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Looking for Environmental Migrants in the Receiving Country – the Example of Migrants from Chosen Countries of North Africa in Poland

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Karolina Sobczak-Szelc

Looking for Environmental Migrants in the Receiving Country – the Example of Migrants from Chosen Countries of North Africa in Poland

Abstract: The majority of the research investigating environmental migration is focused on source areas and little on host countries. As a consequence, a common approach to finding environmental migrants in the destination country is lacking. The aim of this paper is to present a mixed method with a quantitative (survey) and qualitative part (in-depth interviews) that was used to find environmental migrants in Poland. The research was carried out among Egyptians, Moroccans, and Tunisians. For research purposes, the definition of an environmental migrant was extended to three generations. Therefore, under investigation were the motivations and history of migration of the migrant himself, and his father and grandfather as well.

The results show that environmental migrants in the destination country are a hard-to-survey population, as they comprise a group that is hard to sample, identify, find or contact, get to cooperate, and to interview. It was found, moreover, that limited knowledge regarding their father's and grandfathers' migration history and motivations limited the possibility to analyse how environment influenced the migration decisions of previous generations. The migration decision of the investigated migrants was influenced by other factors, such as education, marriage, or looking for a job. Although none of the investigated persons was an environmental migrant, the Moroccan interviewees mentioned the environment as a factor influencing the departure of people from their areas of origin. In the case of Egypt, however, it was difficult to link the migration decision to environmental factors.

Keywords: environmental migrants, mixed-method approach, hard-to-reach populations, migration to Poland, migration from North Africa.

Introduction

Predictions of the number of environmental migrants in the near future estimate their number between 150 million and 200 million by 2050¹. It is even said that in Sub-Saharan Africa, future weather anomalies

1 D. Ionesco and D. Mokhnacheva, F. Gemenne, *The Atlas of Environmental Migration*, Taylor & Francis, 2016, p. 14.

will lead to an additional annual displacement of 11.8 million people by the end of the 21st century². Although the research focusing on environmental migration is located mostly in sourcing regions and countries³, the international dimension of environmental migration attracts the attention of a growing number of authors⁴. However, just a few scholars investigate environmental migrants in destination countries⁵. As a result, there is no standard approach to finding and identifying environmental migrants in destination countries. It is either a gap in the research on environmentally motivated movements worth filling or a methodological challenge that is as worthy of solving.

Standard survey methods often fail when they are used to investigate migrants, including environmental ones, in a destination country. Systematic sampling and data collection among international migrants have always been a major challenge for scientists for a couple of reasons. First of all, a significant portion of contemporary international migration is illegal. Those migrants who decide to come to a foreign country illegally stay there without proper documents or just take up work without a permit⁶. This, among other factors, influences the lack of a reliable sampling frame for all migrants in one country. Second, they are hard to find, as the migrant population is mobile⁷. On the other hand, if they are settled, they do not always visit common meeting places. Third, if the number of them is relatively low, as in Poland's case, investigation throughout the general population, especially of a defined group of migrants, is not only very expensive but almost impossible to reach. Finally, migrants with irregular legal status in the target country often move at the margins of the law or are in conflict with regulations and avoid contact they believe may pose

- 2 L. Marchiori and J.-F. Maystadt, I. Schumacher, 'The Impact of Weather Anomalies on Migration in Sub-Saharan Africa', *Journal of Environmental Economics and Management*, vol. 63, no. 3, 2012, pp. 355-374.
- 3 Ionesco and Mokhnacheva, Gemeinne, op. cit.
- 4 R. Obokata and L. Veronis, R. McLeman, 'Empirical Research on International Environmental Migration: a Systematic Review', *Population and Environment*, vol. 36, no. 1, 2014, pp. 111-135.
- 5 Ionesco and Mokhnacheva, Gemeinne, op. cit., p. 10.
- 6 E. Jaźwińska, 'Metody ilościowe w badaniach nad migracjami międzynarodowymi' [Quantitative methods in the research over international migrations], *Seria: Prace Migracyjne*, no. 36, April 2000, p. 4, <http://www.migracje.uw.edu.pl/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/036.pdf> [2018-08-29].
- 7 D. S. Massey, 'Challenges to Surveying Immigrants', in: R. Tourangeau et al. (eds), *Hard-to-Survey Populations*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014.

a threat, including with researchers⁸. Therefore migrants, including environmental ones, are hard-to-reach or hard-to-survey populations, as defined, among others, by Roger Tourangeau⁹. Nonetheless, the question how to find them is crucial because it will allow further research to answer other questions, such as: whether environmental migrants are different from other migrants and whether they act in a different way regarding integration strategies or connections with source regions.

The aim of this paper is to fill the gap and present the mixed-method approach used to find environmental migrants in a destination country. It also highlights the difficulties of studying hard-to-investigate populations in the destination country, such as environmental migrants, for whom exists no sampling frame and rarely the consciousness of being a member of a target group. Finally, the paper attempts to verify whether it is possible to find and identify environmental migrants in the destination countries.

The mixed-method approach is presented in the example of the results of a study aimed at finding environmental migrants in Poland among migrants from three chosen countries of the North Africa region: Egypt, Morocco, and Tunisia. The idea of looking for environmental migrants in Poland was inspired by research with an ethnosurvey character for the first time used by Douglas Massey¹⁰. The aim of his approach was to investigate both the source regions and societies and people who had left those regions in their present place of residence—usually in another country. It was carried out within the framework of a project regarding environmental-migration research conducted in the chosen areas of Egypt, Morocco, and Tunisia. It was confirmed that in the investigated area environmental factors are among those influencing the migration decision. Although there have been studies investigating Egyptian, Moroccan, and Tunisian populations in receiving countries, the environmental dimension of that migration was not analysed. Also, Poland was not under investigation as one of the

8 Jaźwińska, op. cit., p. 4.

9 R. Tourangeau, 'Defining Hard-to-Reach-Survey Populations', in: R. Tourangeau et al. (eds), *Hard-to-Survey Populations*, p. 17.

10 D. S. Massey, 'The Ethnosurvey in Theory and Practice', *The International Migration Review*, vol. 21, no. 4, 1987.

receiving countries of environmental migrants. Poland, a dynamicaly developing country in the EU, is facing the challenge of increased immigration, including that from North Africa. Although the number of migrants from this region to Poland is still very low, their number¹¹ almost doubled between 2008 and 2017 (from 2 243 to 3 824)¹².

The paper begins with a definition of environmental migrants in the next section, followed by main background information regarding the source regions in part three, and the target population in Poland in part four. Further, two parts provide the outline of the mixed-method approach (part five reviews the survey, section six the qualitative in-depth interviews) for reaching potential environmental migrants and describe the results of both stages of the research. The final part concludes the paper with a discussion of the results and the adopted methodological approach, as well as offers some recommendations for further research of environmental migrants in receiving countries.

1 Definition of an environmental migrant

● According to the definition accepted by the International Organisation of Migration and one of the most frequently cited: “[...] environmental migrants are persons or groups of persons who, for compelling reasons of sudden or progressive change in the environment that adversely affects their lives or living conditions, are obliged to leave their habitual homes, or choose to do so, either temporarily or permanently, and who move either within their country or abroad”¹³. This definition is very wide and covers almost all possible situations pushing people to migrate. It may be, however, insufficient if we are looking for environmental migrants in destination countries. The majority of first migrations triggered by environmental conditions occur within the same country or even the same region. Moreover, the majority of the migration is from rural areas to big cities¹⁴. Simultaneously, cities

11 Number of people with a valid residence card.

12 UDSC, 'Zestawienia roczne, Urząd do Spraw Cudzoziemców' [Annual reports, Office for Foreign], 11 June 2018, <https://udsc.gov.pl/statystyki/raporty-okresowe/zestawienia-roczne/> [2018-06-11].

13 R. Perruchoud and J. Redpath-Cross (eds), *Glossary on Migration*, 2nd ed., vol. 25, Geneva: IOM Online Bookstore, 2011, p. 33.

14 G. Hugo, 'Environmental Concerns and International Migration', *The International Migration Review*, vol. 30, no. 1, 1996, pp. 105-131; F. Gemenne, 'Environmental Migration', in: M. Martiniello

often become source regions for international migration (one example is the migration of Haitians to Brazil¹⁵). International migration takes a lot of resources, not only financial but social and political capital as well¹⁶. Those resources may be accumulated over more than one lifetime. Therefore, this study assumes that environmental migration could have started in previous generations when a father or grandfather decided to leave a rural area. From this perspective, international migration is the last of small steps in a migration distributed between generations. In this regard, during the study, the migration trajectories were extended to three generations. So, the focus was not only on the factors influencing present migrants' decisions but also that of their parents and grandparents and whether environmental factors had influenced their decision to migrate.

2. Source regions

The majority of the area of Egypt, Morocco, and Tunisia are affected by various forms of environmental limitations and changes. The predicted rise in sea levels is expected to reduce the Egyptian agriculture area in the Nile Delta by 12-15 per cent and to cause movements within Egypt¹⁷. Nowadays, however, the most severe problems are desertification and land degradation. For example, the oases in the Western desert are being swallowed up by the advancing dunes of the Abu Muharib Dunes Belt. Desertification touches also the Eastern Desert. Up to 70 per cent of internal migrants interviewed in the framework of the EACH-FOR project¹⁸ moved due to land degradation and shortages of water. The main source regions of that migra-

and J. Rath (eds), *An Introduction to International Migration Studies*, Amsterdam University Press, 2012, p. 13.

- 15 D. Fernandes and B. B. Pimenta, P. Guedes, 'Projeto "Estudos sobre a Migração Haitiana ao Brasil e Diálogo Bilateral"' [Studies on Haitian migration to Brazil and bilateral dialogue], IOM and PUC Minas, 2014.
- 16 Ionesco and Mokhnacheva, Gemenne, op. cit., p. 28.
- 17 T. Shalaby, 'The Impact of Climate Change on Migration: The Case of Egypt', presented at the First Workshop on Climate-Induced Migration and Displacement in MENA, June 2010; N. Burger et al., 'Focus Countries for the Study on Climate Change and Migration in the MENA Region', 2014, p. 9.
- 18 The project investigated environmental migration in 23 case studies. CORDIS, European Commission 'Final Report Summary – EACH-FOR (Environmental Change And Forced Migration Scenarios)', https://cordis.europa.eu/result/rcn/49708_en.html [2018-08-03].

tion were the Eastern and Western Delta and Nile Valley¹⁹. The main source regions for migrations triggered by environmental changes in Morocco are its southern regions, such as the Western Sahara²⁰ and Sousse-Massa-Dara (actually, the Sousse-Massa and Dara-Tafilalt are the most-often described examples from the Dades-Draa Valley²¹). Research carried out in those areas indicated that environmental degradation was one of the reasons for both past and intended migration. Located in the south, the region of Sousse-Massa-Dara was indicated as the most affected in Morocco by youth temporary emigration while the neighbouring Tadla–Azilal was the region where youth permanent emigration dominated²². Moreover, research carried out in the framework of the EACH-FOR project indicated that in 2007, after a severe drought, two-thirds of the irregular migrants arrested in Spain came from the mining and farming province of Khouribga²³ in the Tadla–Azilal region.

As noted above, the research on environmental migrants in Poland was inspired by research with an ethno-survey character. Because no families in which members had emigrated to Poland in the investigated source areas were found, it was decided that the researchers would look for migrants not only from investigated villages and oases but also regions close to the investigated ones. In Egypt, four regions were qualified as potential source regions: the Eastern and Western Desert, and the Eastern and Western Delta. In Morocco, the regions described according to the previous administrative division were: the Sousse-

- 19 K. Warner et al., 'Human Security, Climate Change and Environmentally Induced Migration', United Nations University – Institute for Environment and Human Security, June 2008, pp. 26-27.
- 20 O. A. Gila and A. U. Zaratiegui, V. L. D. M. Diéguez, 'Western Sahara: Migration, Exile and Environment', *International Migration*, vol. 49, no. 51, 2011.
- 21 M. Ait Hamza and B. El Faskaoui, A. Fermin, 'Migration and Environmental Change in Morocco: The case of Rural Oasis Villages in the Middle Drâa Valley', Rotterdam: Responsible Institution: Erasmus University (EUR), 2009; K. Sobczak, 'Changes in the Environment and Migration in Southern Morocco – Example of the Mhamid Oasis', *Miscellanea Geographica*, vol. 13, 2008, pp. 239-250; eadem, *Migracje ludności południowego Maroka a zmiany środowiska przyrodniczego* [Migration of people of Southern Morocco versus changes of natural environment], Warszawa: WGIŚR, 2012.
- 22 M. C. Nguyen and Q. Wodon, 'Extreme Weather Events and Migration: The Case of Morocco', in: Q. Wodon et al. (eds), *Climate Change and Migration: Evidence from the Middle East and North Africa*, World Bank Publications, 2014, p. 217.
- 23 EACH-FOR, 'General Overview Study – Middle East and Northern Africa', Bonn, Germany: United Nations University, 2008.

Massa-Dara and Meknes-Tafilalt. In Tunisia, the regions included parts of the southern governorates: Kebili, Medenine, and Tataouine.

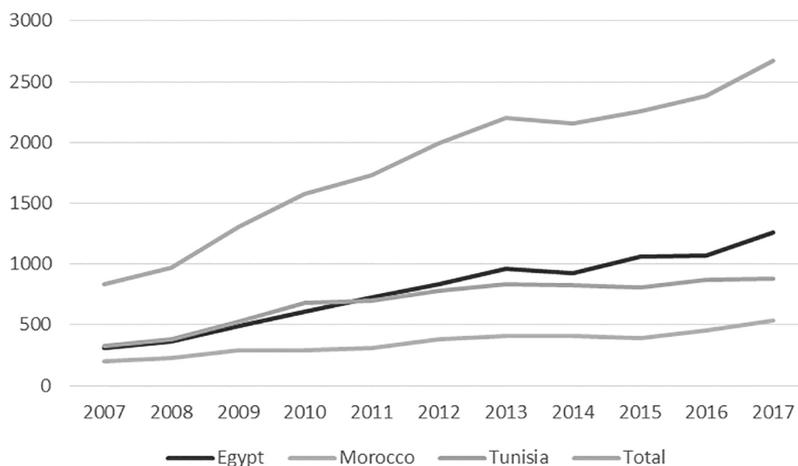
3. The target population in Poland – historical background

The number of migrants from Egypt, Morocco, and Tunisia in Poland is very low but has grown systematically (Fig. 1). At the end of 2017, it was calculated the number was around 2 669. Further, Poland had become not only a transit country but also a destination country²⁴. First, numerous migrants came to Poland in the late 1950s, when students from countries from what at the time was called the “Third World” (including countries in North Africa and the Middle East) came to Poland thanks to scholarships granted by the Polish government. In the following years, there were more intergovernmental agreements that resulted in a slow but constant inflow of students from this region, especially from Syria, Libya, and Tunisia²⁵. Some of these students married Polish citizens and remained in Poland, creating what is called the “old Arab diaspora”, in contrast to the “new-diaspora” that came after 1989²⁶.

24 K. Sobczak, ‘Migracje ludności pochodzenia arabskiego do Polski’ [Migration of Arab People to Poland], in: A. Richling and M. Fuhrmann (eds), *Geograficzne spotkania w drodze – Krok trzeci – Warszawa*, Warszawa: WGIŚR UW, 2010; T. Stefaniuk, ‘Islam i muzułmanie w Polsce’ [Islam and Muslims in Poland], in: R. Kusek (ed.), *W stronę nowej wielokulturowości* [Towards a new multiculturalism], Kraków: Międzynarodowe Centrum Kultury Kraków, 2010.

25 Sobczak, ‘Migracje ludności pochodzenia arabskiego do Polski’ [Migration of Arab People to Poland], p. 252; M. Switat, ‘An “Alien” or a Stranger Indeed?’, *Acta Universitatis Sapientiae – Social Analysis*, vol. 7, no. 1, 2017, p. 45.

26 M. Switat, *Społeczność arabska w Polsce: stara i nowa diaspora* [The Arab community in Poland: old and new diaspora] Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Akademickie DIALOG, 2017.

Figure 1. Number of citizens of Egypt, Morocco, and Tunisia in Poland in 2007-2017²⁷

Source: UDSC, 'Zestawienia roczne, Urząd do Spraw Cudzoziemców' [Annual reports, Office for Foreigners]²⁸.

The new Arab diaspora is different from the old one. According to temporary residence permit statistics maintained by voivodships, the majority of immigrants from Egypt, Morocco, and Tunisia live in the Masovian Voivodship (Fig. 2)²⁹. The majority is male (90%) and between 24 and 35 years old (65%)³⁰. Obtaining an education is still one of the reasons for the choice of Poland, however, some arrivals are also related to marriage or job opportunities³¹. Unfortunately, those migrants do not always have the possibility to work in accordance with their education and vocational experience.

²⁷ Data presented in years 2007-2017 are based on the total valid permissions to stay on the territory of Poland at the end of the year. Before 2007, the Office of Foreigners did not maintain this kind of data.

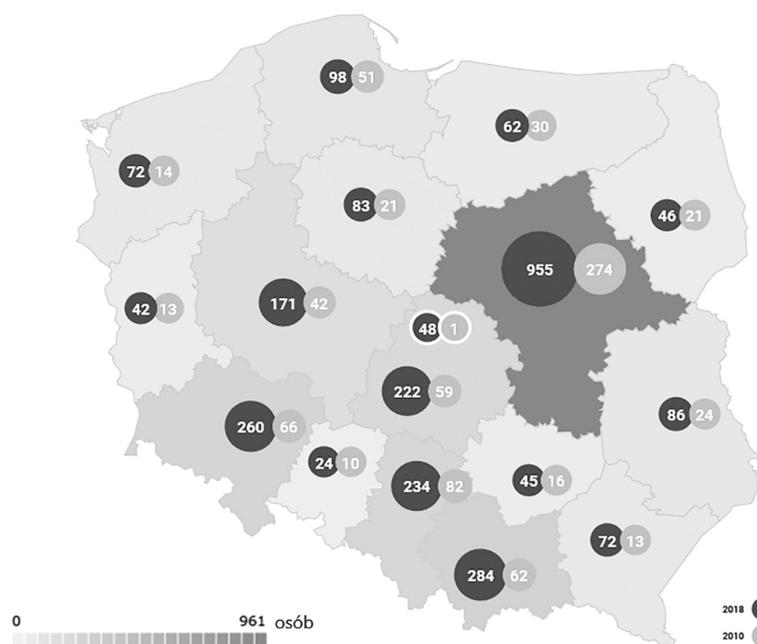
²⁸ UDSC, 'Zestawienia roczne, Urząd do Spraw Cudzoziemców' [Annual reports, Office for Foreigners].

²⁹ A foreigner planning to stay in Poland for more than three months may apply for a temporary residence permit in Poland. A temporary residence permit is issued for a maximum of 3 years. The procedure to legalize a temporary stay is conducted at the voivodship office in the voivodship in which the foreigner lives.

³⁰ UDSC, MIGRACJE.GOV.PL, 'Statistics – Poland – Valid documents – Year: 2018', <https://migracje.gov.pl/en/statistics/scope/poland/?x=0.3905&y=1.0815&level=1> [2018-08-07].

³¹ Świąt, *Spółeczność arabska w Polsce: stara i nowa diaspora* [The Arab community in Poland: old and new diaspora].

Figure 2. Total number of immigrants from Egypt, Morocco and Tunisia who have the right of residence on the territory of Poland in individual voivodships in 2010 and 2018 (data from 2018, end of May 2018)



Source: UDSC, MIGRACJE.GOV.PL, 'Statystyki – Polska – Aktualne dokumenty – Mapa – Rok: 2018' [Statistics – Poland – Valid documents – Map – Year: 2018], <https://migracje.gov.pl/statystyki/zakres/polska/typ/dokumenty/widok/mapa/rok/2018/rok2/2010/kraj/EG,MA,TN/?x=0.3316&y=0.7327&level=0.57195> [2018-06-14].

4. The quantitative part of the research and its results

• Even with the broader definition of environmental migrant, it is still a hard-to-reach or hard-to-survey population. First of all, there is no sample frame for citizens of Egypt, Morocco, and Tunisia in Poland from which we could sample respondents. Second, there is a low number of citizens of those three populations in Poland, which makes investigation throughout the general population very expensive and even almost impossible. They constitute a small fraction of the general population of migrants and/or Muslims in Poland as well. In 2018, the share of this population was calculated at less than 1% of migrants. Third, they are hard to find because the migrant population is mobile

in general³² and Poland still is treated much more as a transit country than a destination country. According to information received from caretakers of mosques and houses of prayer, the members of this group frequently turn over, which causes problems creating a community³³. Fourth, if they are settled, they do not always visit common meeting places such as mosques, cafeterias, or shops (in part because they are available also online), which also makes them hard to reach. Finally, it is hard to persuade them to take part in the research. There are people willing to take part in the survey, but the number of silent rejections (the difference between the declared presence of potential respondents in houses of prayer and filled questionnaires) and accusations of trying to steal their data (which reached the author during a computer assist web interview, or CAWI) is high as well. This may be related with both the regional context and acquired bad experience with Polish society, including researchers. Therefore, environmental migrants from Egypt, Morocco, and Tunisia in Poland fulfil the conditions of hard-to-sample or hard-to-reach populations.

To find Egyptian, Moroccan, and Tunisian migrants in Poland and then to check whether any of them is an environmental migrant, a mixed-method approach was implemented³⁴. The research was conducted in two steps³⁵, first, the quantitative, “filter” part was supposed to allow for the identification of members of the target population. Additionally, it provided basic, contextual information about the target population. The aim of the succeeding qualitative part was to verify whether the migrants identified in the first step were indeed environmental migrants according to the extended definition, meaning that either they or their father or grandfather had emigrated due to the degradation or limitations of the natural environment.

The first stage of the study was aimed at finding citizens of Egypt, Morocco, and Tunisia in Poland. As mentioned, the first challenge

32 Massey, ‘Challenges to Surveying’.

33 During the data-gathering process, talks were conducted with potential respondents and caretakers of mosques and houses of prayer to persuade them to take part in the study or to help recruit respondents. The conclusions from these talks were written down and used in this paper.

34 J. W. Creswell, *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative and Mixed Methods Approaches*, 4th edition, Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications, Inc, 2014.

35 J. Brannen, ‘NCRM Methods Review Papers, NCRM/005. Mixed Methods Research: A discussion paper’, *Working Paper*, 2005, pp. 13-15, <http://eprints.ncrm.ac.uk/89/>.

was the lack of a sample frame from which Egyptian, Moroccan, and Tunisians respondents could be drawn. The evaluation of alternative field methods implemented in the Immigrant Citizens Survey (ICS) concluded that traditional methods that allow investigating hard-to-reach populations, such as telephone sampling or random-walk sampling are limited in providing results for the target population because they exclude a certain part of the target population and have a high refusal rate³⁶. In ICS, it was found, moreover, that location sampling can deliver more adequate results when compared to the total target population. Therefore, to reach as many respondents as possible, not only was the research but also the survey planned with mixed methods. The data were collected between October 2016 and May 2017 by both self-enumerated PAPI (paper assisted personal interview) and self-enumerated CAWI versions of the questionnaire. The questionnaire was one page long and consisted of 12 basic questions divided into three groups devoted to each of the specified generations. Each group had four questions: three closed questions related to the country of origin, place of birth (city or village), and whether income from agriculture was received, and one open question about the name of the region of origin. The questionnaire also included six questions about what is called a “certificate of origin” describing the respondents.

Those willing to conduct the survey in an Arab society should consider including a version of the questionnaire in the *darija* (spoken Arabic, which differs from one country to another) used in the country (for more about surveys of a linguistic minority, see: Harkness et al.³⁷). Because in the investigated countries different *darija* were used and the questions in the questionnaire were not complicated, it was assumed that migrants from the three selected countries are able to speak in the second official national language, which is either French or English, and/or the language of their current destination country—Polish. In this regard, it was decided not to provide the questionnaire in an Arabic version (neither *fusha* nor any of the three versions of *darija*), but, to make the questionnaire comprehensive for as many re-

36 D. Reichel and L. Morales, ‘Surveying Immigrants Without Sampling Frames – Evaluating the Success of Alternative Field Methods’, *Comparative Migration Studies*, vol. 5, 2017, p. 19.

37 J. Harkness et al., ‘Surveying Cultural and Linguistic Minorities’, in: R. Tourangeau et al. (eds), *Hard-to-Survey Populations*, pp. 245-269.

spondents as possible, both the PAPI and CAWI versions of the questionnaire were available in three languages: Polish, English, and French.

With the majority of the investigated populations Muslim, for the survey's purposes were chosen Muslim centres in the main regions of the target group's residence: two mosques and four houses of prayer in five cities (Warsaw, Poznan, Wroclaw, Gdansk, and Krakow). Unfortunately, because of refusal or lack of communication with the leaders, the Muslim Cultural and Educational Centre in Wroclaw and a mosque in Gdansk were not included in the study as recruiting locations. The PAPI was continued using the snowball method and in other meeting places in Warsaw, such as restaurants, shops, and fast-food outlets with oriental food.

Simultaneously, the CAWI questionnaire³⁸ was promoted through different web pages of the Arab and Muslim communities and Facebook profiles of Arab and Muslim communities. Information about the survey was also posted on the web pages of the Muslim Cultural and Educational Centres in Warsaw and Poznan and the house of prayer in Krakow. The snowball method was tried with an e-mail request as well.

The quantitative part of the research ended with 78 questionnaires filled out: 34 PAPI and 44 CAWI. Among them, 32 were completed by Egyptians, 18 by Moroccans, and 26 by Tunisians³⁹. This distribution of responses is close to the distribution of citizens of those three countries with a legal residence permit in Poland.

With the number of women constituting just 10% of migrants with valid permission to stay in Poland⁴⁰, it is not surprising that all of the survey respondents were male. For 36 of them, their age was between 18 and 29, and 39 respondents were between age 30 and 65. There were hardly any responses from the so-called "old diaspora" of Arab migrants (only two responses were given by Egyptian citizens). Of all the respondents, 13 had Polish citizenship, eight of whom were Tunisians. In the case of 41 respondents, Poland was the first destination country (for 14 Egyptians, 8 Moroccans, and 18 Tunisians). The majority arrived after 2014 (with the most in 2014 and 2016). Those

38 The ankieta.pl portal was used.

39 Two respondents had another nationality.

40 UDSC, MIGRACJE.GOV.PL, 'Statistics – Poland – Valid Documents – Map – Year 2018'.

numbers comprise mostly Egyptians in 2014 (7 arrivals) and Moroccans in 2016 (also 7 arrivals). The majority of respondents have a higher education: 56 have at least a bachelor's degree. Of the total, 18 have completed their secondary education. Generally speaking, the investigated group was well-educated.

Out of the whole sample, only three respondents were born in a rural area and had received some income from agriculture before their arrival in Poland⁴¹. More respondents had this connection in the second-oldest generation. The fathers of 16 of the respondents were born in a rural area and had received income from agriculture (6 were from Egypt, 2 from Morocco, and 8 from Tunisia). Although 44 respondents' grandfathers had been born in a rural area, just 27 of them had received income from agriculture: Nine were from Egypt, 7 from Morocco, and ten 10 from Tunisia. These data allowed for screening for potential environmental migrants and thus, interviewees were conducted in the second step of the study.

It is possible that there were more potential environmental migrants in the sample, but respondents often reported a lack of knowledge about their father and grandfathers. As many as 14 respondents didn't declare whether their grandparent had been born in an urban or rural area. Even more, 17 respondents were not aware of their grandparent receiving an income from agriculture. The information was slightly improved if it concerned the father, but still, the lack of data was significant. Awareness of one's family history and experience proved to have been only partially transferred to the next generation, and therefore, investigating the story of parents and grandparents is methodologically challenging.

5 The qualitative part of the research and its results

Since it may be difficult for respondents to identify themselves as environmental migrants or their descendants, before the qualitative stage it was assumed that those respondents who have at least

⁴¹ Although attempts were made to reach all of them to carry out the in-depth interview, the researcher managed to carry out an interview with just one of them. One did not leave contact details and the remaining one was unreachable after the first phone call.

one ancestor (father or grandfather) born in a rural area of one of the defined source regions and who had received income from the agriculture were treated as potential environmental migrants. In-depth interviews were focused on gaining information about the conditions of the natural environment as factors motivating the migrants or their ancestors to migrate.

The qualitative part of the research assumed that it would be possible to return to the respondents that had met the requirements. In both the paper and digital version of the questionnaire, on a separate page, an e-mail address and/or contact telephone number was requested⁴². The participants were informed who had conducted the study and the scientific purpose of the research, and that all contact data would be stored in a secure place at the institution. More than half (47) of the respondents gave information allowing for further contact. From this group, 15 met the requirement of a link to agriculture at least in the third generation but even fewer met the requirements of the region of origin. Unfortunately, not all of the given contact data were correct (e.g., wrong telephone number and/or e-mail address), as well, when contacted, only some were willing to take part in the second stage of the research.

Finally, as part of the qualitative stage of the study, I conducted four in-depth interviews (a summary of the responses is given in Table 1). Three with Moroccan citizens (in English) and one with an Egyptian (with an Arabic translator; the questionnaire was filled out in Polish). During these in-depth interviews, I asked questions regarding the situation of the respondent in the source region, description of the source region, his knowledge of the environmental conditions and agricultural difficulties (if pertinent), and the history and motivations of their migration. The same questions were asked regarding the respondents' father's and grandfathers' history and region of origin. In two cases, the respondents' knowledge of family history was insufficient to fully answer all of the questions. One of the interviewees, whose father

42 A separate page where sensitive data were collected started as follows: "Some of those who will take part in the study will be asked to participate in its second part. Therefore, please indicate any possible way of contact with you. Placing the following contact data means that you agree for further contact".

was still alive, consulted responses with him and sent them by e-mail after the interview.

Table 1. Characteristics of the interviewees

Lp.	Nationality	City of origin	Origin region of the father	Age	Education	Reason for arrival
M1	Moroccan	Casablanca	Dara-Tafilalt	25-60	Bachelor's	Marriage
M2	Egyptian	Alexandria	Alexandria	25-60	Master's	Marriage
M3	Moroccan	Agadir	Sousse-Massa	25-60	Bachelor's	Marriage
M4	Moroccan	Ouarzazate	Dara-Tafilalt	18-25	Bachelor's	Studying

Source: Own data.

Among the Moroccan interviewees, in one case it was the grandfather who had left the area of origin and moved to Casablanca. In two other cases, the migration decisions were made by fathers, who moved from rural to urban areas. Although the fathers of three of the respondents had been born in rural areas, none of them received an income from agriculture before their departure.

The ancestors of all of the Moroccan interviewees were from the Sousse-Massa-Draa region⁴³. Two of them were from the Dades-Draa Valley (Zagora and Tilmi Provinces⁴⁴) the third from Taroudant Province. During the interview, environmental degradation and/or limitations weren't mentioned as direct factors influencing their father's or grandfathers' decisions to leave the area of origin. The grandfather of the first interviewee left because of land expulsion, the father of the second interviewee was recruited to work in mines in France, and the father of the third one, due to the family situation choose military service and moved to Tinghir. Therefore, we can say that the departure was related rather to French policy, as described by the first interviewee:

At that time it was the French occupation, who took over the good lands and expelled people from it. My father's family was a victim of this expulsion. So, they moved to Skoura. They had nothing there. After that, my father's family had an invitation from an uncle—moth-

43 The name of the region before the new division in 2015. After 2015, Morocco changed the administrative division, and southern Morocco was divided into Sousse-Massa and Dara-Tafilalt. However, interviewees were using the old administrative division.

44 Those areas were relatively close to the research areas chosen for the research in Morocco that were investigated in the frame of the same project.

er's brother—he was already in Casablanca [...]. And this is how they moved out to Casablanca. [M1]

The interviewee, whose father was in France, recounted his father's departure:

Morha was taking people to France. He was responsible for all those people. They took everyone that was healthy and tall. There was no choice. My father was 180 cm, he was tall enough. Normal athlete. He was strong. [...] I think one year he was in France only. (...) He left to Agadir where he lived with his brother and later he made his own place. (After) he went and brought my mother [...]. (M3)

The interviewee wasn't able to say why his father decided not to go back from France to the region of origin and moved to Agadir instead. Nonetheless, none of the interviewees can be treated as an environmental migrant.

Two of the respondents had visited the region of their father's origin. One regularly (M4), because they still have land there, cultivated by relatives, and the other (M3) visited just once, although his family lives there as well. Asked about the reasons nowadays for young people to migrate, the interviewee from Ouarzazate explained:

[...] local people, young people don't stay there. They move to city centres. Why? Because they [...] are studying [...], so they are going to the universities. Or, the majority of them, they work for the construction of buildings [...]. (M4)

His further explanations show the complex relation of economic, cultural, and environmental reasons tied to the lack of possibilities to receive enough income from agriculture and the difficult environmental conditions as a direct motivation for young people's migration:

It's not that they don't want to stay. They need to earn. They need to earn to survive. That's why, if they stay there, they cannot make it. And these youths, this generation [...] they are the gadgets generation. This is the generation that needs to dress properly, and they need to wear jeans [...], they need to have gadgets, smartphones, they need to have Facebook, so they need to afford, they need to have money. And they are not interested in agriculture, they are not interested in milk and cow [...]. (M4)

And further:

[...] Because we have the river, [...] it is a mountainous area, each year the river comes with huge, roiling water. More or less it is a flood-

ed area. And the commodities are spoiled, so wasted. So, always they are at risk. [...] the water from the river is the first enemy of the fields. Because when it covers the fields [...] they lose everything, and it is the same for apples [...]. Because fields are closer to the river, and again, if they are not closer to the river it is hard to bring water from the river to the fields. [...] Because these people, [...] they rely on natural resources. [...] It's work for nothing. Because you need to invest and don't expect the benefit. [...] my family, for example, when you see how much money they invest, it's quite a lot, so they don't benefit a bit. And they even need to pay from their pockets. (M4)

It looked different in the case of Egypt, where the respondent came from a family who owned a huge amount of land, which allowed for an above-average income. According to the information received, agriculture activity was important for the interviewee's grandfathers (on both the mother's and father's side), but not for their sons, who decided to choose a different path after obtaining higher education. This situation is not possible in typical agriculture families in Egypt. Of all his family, only the interviewee had finished higher education in agriculture and invested in cotton production, which became a very lucrative activity thanks to the large agricultural holding (150 ha). The rest of the family received income from agriculture because they lease their fields and receive part of the share. Their daily activities are not linked to agriculture. Male members of the family have finished secondary or higher education and work in different sectors than agriculture.

The situation when the income from agriculture is received thanks to the lease of lands or work of other people was mentioned by another Egyptian migrant whose participation was therefore rejected from the in-depth interview as not relevant to the aim of the research. In this situation, it was not abandonment of agriculture, as they were still owners of land that is productive and cultivated, but the development of lifestyle and aspirations.

6 Discussion and conclusions

• Environmental migrants from Morocco, Tunisia, and Egypt to Poland, even according to the extended definition, were hard to reach. One possible reason is their very low number in Poland, and second, the problems with identification by the migrants themselves and by

the researcher. However, it is predicted that the numbers of environmental migrants will rise and so will the self-identification of those migrants. As environmental change and limitations become a more prominent issue, nationally and internationally, and as migration pressure continues to rank as the top national concern for many industrialised countries, the research must move into the destination areas of those who have moved because of environmental change, degradation, and/or limitations and discover what the consequences of those moves are for the migrants and source and destination communities. Taking into account the growing number of environmental migrants, it is highly probable that in the not so distant future some of these migrants will come to Poland, even from countries other than those included in the scope of this paper. Because this group of migrants is not under the protection of international law and it is estimated their number will grow, an adequate solution to this challenge should be sought in both source and destination countries. In this regard, it is important to make an effort to develop the proper methodology of looking for environmental migrants in receiving regions, which it is hoped will be explored in further studies.

This study faced many challenges. First was establishing and updating the list of locations for recruiting respondents. The low response rate suggests that a relatively high proportion of the target group does not visit mosques or other places often linked with migrants from North Africa or they visit them in less common hours due to other obligations. Nevertheless, it is hard to estimate how many people were aware of the survey but unwilling to participate since it was voluntary.

The other issue was to engage in the study so-called “gatekeepers”, such as managers of workplaces or imams at mosques. This necessitates thorough preparation long before the actual study takes place since gaining trust takes time. Conducting research among a hard-to-investigate population is crucial to receiving their approval and support. Therefore, future research should consider the involvement of gatekeepers in the investigated society in the process of the creation of the research tool or even more broadly into the process of planning the research. This solution will work best when there is little turnover among the target migrant population, since staying longer encourages ties with the local community. The turnover in the investigated group,

especially of those coming for economic or educational reasons is relatively high in Poland, which made successful recruitment harder.

To carry out reliable research among these groups of migrants, it is important to understand not only the cultural context of the research but also the conditions (including environmental) in the source region as well. This may help to gain trust and, even much more important, to interpret the results adequately. This is because as researchers we must aim to provide accurate results and carelessness during the research or interpretation stage may influence the future possibility to carry out research among these populations. This can then influence not only the individual researcher but the entire scientific community as well. The gender issue of researchers also may play an additional role in both a positive and negative way. Mixed teams are highly recommended.

In looking for broadly defined environmental migrants in Poland was difficult, as the respondents themselves were unable to define themselves or their ancestors in this category. First, this was due to the fact that even if environmental conditions played any role in the migration decision of the interviewees' ancestors, they were unaware of this. The research of environmental migration from Egypt, Morocco, and Tunisia is very limited. It affects how migration from that region and their determinants are perceived by researchers, politicians, public opinion, and migrants, as such. Usually, other migration factors are more evident for them. The second, even more, important reason was the lack of knowledge about the migration histories of their ancestors. In the western world, it is assumed that basic knowledge about one's family history is known; however, especially during the research among societies from different cultural regions, it should be reconsidered whether this assumption is adequate.

The interviews were carried out only with Egyptian and Moroccan citizens because no Tunisians were among the interviewees, so no conclusions on this group are possible. On the other hand, in the case of the Egyptian migrants, it was difficult to find during the interview any relation to environmental factors influencing their migration decision. In the literature about environmental migration in Egypt, this type of migration is described as having mostly an internal dimension, which may justify the obtained result. Although environmental reasons did not directly influence the migration decision of the Moroc-

can interviewee, all of the interviewed subjects were aware of the hard conditions for both life and agriculture in their father's and grandfathers' areas of origin and of people leaving due to difficult environmental conditions. The biggest problems were related with floods in a mountainous area and the difficult climate conditions in the desert⁴⁵. Therefore, environmental conditions, especially in Morocco, could be one of the drivers, if not precisely the reason, for the departure of the interviewed migrant, or his parents or grandparents, than people from the region of origin.

To answer the question of whether there are any environmental migrants in Poland, it is hard to say the answer is "no" or "very little" because the lack of environmental migrants among the results might mean that either there are no such migrants or that the methodology used was insufficient. Based on this research, it cannot be said that there are no environmental migrants in Poland, because the lack of results does not prove the absence of the target population. Therefore, the question of environmental migrants in Poland remains unanswered. Nonetheless, this study marks a good point for further research to determine when such migrants will eventually appear in Poland, who (which nationalities) will be first, and which factors affect the greater scale of such migration to the country.

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45 Both of those responses can be confirmed based on research carried out by the author in those regions.

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