevertheless, the refugee issue also generates strong emotions and controversy in society. Analysing attitudes and opinions toward refugees can provide valuable information about public sentiment, educational and psychological needs and challenges to acceptance and integration. This is important for managing these issues and avoiding divisions and social conflicts.

In the international context, a responsible approach to the refugee issue can help strengthen Poland's role as an active participant in the European and international legal order. Building a reputation as a country committed to solving global challenges can help increase Poland's influence in politics, diplomacy and international cooperation.

The first specific problem was: what is the theoretical basis for the refugee protection system? The protection system for modern refugees is based on an elaborate scheme of legal frameworks, including both international conventions and domestic law. The main piece of legislation is the 1951 Geneva Convention, which codified the definition of a refugee and defined the rights and obligations of states towards refugees. Poland acceded to the Convention in 1991. There are various forms of protection, such as refugee status, subsidiary protection, temporary protection and national forms of protection: asylum, tolerated stay permit and humanitarian residence permit. Granting of protection is based on a case-by-case assessment, taking into account the circumstances of flight, a well-founded fear of persecution and other factors. In addition, refugee protection applications must meet legal requirements and be supported by credible evidence. The refugee protection system also involves various actors: state authorities, international

organizations, government agencies and non-governmental organizations, and their cooperation is crucial to the effective functioning of the system and the provision of protection and support to refugees. The findings underscore the importance of the functioning of the protection system for today's refugees to provide a dignified and safe haven for those who must leave their countries due to persecution or danger.

The second research problem was in the form of the following question: what is the scale of applying for and providing shelter to foreigners in Poland? As a border state of the European Union, Poland has experienced an influx of migrants from various regions, both from the Middle East and North Africa, as well as from eastern regions such as Russia, Belarus and Ukraine. This suggests that migration and the granting of international protection are dynamic processes that are subject to change. Analysing changes in the number of applications for international protection over the period covered by the study, one can see periods of increasing and decreasing migration, which are often linked to global events such as armed conflicts or political crises. This confirms that migration is a multidimensional phenomenon, the result of complex political, social and economic interactions. As a border country, Poland must be prepared for such changes and adapt its migration and protection policies in response to emerging needs and challenges. These conclusions underscore the importance of a holistic approach to migration, taking into account political as well as social and humanitarian aspects. It is also important to conduct long-term research and monitor changes in migration in order to better understand the phenomenon and take appropriate action.

The last specific problem was formulated as follows: What are the public views on the formation of a sense of security in connection with the presence of refugees on the territory of Poland? Analysing the results of the survey, it can be concluded that the public perception of refugees is diverse and multifaceted. Respondents indicate different definitions of refugees, but most of them identify refugees with people fleeing their country due to war or armed conflicts. This shows that there is an understanding of the need to help those who are forced to leave their homelands because of danger. Furthermore, opinions on the impact of refugees on Poland's security are divided. Some respondents believe that the presence of refugees does not pose a serious threat to the country, while others have concerns and are convinced that a risk does exist. This indicates a divergence in the public perception of the impact of migration on the country's stability and security. Another important aspect is the diversity of opinions on how refugees should be treated. Some respondents favour not accepting refugees, while others favour openness and accepting all people. There is also a group of people who believe that Poland should select the refugees it accepts according to diverse criteria, such as culture, demographics, religion or geography. This shows that opinions on this subject also vary and are based on different perspectives and values. In addition, differences are also evident in the assessment of safety at home in case more refugees are accepted. Respondents express different reactions, with some feeling

safe, while others fear that their safety could be threatened. Many are unable to clearly define their position on the issue. This, in turn, points to the existence of disparities and individual experiences as well as concerns as to the impact of migration on local security. In conclusion, the results of the survey indicate the complexity and diversity of public opinions on the presence of refugees in Poland. There are multiple perspectives, which may be based on experiences, values or fears. Understanding these perspectives and continuing to discuss the issue openly is key to finding a balance between the humanitarian needs of refugees and concerns about the country's security and stability.

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FORMY OCHRONY UCHODźCÓW I ICH WPŁYW NA POCZUCIE BEZPIECZEŃSTWA POLAKÓW

Abstrakt

Artykuł koncentruje się na tematyce uchodźców i ich wpływu na społeczeństwo. Analizuje zarówno system ochrony uchodźców, jak i skalę ubiegania się i udzielenia schronienia cudzoziemcom w Polsce. Jednocześnie zwraca uwagę na postawy społeczne oraz opinie na temat przyjmowania uchodźców i ich ewentualnego wpływu na bezpieczeństwo kraju. Wnioski z badania wskazują na różnorodność perspektyw i zróżnicowane podejścia do tego zagadnienia. Integracja uchodźców może nieść szanse dla kraju, ale wywołuje także obawy i kontrowersje w społeczeństwie dotyczące tego tematu. Artykuł wskazuje na kompleksowość i wieloaspektowość tematu uchodźców oraz ich wpływu na społeczeństwo. Analiza teoretyczna i badania empiryczne dostarczają wartościowych informacji, które mogą przyczynić się do lepszego zrozumienia migracji i skutecznego zarządzania procesem przyjmowania uchodźców w Polsce. Na potrzeby realizacji procesu badawczego określono następujący wydzielone problemy szczegółowe: 1) Jakie są podstawy teoretyczne dotyczące systemu ochrony uchodźców? 2) Jak przedstawia się skala ubiegania i udzielenia schronienia cudzoziemcom w Polsce? 3) Jakie są opinie społeczne na temat kształtowania się poczucia bezpieczeństwa w związku z obecnością uchodźców na terytorium RP? W obrębie metod teoretyczno-poznawczych zastosowano metody: analizy i syntezy, natomiast do badań empirycznych wykorzystano: metodę sondażu diagnostycznego i wnioskowania.

Słowa kluczowe: bezpieczeństwo, poczucie bezpieczeństwa, migracje, uchodźcy, cudzoziemcy