

Language Policy in Practice: Re-bordering the Nation

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ABSTRACT

We present findings from an anthropological field study on the role of language and language policy in migration from Poland to Norway, and the larger implications for emerging language and immigration policy in Europe. Initial fieldwork in Norway found that Polish workers without knowledge of the Norwegian language struggled to secure employment in the formal economy. The 2008 financial crisis intensified competition in the labour market and underscored fluency in Norwegian as a means of discriminating among workers. Comparative case studies of language schools revealed that these organizations are active participants in channeling Polish migrants' movements into a segmented labour market, often in ways that involve cooperation between private companies and the State. We frame the Norwegian case within the larger context of Europe and the trend there toward favoring integration over multiculturalism. The emergence of restrictive language policies in Europe may be interpreted as a legally and culturally acceptable means for discouraging access to rights associated with permanent residency or citizenship by work migrants from CEE countries, while at the same time permitting them access to the labour market for temporary work. The long-term consequences of such policies for European society are uncertain.

INTRODUCTION

Europe is an important region for the study of transnational migration¹ and language, given a history of intensive contact and conflict, succeeded by a modern era of planned regional integration (Barbour and Carmichael, 2000). An especially interesting case is the recent (May 1, 2004) expansion of the European Union (EU) to include eight new Central and Eastern European (CEE) member nations² (referred to hereafter as the Accession). Nations in Western Europe welcomed CEE workers to fill jobs that their own citizens did not care to take (Plewa, 2007), but there have been concerns about the long-term implications of a large influx of workers from countries with different cultural and linguistic traditions (Eurofound 2010).

Increases in migration flows and concerns regarding the integration of migrants have led several countries to rethink their policies favoring multiculturalism and to adopt new standards for naturalization (Bloemraad, 2006:233–234). This has manifested in the fear that open borders might create a competitive imbalance, especially a phenomenon known as “social dumping,”³ referring to the creation of a discriminated-against lower tier of migrant workers who do not receive the same wages,

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benefits, and social welfare rights as native workers, which could give rise to a new “servant class” in the West (Pijpers, 2006; Wintour, 2009; Favell, 2008:711). This challenged the social norms underpinning the European welfare state and led to the enactment of “transitional laws” in most EU member nations that partially closed labour markets to workers from CEE nations for at least two years following Accession.

Some nations in Northern Europe have made changes in their residency, citizenship, or immigration laws that include language requirements and demonstrations of an acceptance of the nation’s “core values” (Bloemraad, 2006). The prominent position of language among these standards has led some observers to interpret the phenomenon as “linguistic nationalism” (Stevenson, 2006). Laws requiring language tests as a condition for residency or citizenship suggest that some nation-states intended to strengthen a nationalist or culturally homogeneous orientation despite open border provisions, seemingly illustrating Hollifield’s (2004:887) notion of attempting to equilibrate a “liberal paradox” (i.e. economic liberalism in matters of trade, contrasted with political closure with respect to immigration). Though it is debatable whether such policy restricts migration (Massey et al., 1998; Castles and Miller, 2009), language capital⁴ is increasingly recognized for its role in mediating migration pathways (Williams et al., 2004:31).

Here we present findings from an anthropological field study on the role of language and language policy in transnational migration from Poland to Norway. Although Norway is not a member of the European Union, it is linked to the EU’s policies through membership of the European Economic Area (EEA), which requires Norway to open its labour market to EU workers. While Norway once was considered an emigration country, its status as one of Europe’s wealthiest nations, abundant energy resources, and social welfare policies have made it an attractive destination for workers from CEE nations.

Our fieldwork in Norway and Poland was conducted over a 22-month period, from December 2008 to October 2010, during the aftermath of the 2008 financial crisis. During the initial period of our study, we found that migrant Polish workers without knowledge of the Norwegian language struggled to secure employment in the formal economy. We postulated that the financial crisis revealed the salience of the native language as a key factor in the experiences of transnational work migrants, intensifying competition in the labour market and underscoring native language fluency as a means of selection. We argue that language may be emerging as a boundary phenomenon that is used by institutional actors (e.g. employers, the State) to discriminate among migrants.

Our study adopts an institutional approach, which views economic phenomenon such as transnational work migration as an integral aspect of social and cultural practice (Wilk, 1996; Heidenreich, 1998; Scott, 2008). This provides an empirical exploration and interpretation of the perspectives of actors and their interactions. Key actors in this study include individuals and their networks, formal organizations, and the State, all of whom are attempting to advance their interests through transnational migration (Plewa, 2007). An important research objective is to identify the rules, norms, and cultural-cognitive frames that motivate, constrain, and differentiate actors’ interests and agency (Scott, 2008).

Our initial focus was not language or language policy, but migrants’ work experiences. Our research participants pointed us toward a principal sector of the migration industry – language schools. Understanding whose interests they represent; what their goals, practices, and outcomes might be; how these are rationalized; and their significance to various players is a focal point of this paper. We compare case studies of three language schools – one offered by a private firm, one offered by Polish migrants themselves, and one offered by municipal governments in Norway. We reframe the debate opened by Hollifield’s (2004) notion of the “liberal paradox” (economic openness vs. political closure) and suggest that the schools represent different institutional responses to the State’s linguistic policy, with each embedding a unique set of sorting mechanisms that offer different visions of incorporation.

TRANSNATIONAL WORK MIGRATION AND LANGUAGE POLICY: RECENT LITERATURE

Language knowledge and skill are significant factors in shaping economic and social outcomes for transnational work migrants and their destination countries (Chiswick, 1991, 2008; Chiswick and Miller, 2001; Dustman, 1999; Pendakur and Pendakur, 2002; Hawthorne, 2005). Proficiency in the majority language influences earnings, job placement, and promotion (Chiswick and Miller, 1995; Bach, 2003; Allen et al., 2004; Cardu, 2007) and might be necessary to assure safety or security in a given workplace (Bach, 2003). Increasingly, it is recognized that skills are socially constructed, reflecting negotiations regarding the value and significance of human capital (Csedo, 2008:803). Employers, for example, may prefer to hire individuals with perceived “soft” skills (qualities such as motivation or subservience) that they believe will best meet their needs (Moss and Tilly, 1996; Waldinger and Lichter, 2003; Rudnyckij, 2004).

National policies pertaining to language skills play an important role in shaping the flow of migrants over borders (Chiswick and Hatton, 2002). Such policies attempt to select for or against migrants based upon language capital characteristics (Taylor et al., 1996; Hawthorne, 2005). High levels of unemployment may give rise to immigration stops, requirements for literacy tests, or immigration quotas. Many nations interlink their migration control and language policies, either directly or indirectly (Salt et al., 2004).

Language policy reflects the broader construct of language ideology (defined as “shared bodies of commonsense notions about the nature of language in the world”; Ramsøy, 1990:346; Woolard, 1998:3–4) by highlighting links between language and identity, morality, and power relations, and providing insights into the relations between institutions such as governing bodies, laws, and educational organizations. It also reflects community values regarding “identity and allegiance that are indexed by language use” (Woolard, 1998:16) that may not be expressed (or even permitted) in migration policy. With the possible exception of English, which serves as a global conductor of migration, languages are associated with national, ethnic, or cultural traditions that must continue to remain intact if the public is to be “strong” (Stevenson, 2006:160). Discrimination on linguistic grounds may be publicly acceptable where ethnic or racial discrimination is not (Gumperz, 1992). Large-scale migrations create challenges to sovereignty that threaten national integrity. With the movement of people comes the movement of languages (Stevenson, 2006:1). In such cases, a “dogma of homogeneity” may emerge in which intergroup (language) differences are viewed as damaging or dangerous (Blommaert and Verschuere, 1998:194–195).

NORWEGIAN LANGUAGE AND IMMIGRATION POLICY

The relationship between a nation’s language policy and other critical aspects of national interest such as immigration policy are reflected in the evolution of Norwegian policy. Norway did not have a formal language policy related to immigration until the 1970s, when guest workers from culturally and linguistically distant nations started to arrive in significant numbers. Then, the Norwegian State started providing free-of-charge courses in Norwegian language and society that were directed mainly toward adult work immigrants. As guest workers increasingly settled and problems arose regarding social integration, Norway implemented a “migration stop” policy aimed at restricting the number of workers migrating from developing countries. When Norway began to accept political refugees and asylum seekers during the 1980s and 1990s, language policies changed to reflect this humanitarian shift, and political refugees were accepted into the free-of-charge language and society classes.

The State assumed responsibility for providing language classes to facilitate social orientation and integration of persons that it had selected for entry, gradually adjusting its policies based on categories of immigrants and the nature of their stay. This effort to select and provide orientation for migrants through language and society training could be viewed as a policy manifestation of an ideally “homogeneous” (Ramsøy, 1968) or “egalitarian” society (Barnes, 1978; Gullestad, 1989, 1992), with “equality” being interpreted in this context as “sameness” (Klausen, 1984; Lien, Lidèn and Vike, 2001).

The Accession appears to have ushered in a new era in the relationship between Norwegian immigration and language policies. In the post-Accession era, Norway established language policies that separate immigrants into three distinct groupings, each of which have different rights and obligations with respect to participation in language and social studies courses.

- The first group has *both a right and an obligation* to participate in Norwegian language and social studies classes, free of charge. This group includes individuals granted residency on humanitarian grounds, and it is reasoned that they have less potential to finance their own learning, and the public has a special responsibility to help this group to become integrated into Norwegian society.
- The second group has *no right to free tuition but has an obligation* to complete language and social studies classes. This group includes labour migrants from outside the EEA/EFTA⁵ area and family reunions with these persons. The rationale is that work migrants relocate voluntarily, and that they have employment earnings that can be used to pay for classes and employers who have an interest in helping them learn Norwegian.
- A third group has *neither a right nor an obligation* to participate in language or social studies classes. This group includes students, au pairs, and others with temporary residence; Nordic citizens; and persons with residence pursuant to EEA/EFTA rules. Among these groups, temporary workers are not expected to integrate socially, Nordic citizens probably speak a mutually intelligible language already, and EEA/EFTA citizens cannot be barred from moving freely across borders for work. If these persons wish to become citizens, however, they must complete 300 hours of Norwegian (or Sami) language and social studies courses or demonstrate their knowledge of Norwegian by other means.

This policy continues Norway’s tradition of accepting humanitarian migrants, but it no longer offers free State-sponsored language and social studies classes to other immigrants. Thus, while language policy once served as a means to integrate immigrants into Norwegian society, language laws have become a culturally acceptable means of discrimination. The Norwegian State selects migrants that it desires, and it requires others to jump over a high bar without State assistance.

WORK MIGRATION FROM POLAND TO NORWAY

It is against this backdrop that we launched our pilot study of Polish work migrants in Norway in December 2008.⁶ In 2004, Poland had the highest unemployment rate in the EU (over 20%), and the number of work permits issued by the Norwegian Directorate of Immigration to Polish workers increased nearly 1,000 per cent between 2004 and 2009.⁷ Between 1990 and 2009 Poland was the origin of more immigrants to Norway than any other nation, and of the foreign nationals living in Norway in 2010, Poland had the largest number. Poland also topped the list of family immigration to Norway between 2001 and 2009 (Thorud et al., 2010). A recent survey conducted in the Trondheim region of mid-Norway reported that six out of ten Polish labour migrants who are formally employed work in the construction sector (Torvatn and Buvik, 2011:16).

Flows of work migrants from Poland into Norway after 1990 are part of a larger process through which nations of Western Europe accepted temporary foreign workers at the end of the Cold War (Castles and Miller, 2009). Advocates of temporary foreign worker programs (TFWPs) argued that such policies would support political and economic transformation in origin countries by relieving unemployment, and would benefit destination countries by relieving labour shortages (Plewa, 2007:19). But when companies and agencies began to hire Polish workers on terms that were less favorable than those received by Norwegian nationals, this fueled competition between national and foreign workers, triggered fears of social dumping, and created public demands for protection of workers' rights (e.g. health, safety and working environment regulations).

The outcry was answered through a government Action Plan (Handlingsplan) designed to ensure that companies offered equitable pay and working conditions to employees, regardless of nationality; to ensure that laws, regulations, and collective bargaining agreements were carried out; and to impose sanctions for non-compliance (see Thorud et al., 2010:21). Norway's efforts to treat Polish workers fairly included granting them welfare benefits if they had been employed for one year or more and then lost their jobs, but a financial crisis that began in 2008 revealed a policy paradox. The majority of these workers did not speak Norwegian, rendering them unable to find alternative employment and therefore fairly persistently attached to the welfare rolls. By separating Polish "guest workers" (Castles, 2006) from social integration services such as free language training courses, the Norwegian State may have helped foster the conditions for social dumping. A complex network of actions and interactions among various actors, including migration industry organizations and the migrants themselves, probably also contributed to the situation. Our research is oriented toward the exploration of these phenomena.

DATA AND METHODS

Our methodology is influenced by institutional ethnography (DeVault and McCoy, 2002:755), which draws from the everyday experiences of individual actors. From their subjective accounts, we identified institutional and organizational phenomena that were central to shaping their migration experiences, which we studied in a second phase. They focused our attention on the role the Norwegian language played in their work experience and on organizations that support language learning. This directed us to look into language policy and its implementation in local practice and to interview policy administrators during the third phase of research. Our intent was to identify key actors, understand their points of view, and examine how they interacted both locally and trans-locally.

Phase one research was conducted in and around a medium-sized city in the western region between December 2008 and May 2009. Our primary data source was semi-structured ethno-historical interviews with eleven Polish migrants who were working or actively seeking work in Norway. Interviewees were identified through a snowball sampling technique.⁸ The method focused on the individual's experience as a work migrant, with an opening grand tour question and follow-up probes for clarification. Additional interviews were conducted to follow developments in job seeking and changes in jobs over time.

The second phase, conducted between February and April 2010, involved site visits to language schools; interviews with and observations of students, teachers, and administrators in three locations; and research on the schools conducted through web searches. We interviewed eleven students, five teachers, three directors or administrators, and two consultants involved in the schools. This phase uncovered two municipalities in Norway that were offering language classes free of charge to EEA work migrants (mainly Polish).

The third phase was made up of interviews conducted between May and October 2010. We interviewed five local level policy administrators to gain a better understanding of the rationale for offering language classes free of charge to unemployed Polish migrants.

Data analysis procedures included transcription of recorded interviews, coding of transcripts and notes, and qualitative data analysis techniques using both computer-aided and manual procedures. We also engaged in extensive analytic journaling as a means of summarizing partial findings, posing further questions, and laying out next steps.

PHASE ONE FINDINGS: NORWEGIAN LANGUAGE LEARNING AND EMPLOYMENT

Generally, those interviewees who engaged in highly skilled work indicated that learning Norwegian was essential to gaining employment, while those who performed less skilled work found that a working knowledge of Norwegian was usually preferred. One service contractor noted: “I was working as an English teacher in Poland.. .. [But] I was told by the cleaning companies that I applied to that I had to speak Norwegian; the job agencies said the same thing.” Learning Norwegian was described as a rigorous, time-consuming, and expensive endeavor. The construction contractors who circulated between Norway and Poland were the only interviewees who were able to work without learning the language.

Because the Norwegian language is salient to obtaining skilled employment, language training in and around Norway serves as an aspect of the migration industry (Garapich, 2008:738). Our Phase 1 interviewees described three types of language schools: 1) an intensive immersion school offered by an entrepreneurial firm and sponsored by Norwegian employers; 2) a voluntary association-based school that provides informal courses; 3) and a public sector-financed school that reaches out to specific migrant populations. We postulated that language schools could be important social actors, and therefore what interests they represent, how they interact with migrants, and how they enable migrants to construct and negotiate language skill across boundaries became a focus of the next phase of our research.

PHASE TWO FINDINGS: LANGUAGE SCHOOLS, KEY ACTORS, AND INTERACTIONS

In our analysis of ethnographic data, we present case studies of each of three types of language schools identified by our research participants and endeavor to understand the perspectives and interactions of key institutional actors involved in each of these schools (i.e. migrants, schools, and the state). Our goals in this phase were to consider the interactions of these actors within the context of Norway’s post-Accession language policy. We were especially interested in how the schools interact with migrants in negotiating the language boundary and the resulting potential implications for workers’ future prospects and Norwegian society.

Case 1: employer-sponsored language school in departure country

The three principal actors involved in this language school are a tax revenue-based Norwegian hospital consortium (a public sector actor); an entrepreneurial firm led by a Polish expatriate (a private firm); and individual Polish physicians who elect to emigrate to Norway (professionals). Together they comprise a supply-demand market situation, connected by a private-sector transaction agent

(the firm). They exemplify the aspect of Norwegian policy that suggests that employers should support the language training of employees.

One of the Authorities that provide hospital services in western and northern Norway contracted with a small Polish-Swedish firm to recruit physicians from abroad. The firm was to provide a bundle of services, including candidate screening, Norwegian language and culture training, and relocation services. The firm's website claims that they expect that clients will eventually repatriate and take new knowledge and skills back to their home countries. This statement is somewhat coloured by the fact that the website also offers "Permanent Placement" services. The ambiguous nature of transnational relocation and repatriation that involves learning a new language is reflected in these divergent representations.

Candidates who pass the screening are given a conditional contract, and the firm guarantees that they will be capable of practising at European language level B by graduation. They are relocated to the Warsaw campus, where they study in small cohorts, generally of five to eight students.

The program is highly intensive, including four full days and one half day per week of classes and a significant amount of out-of-classroom work. After they move, students continue their training on Skype. Students displaying weaknesses receive individual tutoring to address the underlying issues. If an individual physician is not successful in making the transition to Norway, then he or she is expected to repay a loan for living expenses.

Teachers have university level degrees in the teaching of languages and have passed formal examinations in Norwegian. The Warsaw campus manager also has a background in language teaching from a third country. At the conclusion of the program, candidates are required to pass a Norwegian language test before they are allowed to move to Norway.

This language school meets all of the criteria advanced by human capital theory for the optimal attainment of language proficiency; i.e., *exposure* before and after migration (Chiswick and Miller, 2001, 2007a, 2008b), *efficiency* as evidenced by the total immersion program (Long, 1990), *motivation* as a factor in selecting candidates (Chiswick and Miller, 2007a, 2008a, 2008b), and economic *incentives* in the repayment requirements (Chiswick and Miller, 2006, 2007a, 2007b, 2008b). The private sector recruitment firm has developed a "gold standard" in language training to meet the exacting specifications and preferences of the healthcare industry employers.

The firm helps migrants negotiate the linguistic boundary by providing a scaffolding for language acquisition that may be considered an alternative to social or cultural capital (Massey et al., 1998; Castles and Miller, 2009). It assembles teachers, learning resources, and a cohort of peers who navigate the learning process together. It carefully matches hospitals and candidates, "guaranteeing" success. It also forms a communications network among the learners and teachers who remain in contact after placement. This community supports the physicians as they migrate, and this model illustrates how the migration industry may reduce risk in a manner that is different from the approach that has been used by networks of migrants for generations (Massey et al., 1998; Castles 2000).

The Case 1 language school represents a sophisticated model of transnational capitalism that blurs the distinction between market forces and the public sector (Hernandez Leon 2005), thereby challenging Hollifield's (2004) notion of a stark "liberal paradox" – that is, economic and political forces and interests are not neatly categorized and clearly opposed to one another but instead display interrelationships that are complex and hierarchically intertwined (Garapich 2008:738–739). Elite candidates are selected by the private sector and fully supported in the process of negotiating linguistic hurdles. The public sector is involved through the sponsorship of the school by the hospitals, which are funded by tax revenues. This model seems to skirt the Norwegian government's policy regarding migrants who do not have a right or an obligation to attend free classes, possibly reflecting the high priority that the State and the public place upon healthcare services (Tjomsland, 2002).

Case 2: voluntary association language school in destination country

This language school was self-organized by migrants in the western region of Norway. The principal actors included a voluntary Polish Association that sponsored the school, the Catholic Church, and unemployed or informally employed migrants who were affiliated to the school.

The founder organized the school in 2008, when he observed large numbers of Polish work migrants losing their jobs. Most of them could not speak Norwegian and did not know how to apply for welfare benefits or to argue for their rights. He noted: “The people coming here need to learn Norwegian, but they have to pay for it themselves and it’s not good. Language is the key. Yet because many of the migrants are not in a legal status, they don’t have an opportunity to take a Norwegian course even if they could afford to pay for it.”

He offers a number of other services in conjunction with the Polish Association and the school, including the translation of Norwegian documents, assistance in completing job applications and school admission forms, and translating between prisoners and lawyers. He believes that the language school and associated services provide bridges to stabilization and legality for migrants.

Norwegian classes are announced in the church that is affiliated with the association, and the classes are held at the local university. Textbooks are supplemented with texts that address the vocabulary of occupations or workplaces. The school charges only a nominal fee to help reimburse commuting expenses for the volunteer staff, which is made up of retired Norwegian teachers. Opinions regarding the effectiveness of the instruction at the school were mixed, and exposure to the language is low in the program, at only about two hours per week. Some were able to gain admission to formal language schools that require intermediate levels of knowledge in Norwegian.

The Polish Association and the school are integral components of Polish émigré society in the region. They have been self-organized around the needs of an expatriate community that continues to speak Polish, retains strong affiliations among nationals, and is oriented toward the culture and religion of the home country. Some services that could be provided by the migration industry in another context (e.g., translation, tax, and legal services) are provided through the association and its networks. The self-organization process is in evidence here, although in this case it has taken a collectivist or proto-socialist form (somewhat distinct from the entrepreneurial business modality described by Garapich, 2008), rather than the more typical entrepreneurial business model. One reason for this variation may be language-related. The fact that Norwegian is the official language in Norway could handicap business start-ups by migrants, and studies have shown that immigrants are not as successful as Norwegian nationals at forming new enterprises there (Thorud et al., 2010).

Boundary conditions such as language barriers that tend to relegate the ethnic enclave community to the informal economy suggest that the wages and working conditions of this segment do not meet the standards that are expected by most nationals (Plewa, 2007). Social dumping could be occurring and a discriminated-against lower tier of workers might have emerged within Norway following the financial crisis. Although a link between language policy and social dumping has not been established, this study indicates that the possibility should be explored further.

There is little sign of the workings of government or the private sector in the voluntary language school. The participants in this school are those migrants whose language learning was supported by neither the government nor an employer; they are the migrants that the government hoped would go back to Poland once their formal employment came to an end.

Though it is possible that the migrants affiliated with this language school are not permanent settlers, but part of the transnational circulation workforce, and their involvement at the school reflects the level of services that they need and can afford to sustain their participation in the transnational flow, the temporary or circulating nature of *specific* individuals in the enclave community should not be viewed as evidence that Norway’s new language policy has achieved its desired effect. The policy reduces the likelihood that the Norwegian language will be learned well by members of the

Polish community, but it does not reduce the size of the community or its influence on Norwegian society. It is not entirely clear whether policymakers have grasped the difference between fencing off individual Poles and the nature of the global Polish diaspora (Morawska, 2001; Kicingier and Weinar, 2007) and how the latter could affect Norway, even if few Poles become permanent residents or citizens (Favell, 2008).

While the first contact with the school may be as a form of “emergency relief,” ongoing contact could enable new migrants to broaden their horizons. Yet, some migrants prefer not to be associated, either with the school or the larger Polish Association, possibly reflecting issues of class and class mobility. This preference demarcates one of the boundaries in the segmented labour market that some migrants would sooner negotiate by themselves.

Case 3: municipal-sponsor language school for unemployed polish workers

The principal actors in this school are local municipal government agencies that sponsor free-of-charge language courses for unemployed Polish workers, a multinational corporation that was contracted to offer language training, and unemployed Polish migrants who must participate in the training to qualify for welfare payments.

This combination of actors was unexpected, since Norway’s post-Accession policy does not provide free-of-charge language classes for CEE work migrants. Still, municipal authorities are allowed to offer these programs if they choose, and the funding for this could, in theory, come from State-provided (discretionary) funds. In fact, two municipalities hired a private company to implement a language course for unemployed Polish workers. The public sector sponsor of the school is the Norwegian Department of Labour and Welfare Service (NAV). Participants are selected by the NAV, and they must take the course or risk losing welfare benefits.

According to interviewees, learning Norwegian has become critical to employment security during the economic crisis. A participant in the municipal-sponsor school noted: “I see the Norwegian language requirement as raising the bar due to the economic crisis. A recruitment firm interviewer would ask me ‘why are you speaking English now?’ and I would say ‘I spoke it before,’ and he would say ‘the requirement for this job is to speak Norwegian.’ My interpretation is that it is brutal. The building boom is over, and Norwegian society is clearing the market. But I haven’t changed my view of Norway—I still want to be here.”

This language school uses a design that incorporates both language learning and job seeking skills. The school emphasizes the importance of learning Norwegian for effectiveness at work and aims to place participants in jobs where they will have a good opportunity to speak and learn Norwegian. One of the aims is to motivate the participants to plan for their careers. The course is intensive, meeting five days a week, seven hours a day for 26 weeks.

In the first of four modules, participants develop a career plan, write a curriculum vitae in Norwegian, and receive an orientation to the Norwegian market and working life. In the second, they learn more about Norwegian work and social life, explore how to find jobs, and engage in more intensive language learning. In the third module, the participants secure a praxis. Module four is ten weeks of working in the praxis, with the “wages” paid by the government through welfare benefits. The company hosting the school reports to NAV how many participants have a job contract six weeks and twelve weeks after the course is complete. Recently, the placement rate has risen from below fifty per cent to sixty per cent, which is the same as the placement rate for other groups of unemployed workers in Norway.

One of the company’s responsibilities is to motivate the participants not only to learn Norwegian but also to plan for their careers. Some participants feel that they are being forced into attending the program; others do not intend to stay in Norway much longer, and those who plan to be mobile would rather learn English, which would be useful elsewhere. Others are highly motivated and do

plan longterm stays or settlement. Some are just happy to be in Norway and to have access to welfare benefits. Many are expected to return to Poland once their unemployment benefits expire.

The language teachers in this school are qualified teachers of Norwegian or a related language as a foreign language. The teachers in the school also provide support services to students, such as helping them translate their tax bills or other notices (much as in the voluntary association school).

According to administrative officials, there are about 200 people on waiting lists for each cycle of the program. The course has become popular and is well-known in Polish circles, with attendees now recruiting their own networks.

PHASE THREE FINDINGS: POLICY ADMINISTRATORS' POINTS OF VIEW ON CASE 3 LANGUAGE SCHOOL

Since the municipal-sponsor language school in Case 3 appears to contradict the State policy barring EEA work migrants from free-of-charge language instruction, we were interested in understanding the rationale for offering this program. Our interviews with administrators revealed a number of different perspectives on this subject.

The NAV administrators agreed that allowing the participants to practise Norwegian was perhaps more important than the work component. One noted that some of the Polish migrants were skeptical about the linguistic rationale for the course, believing that the objective was to provide free or low-cost work for Norwegian companies. The reason for skepticism may have been the relatively low level of Norwegian language content in the course and the resulting modest level of knowledge that many participants acquire. Graduates also are sometimes placed in jobs that do not require much exposure to the Norwegian language. Another volunteered that some of his colleagues objected to the new language policy, believing that all work migrants should learn Norwegian and that this is important to safety at the workplace. A few acknowledged that some small municipalities allow work migrants from the EU to sit in on the language classes that are offered free-of-charge to other migrants, as their numbers (and the associated costs) are negligible.

They also agreed that the course helps the State determine whether welfare recipients are actual job seekers or whether they are using welfare payments to supplement income from the informal sector. They interpreted attendance as an indication of a worker's intention to remain in Norway, which engendered further efforts to support the worker.

NAV administrators did not agree on the objectives of the job placement effort. One claimed that it was designed to facilitate a shift in the types of jobs that Polish workers filled, saying that "raw muscle power" and "unskilled labour" are no longer so much in demand. Increasing skill levels, including linguistic skill, may help reposition workers to fill new types of jobs. Another administrator stated: "We give priority to the participants that receive benefits because they have automatic rights to different types of help. Not all immigrants are entitled to this.... [T]here were some people who meant that it would be ideal to start a measure for such a group because then you avoid having people just sitting around and accepting benefits without doing anything for it."

This comment hints at the suggestion that praxis could serve as a means to justify welfare payments. Another interviewee noted that the language courses are a "non-topic" in the Norwegian political arena because it is considered more economical to provide the classes to those who are possibly going to remain in Norway for many years to come than to have them remain on welfare.

The courses were developed because municipalities had to call on translators to engage many of the unemployed Poles who approached their offices to inquire about benefits. These migrants were not eligible for any free of charge classes, and they had little or no money to pay for private classes. This situation defied the language policy expectation that work migrants should have the

means to pay for their own language classes and set up a situation where the State had to pay for welfare benefits instead. The response was to offer language classes to unemployed workers.

This case reveals the role the State can play in the social construction of skill, particularly “soft skills.” The curriculum component related to learning Norwegian work and social life sends a clear message that participants are expected to return to the labour market in a “Norwegian frame of mind.” The larger lesson is one of language ideology – that using Norwegian is a signal of “language loyalty” (Klein, 2001; c.f. Stevenson, 2006:5), which reduces the perception of threat represented by CEE work migrants (Castles and Miller, 2009). The student/participants are being trained in the “soft skills” of being willing to try to act “more Norwegian.”

Cooperation between the State and private employers was evident, both in employment policies and practices and in the language school. We do not find the stark division of a liberal paradox of economic and political forces, but rather a concerting of these interests that attempts to bend the will of migrants towards that of the nationals. The State certified that workers who completed the course were “legal” and indoctrinated in rudimentary Norwegian language and social codes. The private sector then reintegrated them into the workforce, which consequently removed them from the welfare rolls. Through this process, the government converted unemployed Poles on welfare back into typical CEE migrant workers (basically, temporary foreign workers). Cooperation between State and private sector was required for this transaction to take place.

It is significant that only 60 per cent of the workers make it through this “standardization” process, given that the overall Polish population in Norway is estimated at somewhere between 80,000 and 130,000, and the official unemployment rate among immigrants in Norway was 7.3 per cent in May 2010, compared with 2.7 per cent for the overall population (Thorud et al., 2010:66). The other 40 per cent seem likely to remain on welfare for the time being, and their future is uncertain.

DISCUSSION

The Norwegian case may be framed within the larger context of the European region. On the one hand, several European nations have started to place greater emphasis on integration (Castles and Miller, 2009:274–75) following a widespread rejection of policies associated with multiculturalism, which now are viewed as being linked to immigrant marginalization, minority formation, and social discord. The promotion of language ideology by the Norwegian State may not only reflect nationalist politics but also encourage individual incorporation, especially at work. On the other hand, the recent cycle of TFWPs have been aimed at fears that workers flowing across borders from the East would endanger Western European wages and social standards (Plewa, 2007; Favell, 2008). Polish migrants engaged in a de facto TFWP cycle may prefer not to integrate but to remain within their own enclaves, and Norwegian language policies might be viewed as encouraging such workers to form minority groupings, acting against eventual incorporation.

A possible interpretation is that new language laws can serve as a legally and culturally acceptable means for discouraging access to rights by work migrants from Accession countries. While CEE migrants may search for work, hold jobs, or reside in Western European countries with restrictive language policies, they cannot become citizens or claim citizens’ rights unless they take on the difficult challenge of learning the national language. Under such policies, the State is not burdened with policing each migrant’s citizenship status; rather, residency or citizenship is limited or denied unless linguistic competency is displayed.

So, temporary foreign workers gained citizen-like rights, and the bureaucracy used language ideology (not policy – as there is no policy that denies welfare benefits to migrants who lack Norwegian language skills) to separate out these beneficiaries and place the majority of them back in the job market as temporary workers. Public outcry against poor treatment of migrants was supposed

to rein in democracies' actions against them (Castles, 2006), but here language ideology has proven effective as a means to finesse the situation.

If language policy becomes the path of choice for re-bordering European nations, then Hollifield's (2004) liberal paradox may have found its rejoinder. Such policies effectively separate temporary from permanent residents, changing open borders to something semi-permeable. The Norwegian case raises the possibility of language and language policy not only as an index of allegiance but also as a standard of competency (see Levy, 2010; Greene, 2010). It also suggests that there may be a great deal of flexibility in the implementation of this "standard," allowing private sector employers to make decisions apart from the overall policy framework set by the State. This process would reinforce the tendency for transnational migration to be temporary, circular, and not long-term (Favell, 2008).

Language policy may bring institutional actors into play that would not have the same cache if transnational migrants mainly needed to speak English. Language schools can become an intermediary in the migration process, and they can interact with other institutions such as employers and government agencies to facilitate migrants' capacity to traverse boundaries and integrate into foreign job markets (Csedo, 2008). If instead of viewing national borders as geographic boundaries that may be "open" or "closed" to migrants, we view them as a "discontinuity in space" (Crowley, 2002:9) that distinguishes between people, and thus restricts, prohibits, and/or channels movements, choices, and actions in social space (Young, 2007:168; Moan, 2011:20), then the language schools become active participants in a process that goes beyond merely teaching language and becomes an integral component of labour segmentation.

Language schools sort migrants differentially, according to their status in a segmented labour market. At the top end of the market (the employer sponsored school), the process is highly selective, rigorously focused upon language ("hard skills"), and often leads to placement in specific locations where candidates are contractually bound to remain for a number of years. At the other end, there is either an open admissions policy (the voluntary school) or a government-overseen process of selecting participants. The sorting mechanism is less likely to teach these migrants to speak Norwegian fluently, likely to focus a curriculum on "soft skills," and leaves a large proportion of migrants unaccounted for. As a result, the highly skilled migrants have less freedom to choose their place of employment and may be socially isolated, while those who take up the 3D work (difficult, dangerous, or dirty) appear to have greater degrees of freedom and more opportunities to commune together socially and to circulate transnationally. A proportion of the latter are likely to be active in the informal sector, and engaged in practices that are not fully legal. This is likely to engender an ethnic enclave of Polish migrants, continuing to speak Polish internally, and fostering further migration from Poland, much as in the classic pattern of the Polish diaspora (Kicinger and Weinar, 2007). By whatever name it is called – a temporary foreign workers program, a new language policy, a circulating transnational community – the emergence of a phenomenon that resembles self-replicating enclaves of Polish migrants in Norwegian urban areas is likely to have long-term consequences for Norwegian society.

As institutional actors, the language schools may be conceived in terms of Burt's (1992) "structural holes" in that they take advantage of the insularity that exists between contacts in different social networks (i.e. the "hole") where each set of actors within a network could benefit through connections with the other (e.g. migrants and employers). The language schools profit from making these connections by virtue of their contacts in each of the networks. Utilizing information and control gained through access to migrants, employers, and across the public sector, they imperfectly fill the structural hole while continuing to receive benefits by acting as a *tertius gaudens* (a term Burt borrowed from Georg Simmel meaning "the third"). They do this by limiting the autonomy of migrants they purport to integrate; i.e. facilitating employment contracts that lead to social isolation (Case 1); reinforcing ethnic community while supposedly teaching the native language (Case 2); and offering low-level language training that carries the threat of welfare withdrawal (Case 3). The

tertius strategy reveals the substantial influence of these organizational actors in the re-bordering process.

Our small sample suggests that Norwegian national interests concerning foreign language learning are being met by public-private partnerships between Norwegian entities and foreign suppliers and that the Polish immigrant community in Norway has few resources to provide language learning for itself. This pattern suggests that Polish immigrants should consider themselves temporary workers, not permanent entrepreneurs. Still, although business ownership by migrants may encourage the formation of ethnic enclaves (e.g. Light and Gold, 1999), it could be more efficient for policymakers to encourage Polish migrants to settle and establish small businesses that could provide migrant services more efficiently.

We postulate that in nations where language policy is acting as a bordering device, it would be difficult for Polish migrants to self-organize in ways that would transform their quasi-legal status to legal. Many migrants work informally, and though some of the activities in this sector are entrepreneurial, most do not relate to the migration industry but involve services that can be arranged through transactions in English. These are areas in which Poles traditionally worked prior to the Accession, and even before 1989 (Plewa 2007), and they do not lead to permanent, legal status. Formal, legal migration industry businesses require a mastery of written and spoken Norwegian that the majority of Polish migrants do not possess at the point of migration. Those who undertake to learn Norwegian generally are seeking employment with a firm, agency, or another organization that provides access to benefits – a legitimate position in Norwegian society that may be elusive for many.

CONCLUSION

Although this paper examined the aftermath of new language policy in one particular country, the implications can be applied to other northern European nations that are using language policy as a means of shifting away from multicultural policies and toward re-bordering. Using empirical data drawn from institutional ethnography, we compared three language schools to understand institutional actors' negotiation of language boundaries, and we discovered an array of strategies for coping with challenges at different points on the skill continuum of the labour market. Our study did not find a stark "liberal paradox" of economic liberalism and political closure, but rather a more complex interplay among public, private, and civil society sectors that frames migrants within the semi-permeable bounds of "linguistic nationalism."

Data from the employer-supported language school (Case 1) and the state supported language school (Case 3) revealed collaboration and intertwining of interests among State agencies and private employers, working together to manoeuvre carefully selected groups of migrants across the skill continuum into formal employment positions that encouraged them to remain in Norway while meeting job-appropriate and socially constructed standards of linguistic and social skill. Potential migrants who were not successful in securing passage through these standardized processes might be relegated to the informal sector, where they could find "self-help" language support in a voluntary language school (Case 2) or perhaps were expected to leave Norway. The diverse migration strategies of Poles appear to be well matched to the ambiguity, complexity, and indeterminacy of outcomes that may be expected when new language policies neither oblige nor require language training, employers' requirements shift with economic circumstances, and policy administrators have not yet reached consensus.

The language schools that have arisen in response to new language policy have played a role in the incorporation of migrants into Norwegian society, albeit in different ways. In Case 1, an expatriate Pole offered high-quality language services through which other Poles could relocate to Norway and work in their own skilled professions. In Case 2, a Solidarity-era Polish migrant founded

an informal school that provided discounted services to help migrants cope with life in Norway. In Case 3, a new school arose as a response to Polish migrants' demands for welfare benefits. The language schools also have incorporated migrants as suppliers (teachers) and consumers. Yet the schools also imperfectly filled the "structural holes" between migrants and employers by limiting the autonomy of the migrants they purport to incorporate, revealing the substantial influence of these organizational actors.

Regardless of the language schools' influence on immigrant incorporation, the majority of migrants reside at the lower skilled pole of the labour market, where there are fewer resources for language training. Available data suggest that the majority of Polish labour migrants who are formally employed work in the construction sector. The language school for unemployed migrants who had not acquired rights to welfare benefits (Case 2) did not appear to be highly effective in facilitating migrants' language skill development, and also had the goal of reinforcing ethnic ties, thereby sustaining the school's position within the structural hole. When considering the majority of Polish migrants, language policy thus may have the consequence of marginalizing many immigrants into less desirable jobs within the informal economy (the same types of jobs they held prior to Accession), providing substandard wages and working conditions that establish the conditions for social dumping.

NOTES

1. Transnational migration is defined as substantial and enduring relationships of an economic, political or socio-cultural nature (see Castles and Miller, 2009, p.30).
2. The Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia.
3. The concept of social dumping extends the economic idea of "dumping" manufactured goods to the costs related to direct and indirect labour standards. Differences in wage costs could lead to "social policy regime competition," whereby member states would be under pressure to reduce their labour costs and social standards to become more competitive, particularly in attracting investments from multinational corporations (European Industrial Relations Dictionary, 2007, www.eurofound.europa.eu/areas/industrialrelations/dictionary/definitions/singleeuro).
4. Language capital is the component of human capital comprised of linguistic knowledge and skill.
5. The European Free Trade Association (EFTA) is comprised of Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway, and Switzerland.
6. The research reported here represents one component of a larger project sponsored by the Working Life Research Program at the Norwegian Research Council, which is entitled "Work Unlimited: Identity Construction in a Global Context," on-going from 2008 to 2012. The project is based at the Institute for Social Anthropology at the Norwegian University for Science and Technology.
7. Workers had to apply for a new work permit every year, so "new" work permits include those issued to workers who re-applied year after year.
8. Two of the interviewees were physicians, one was an IT worker, one was a public sector service employee, one worked as a chambermaid and then as a language teacher, one was an engineer, and five were construction workers. Eight were males and three were females.

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