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The Cosmopolitan Reality of Polish American Families

In the globalizing world of the twenty-first-century, the number of “world families” is increasing (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim); it is a sign of the times. “World families” do not have one home country. They frequently reject cultural, political, and territorial divisions. “Cosmopolitan” is the name they give to their new hybrid identity, which is enriched by a close relationship to cultures other than just their own.

In his book *Risk Society: Towards a New Modernity* (1999), Ulrich Beck writes about the necessity of building a cosmopolitan society globally. In his other books, *Power in the Global Age* (2005) and *Cosmopolitan Vision* (2006), he postulates the thesis that in the global age, national categories will be rejected in favor of transnational ones. For Beck, cosmopolitanism does not mean *no*-nationality, but a coexistence of separate national identities. Beck’s project of the cosmopolitan order entails an acceptance of equality and diversity, based on tolerance and responsibility towards the whole world. “World families” are reflections of these changes, and as Beck states, they constitute an intersection of different worlds (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim 19).¹⁰⁸

Referring to his theory of cosmopolitanism, I shall present selected conclusions from the research on Polish American couples I conducted in the years 2012–2015 (Jasińska). The trajectories of 23 well-educated, white, binational married couples, city dwellers, aged between 30 and 60 years old, who have been married for at least five years, will serve as an illustration of Beck’s “cosmopolitan project,” in which communities are connected globally, i.e. globally and locally. This “new patriotism” transcends local and national boundaries, but – as Taoufik Djebali rightly notices in his article in this book – Beck’s concept of cosmopolitanism rooted in Western European tradition and liberal democracies, based on shared race, religion and cultural patterns, does not take into account recent racialization of migrants coming to Europe. Thus, the sample of the interviewed racially homogeneous couples living in big cities matches the cosmopolitanism of metropolises as defined by Anna Sosnowska in the article following this one rather than the more radical, minoritarian cosmopolitanisms discussed by other authors. As a result, situated in the context of this book, my research aptly illustrates the difference between the way that the idea of race and the much less politicized notion of ethnicity function in the transatlantic world.

The aim of the research, conducted using qualitative methods (in-depth interviews and case studies), was to determine whether cultural diversity in a Polish

108 For a critique of Beck’s thought from a racial minority perspective, see Djebali’s chapter in this volume.

American relationship was an obstacle in everyday life or a special quality enriching the relationship. I analyzed how the respondents negotiated and adjusted to cultural differences. Studying the roots and cultural identity of Polish American couples, their values, and the traditions and customs they cultivated allowed me to establish which differences they perceived as important and how they changed and are still changing in contact with another culture.

The relational trajectories of the respondents demonstrate the fluidity of their cultural identity, which is a processual construction. They illustrate Anzelm Strauss's theory, which constituted a theoretical framework for the research, that personal identity is a symbolic and cultural process, an outcome of relationships with other people. It is constructed as a result of an interaction with other human beings when we take on their perspectives, adjust our actions, create meaningful gestures, and adapt symbols coming from a different culture in everyday life (Strauss).

In the present article, I shall describe the characteristics of binational families, and on the basis of several diversified examples, I shall trace the process of their cultural transformation. Analyzing their cultural identity after years together in a binational relationship, the traditions and customs they cultivate, how they share duties, and the contacts they maintain with others, I shall present several Polish American "world families."

1 Binational Marriages and Their Characteristics

Marriages entered into with foreigners are an indicator of a society's openness towards other countries (Szukalski). Nevertheless, marriages of Polish women and men to foreigners are not very frequent. They constitute 1.5–2.1% of all marriages registered in Poland (Rządowa Rada Ludnościowa [Government Population Council] (78–79). Data concerning intermarriage between US citizens and Poles outside of Poland could not be found. Among binational marriages that took place in Poland in the years 1996–2011, marriages of Polish women to British men (23.1% in total) and to German men (14%) living abroad dominate. Marriages of Polish men to foreigners show different geographical preferences. Here marriages to Ukrainian (35.4%), Russian (15.4%), and Belarusian (8.6%) women dominate. Legalized relationships between Poles and US citizens are not numerous. They make up 1.5% of all marriages between Poles and foreigners and 4.4% of marriages between Polish women and foreigners that took place in the years 1996–2011. As can be seen, Polish women are more willing to marry US men than Polish men are to marry US women. This has been confirmed by my research as well. The sources of these discrepancies are frequently different expectations of Polish partners as to gender roles and the individualized needs of US women (Jasińska).

Functioning in a binational family requires exceptional communication skills to reconcile frequently different value systems and the customs and expectations of each individual's culture (Falicov; Crohn). Through an everyday interaction in a "world family," the partners and their children undergo a process of acculturation, i.e., they acquire the patterns of behavior characteristic of the individual's cultural surroundings (Berry). Cultural identities evolve and enrich themselves by distinct cultural baggage, thereby creating a new hybrid and cosmopolitan identity of the individual, couple, and family.

Although research shows that individuals in culturally homogeneous marriages have a better chance of staying together than those who differ in terms of nation, religion, and race, upbringing in the same culture does not ensure the permanence of marriage (Walczak 22). Walczak's research results also show that the permanence of binational marriages depends on the ability to make cultural compromises, which would entail mutual adjustment of differences, overcoming of personal prejudices and stereotypes, and development of a system which would combine different cultures (Walczak 23). Such factors as the knowledge of foreign languages, interest in the culture of another person, and social approval or disapproval exert a significant influence on the advantage of one culture over another in the everyday life of binational partners.

The place of residence plays an extremely important role in the functioning of binational families:

The consequences are different in the case where a couple chooses as the place of their residence the country of origin of one of the parents, in which case the dominant culture becomes the family culture, than when they choose a neutral country, i.e. a country which is not the country of origin of either of the parents. This offers an opportunity for openness towards cultural differences and orientation towards multiculturalism as a value. (Miluska 381)

The problems which appear in binational families concern the following:

the ways of expressing love, closeness, character and degree of commitment to a relationship, attitude towards marriage and parenting, and the perception of the roles of men and women. Common are communication problems resulting from an inappropriate interpretation of non-verbal signals, such as tone of voice, quantity and quality of eye contact or gesture interpreted by a partner contrary to the intention of the speaker. (Sowa-Behtane 29)

Individuals raised in multiple cultural contexts develop, like their parents in binational marriages, hybrid cultural identities, composed of a multitude of influences. In this new individualized cultural identity, the boundaries are blurred, and the range of values and cultural symbols is expanded. Consequently, these individuals are maladjusted, cannot identify with the culture of either parent, and feel the need to move to a third country to search for self-identity.

What are the positive and negative effects of being raised in a binational family? The positive effects Ewa Sowa-Behtane mentions are the following: openness towards

others, a tolerant attitude, curiosity about the world, increased cultural awareness, multicultural identity, and multilingualism. Among the negative effects, she lists identity problems connected to cultural or national identification, the feeling of loss, an intolerant attitude toward the environment, and limited contact with the family of one of the parents.

As can be seen, the shaping of a cosmopolitan identity in a binational family is a process which requires certain strategies for coping with cultural differences. In the following sections, I shall present the accounts of selected respondents concerning their cultural identity, traditions, and the customs they cultivate in everyday life.

2 Cosmopolitanism and Cultural Identity of Polish American Couples

All respondents were born and raised either in the United States or in Poland. Currently, they live in Poland (in Warsaw or its vicinity, Kraków, and Lublin), or in the United States (in Chicago, New York, Los Angeles, Detroit, or in their vicinities). One couple lives in Freiberg, Germany. The four selected couples differ with respect to their nationality, country of origin, current place of residence, and number of children: Kasia and Ben: a Polish woman and US man living in the US; Maciej and Sandra: a Polish man and US woman living in the US, but currently moving to Denmark; Anna and Ed: a Polish woman and US man living in Germany; Beata and Chris: a Polish woman and US man living in Poland. The following examples will pertain to the origin of the respondents and their attitude toward the country of origin. They will also constitute an attempt at determining their current cultural identity.

2.1 Couple 1: Kasia and Ben

Kasia, aged 49, comes from Warsaw and is a pianist. When she was 26, she left for the United States to study music. There she met Ben, who is the same age as Kasia, and likewise a pianist. They have been married for 18 years and live in San Francisco, where they run a music school. To develop their professional passions, they decided not to have any children but are the owners of two cats: Francis and Antonio. This is what they say about their origins and family:

Kasia: I come from Warsaw and so did my parents. My father was an engineer. He travelled a lot. He was a soldier of the Home Army. I inherited his strength. My mother was a housewife and did not work professionally. She always told me: "Do not end up like me, do not repeat my mistakes, rely on yourself, not on a man."

Ben: I come from the Midwestern United States, from Nebraska. I am the first person in my family who has left our hometown to achieve something. My parents were not educated. They were not interested in the world outside their town. Even when we went on holidays, this was in the vicinity of our home. We never went to the ocean or mountains, not to mention a holiday abroad.

Kasia and Ben stress that nationality does not matter much to them. Kasia feels Polish, but she has a lot of typically US American characteristics as well:

Kasia: I am assertive, independent and self-reliant, and these are American characteristics. For me, Polish identity manifests itself in culture and music. In my music school, I get my students acquainted with Chopin's *oeuvre*, which is the very essence of Polishness. And yet I do not keep contact with the Polish community in San Francisco. These are very distrustful, unfriendly and envious.

Ben maintains that he does not feel like a typical guy from the Midwest of the United States:

Ben: I have neither a cowboy hat nor a gun. I am not very patriotic. I am interested in the world outside Nebraska. I easily adjust to new conditions as when I lived in Canada while doing my Ph.D.

2.2 Couple 2: Maciej and Sandra

Maciej, aged 39, comes from Kraków. Having finished his studies, he left Poland to join his family. They had received green cards and were living in the USA. In Madison, Wisconsin, he met Sandra while doing his Ph.D. Sandra, aged 35, grew up on the East Coast of the United States in a very homogeneous environment: white, Protestant, among agricultural lower-middle class workers. Her grandparents came to the United States from Italy. Sandra and Maciej have been married for seven years. Sarah is a sociology professor, and Maciej is a multimedia producer. They have two daughters, aged five and two. Since Sandra has recently signed a one-year contract to work at the University of Copenhagen, they are moving to Denmark.

Maciej did not plan to leave Poland. He was fascinated by the Eastern Borderlands. He felt truly Polish. This is what he says about the transformation of his cultural identity:

Maciej: Now, after the years spent in the USA, I think I have a flexible identity. I assume the one that suits me at the moment. I am between cultures. I know that I will never be an "American" for my US friends, but this does not disturb me at all. I am proud of it. I got stuck somewhere in the middle. I have been living in the States for 15 years and this has changed my identity. After 24 years of living in Poland, being wrapped in cotton wool, I have learned many lessons at the school of hard knocks. I had to cope on my own, float or drown. I did very well, indeed. This taught me self-discipline, setting goals and consistently achieving them, following my dreams.

During her studies, Sandra travelled a lot around Europe and Asia. But it was her stay in South Korea, where she lived for three years, that entirely changed her perception of her culture:

Sandra: On my return to the States I felt I no longer fit in with my friends. I was out of the game. I did not know what was going on in pop culture. I did not see the much-discussed TV series “Friends.” I did not hear about the shootings there, or elsewhere. It was as if I had lost my US identity and stopped sharing a common culture. For a while I even thought of coming back to South Korea, where I had felt really good. I had to come to terms with the fact that I was not a typical American.

According to Sandra, a “typical American” does not spend much time outside his or her country. Americans from the US do not see the world through other people’s eyes. They are immersed in mass culture: talk shows, national news, the newest series, etc.

Sandra: I would say that a typical American is a patriot, a nationalist admiring the power of his own country, having an optimistic, materialistic and anti-intellectual attitude to life. I am not a nationalist, but nevertheless I feel American.

Despite the feeling of maladjustment, Sandra maintains that she could not leave the States forever. She believes that categorizing people with regard to their nationality is not altogether precise, but quite useful. It is growing up and living in a certain place, or country, that shapes us.

2.3 Couple 3: Anna and Ed

Anna, aged 39, comes from Wrocław. She was born into an artistic family. As a teenager, she attended music courses in Germany, where she later took up music studies in violin. There, at the university, she met Ed. Anna currently works as a violinist in an orchestra and teaches the instrument at a music school. Ed, aged 39, is also a musician. He plays the saxophone in a quartet, giving concerts all over the world. He comes from Columbus, Georgia, from a musical family of American Jews. Anna and Ed live in Germany. They have a seven-year-old daughter, who is learning to play the saxophone and sometimes gives concerts with Ed.

Anna: My grandparents came from Lviv. My mother is a pianist, my father an actor. I was born in Wrocław, but we quickly moved to Warsaw, where I lived until my departure for Germany.

Ed: My grandparents arrived in the United States from Minsk. My mother was born there. My father has Dutch roots. My parents are assimilated Jews. Like me, they are musicians: My mother is a cello player, my father plays the clarinet.

As for her cultural identity, Anna says she feels Polish, because she speaks Polish, cooks Polish dishes, and celebrates holidays in Polish, but she could no longer live in Poland:

Anna: We, the Poles, are a sad nation, full of fear. Here, in Germany, I got rid of this fear. I do not complain any longer. I am not a grumbler.

Ed: My wife says that I am not a typical American because I have my own opinion and I do not need the media to know what to think. Living in the States means that one has to work constantly. Americans are proud that they do not have holidays. But I like my everyday life, bits and pieces of different cultures in our life. I feel rather European.

2.4 Couple 4: Beata and Chris

Beata, aged 49, comes from Warsaw. She is a lawyer, but she has never practiced her profession. Instead, she writes books and teaches German. She met Chris on a bus while taking part in an academic exchange program in Germany. They have been married for 21 years. Chris studied humanities. Currently, he works as a manager abroad and returns home on the weekends. The couple has four children, aged 19, 17, 13 and 5. They live near Warsaw. This is what they say about their roots and cultural identity:

Beata: My parents lived in the country. Like many other Varsovians, they moved to Warsaw, where I was born, from one of the nearby villages. My father worked in a shipping company. My mother worked as an economist.

Chris: I was born in the States, near the Mexican border. Those who lived there had very mixed roots. Mine are Norwegian, German, Swiss and Irish. My great-grandmother, whom I remember quite well, spoke Norwegian. My parents were educated. My father was a physician, whereas my mother was a teacher.

Beata: I feel European even more than Polish. When I was in the States, I felt that everything was so far away. I also understood that Poland and Europe are extremely diverse. I grew to appreciate Poland and I do not agree with this constant complaining about our country.

Chris: I got Europeanized and Polonized in exile. It would be difficult for me to come back to live in the States. I do not know who I am any longer. In the States, I do not feel at home. I am a citizen of the world. I constantly travel between Germany, Poland, England, and the States. Wherever I am, I feel good. But I like Poland very much, and I speak good Polish.

The majority of my respondents stress the emotional bond with their countries of origin, claiming at the same time that nationality is not of great importance for them. They emphasize that they do not feel like typical Poles or Americans from the US. They were always interested in otherness and exoticism. That was why they travelled a lot and studied abroad. My respondents changed their attitude to their countries of

origin as time passed. The longer the immigration was, the lesser the levels of homesickness and the need to maintain national tradition and speak the mother tongue. The ongoing acculturation process transformed their cultural identity, enriching it by new elements. They adopted more and more customs, traditions, and patterns of behavior from their partners and their countries of origin, gaining simultaneously deeper self-awareness and increasing their openness towards otherness.

3 Cosmopolitanism and Friendships of Binational Families

The majority of my respondents attach great importance to close contacts with their family and friends, and they appreciate them very much. In most cases, these are international connections. My respondents stress that friendships in Poland look much different from those in the States. They are much deeper, and people make every effort to meet. In the States, people often say: “We have to meet,” but it is not binding and does not lead to an actual meeting. People work a lot, and the distances between the houses are immense. The Poles living in the States miss close relationships with their friends such as those they had in their homeland. Yet they complain about the Poles living abroad and they do not seek contact with them. It is most common that the closest friends come from countries other than Poland and the States.

Chris: Apart from my family, friends are really important. But I have to confess that friendships with the Swedes, Poles, Danes, and Japanese seem to be deeper, truer than with Americans. In the States, people do not have time for their friends. When we arrive in Poland only for four days, our friends organize their duties in such a way that we could meet.

Beata: Where do we find our friends? We have four children. It is widely known that everyone can visit us, and so people from all over the world drop in as they wish. Nowadays there are increasingly more children at school who have mixed backgrounds; their parents are different and they lived in many different countries. These are really children of a third culture.

Anna: Our friends make up an international environment. We hardly have any Polish friends except for two acquaintances of my parents from whom I rented a flat as a student. We completely lost touch with Poles. The Poles living abroad are extremely greedy and envious. They do not hang out together. We have a lot of German friends. Ed’s friend from Trinidad, who lives here, is a conductor. We also have friends who come from France and Australia.

Sandra recalls the period when they lived in Philadelphia and Detroit as follows:

Sandra: I appreciate the time we spent in Philadelphia and Detroit, because our neighborhood was multicultural and diverse, mainly African American. Among our neighbors we were a white minority, and by making friends we were crossing the barriers which still exist in the States. We are still in touch, although we have not been living there for 10 years.

4 Cosmopolitanism and the Cultural Identity of the Respondents' Children

My respondents' children are bicultural. They speak two or even three languages fluently. Due to their parents' attitudes, they are more open and tolerant towards otherness. They often are unable to decide about their cultural identity, but it is frequently shaped with reference to the place where they spent their childhood and early school years:

Beata: Four of my children speak two languages fluently, although to a varying degree. They always talk with their father in English. Iza, who spent three years at school in the States, writes and speaks fluently. Kinga writes poorly in English, and one can see that she did not attend an American school. Max is the funniest case: He was neither brought up there nor attended the school, and yet he is bilingual because he listens to the language all the time.

Ed: My daughter is seven years old. She was born in Germany and raised there. Although she is brought up tri-culturally, she is more German than Polish or American. What does a tri-cultural upbringing give her? I think she is much more open and tolerant, has broader horizons and looks at the world from a broader perspective. She is not too hasty in judging people and does not think "he is different, i.e. worse." She treats otherness in a normal way.

Maciej: Both our daughters were born in the States. They attend American schools. I see to it that they talk with me in Polish and use Polish when talking to each other. I read Polish fairy tales to them every day. The older one, Ola, starts reading herself and she reads out loud Brzechwa's poems to her younger sister. What kind of cultural identity will they have? It depends if we leave the States, because then they will absorb the culture of a given country. I think they will feel rather American enriched by Polish culture.

My respondents perceive their multicultural experience as having immense value in their lives. That is why they want their children to become citizens of the world. They wish them to speak a few languages and be open towards otherness:

Chris: My wife and I want our children to maintain contact with the global world, for the world is a global village. We wish them to speak a few languages and have contact with people from different socioeconomic backgrounds so that they would not think that the world is one-dimensional.

Among the 23 Polish American couples I studied, nine currently live abroad: Eight in the United States and one in Germany. Six of them have one to four children, between the ages of 1 and 15. Most of my respondents' children living in the States attend a Polish Saturday School in which they learn reading, writing, and speaking in that language. The children living in Poland attend, in most cases, international schools with English as the language of instruction. All respondents emphasize that the advantages of an upbringing in a binational family are unquestionable: A bicultural child sees the world in a multidimensional way, in a broader perspective, and hence is more tolerant.

5 Cosmopolitanism and the Respondents' Cultural Traditions

Culture is a matrix which fashions the individual. In the process of socialization, the individual internalizes the patterns of culture present in the traditions, language, and history of a given nation to subsequently replicate them. Cultural identity binds people to the culture of their place of upbringing and to the group of people who share the same values and cultural heritage. "Cultural identity is a "product," a group artifact, the system of associative community ties which places an individual within a network of positions and gender roles, birth order, age, race, and familial, tribal, ethnic, national and civilizational identities" (Paleczny 71). Tomasz Paleczny emphasizes that the individual's personality is shaped first and foremost in a small, local, familial, and neighborly community. It is the familial environment that forms our worldview, allowing for an internalization of norms and symbols before an individual can identify with a larger cultural group, which is racial, ethnic, or national. Homogeneous cultures, to which Poland belongs, where there are practically no religious or national minorities, are characterized by the rigidity of norms and values, which means that the modification of one's identity is possible only to a lesser degree. In heterogeneous societies, to which the United States as a multicultural society belongs—"the melting pot" of nations and religions—the range of identity transformations in constant confrontation with constituent groups is much greater (17).

5.1 Couple 1: Kasia and Ben

Kasia brought a love of Chopin's music, which she promotes in her school, as well as Polish proverbs, which she constantly quotes, from Polish culture. Kasia and Ben are not religious. They do not go to church, and they do not associate feasts with religion and the church calendar. Among the Polish feasts, they celebrate Christmas Eve with a traditional dinner, which is not typical in the States, where the main Christmas meal is most frequently eaten on Christmas Day (the 25th of December):

Kasia: Once a year I turn into a Polish woman. With my own hands, I prepare Polish dishes: dumplings, sauerkraut-and-meat stew, and beetroot soup. But I do not enter the kitchen on Christmas Day. Ben does everything.

For 10 years, they have celebrated Christmas Eve with Ben's parents. They always visit them in San Francisco. On Boxing Day, they go for a week to Mexico, while their cats are taken care of. They do not celebrate Easter. Kasia bakes a yeast cake and prepares herring, buying bloaters in a Polish shop. They also have their own rituals besides Polish and US traditions. They solemnly celebrate their wedding anniversary and the day they adopted their cats. Every year Kasia and Ben spend their holidays in Poland.

In Warsaw, they stay at a hotel, not at Kasia's brothers', because she does not keep in touch with them. They meet Kasia's college friends. They sometimes give a concert in one of the Warsaw clubs.

5.2 Couple 2: Maciej and Sandra

Sandra and Maciej, although they grew up Catholic, are not engaged with matters of faith. They do not celebrate all religious feasts. At Easter they go to church with an Easter basket and on Easter Monday they throw water. In the spring, they drown an effigy of Marzanna with other Poles in Ann Arbor. They celebrate neither St. Valentine's Day nor Polish or American Independence Day. They celebrate Christmas, but not the traditional Polish Christmas Eve with 12 dishes. On Christmas Day, they have a festive breakfast following Sandra's home tradition. They also celebrate a somewhat unusual Thanksgiving Day with North American, Polish, and Chinese food, and of course, birthdays.

Sandra: At home we eat Polish and American dishes. I do not cook *in Polish*, but Polish food is constantly present on our table. We travel to a Polish shop at Hamtramck twice a month, where we buy sausage, fresh rolls, Polish candies, and dumplings. Maciej sometimes makes Polish vegetable salad, and his father stuffed cabbage when he visits us. So I think we have a lot of Polish as well as American food at home. I love sauerkraut-and-meat stew.

For Maciej, traditions are not particularly important. He does not care about US ones, but he does care about Polish ones:

Maciej: We usually spend Christmas at my mother's in Delaware. She prepares 12 dishes. At Easter we stay here, in Ann Arbor. Sandra and my daughters paint Easter eggs which we have later blessed in the church. There I meet mainly Poles and some Italians. At Christmas we break the wafer, decorate the Christmas tree, but we do not sing carols. We do not celebrate Christmas Eve like other Poles in the States, but Christmas Day straight away.

To maintain contact with Poland, they visit Kraków, Maciej's hometown, once a year. There his daughters attend a Polish kindergarten for a month. In the States, they attend a Polish Saturday School. The family maintains close relations with the Polish community in Ann Arbor. Maciej organizes an annual Polish film festival.

5.3 Couple 3: Anna and Ed

Anna and Ed combine four traditions on an everyday basis: Polish, North American, German, and Jewish. They incorporate German tradition because they live in Germany and Jewish tradition because Ed is a Jew. They are not religious but rather ecumenical, as they say.

Anna: Our cuisine is international: German, Polish, Italian, Thai, very much open, every day something different. I make pork cutlets and sauerkraut-and-meat stew. Ed prepares hamburgers. Our daughter loves pork knuckle. We also eat pig ears. I have recently cooked a liver and noodle soup and tripe—the dishes an ordinary American would not touch, but we eat them with pleasure. And potato pancakes with applesauce, as this is the way it is eaten in Germany and our daughter got used to it.

Ed: As to American feasts, we celebrate Thanksgiving, but we do not prepare a turkey, because nobody wanted to eat it. It is too thin and the oven is too small. Instead, we make chicken, because everybody likes it. We also celebrate Halloween. We go to the Europa-Park. Everybody is dressed up. We have holidays, and so we take a rest there. We will soon celebrate Hanukkah, the Jewish Festival of Lights.

Since their daughter started kindergarten, Anna and Ed have incorporated German feasts in their calendar. They do not want their daughter to feel isolated from German tradition. That is why, on November 11, they celebrate St. Martin's Day, baking a goose. From the beginning of December until Christmas, they wait for the dwarves to bring presents. Yet they celebrate a Polish Christmas Eve, preparing beetroot soup with small dumplings, *kutia*—a sweet grain pudding—mushroom dumplings, and carp.

Anna: On November 1, which is All Saints' Day, Poles visit the graves of their family and friends. I do not go to the cemetery because I do not have anyone here, but I talk about death at that time. I also cultivate old Polish traditions, such as putting out food for ghosts. It is some kind of return to the beginnings. We try not to celebrate Easter Monday because our daughter often caught a cold. We are definitely not bored by celebrating. We have to celebrate all year round to know when we should celebrate.

5.4 Couple 4: Beata and Chris

Beata and Chris are practicing Christians. Chris is Protestant and Beata is Catholic. As they lived on three continents in numerous countries, moving many times, their cultural traditions are extremely rich:

Beata: We celebrate all feasts in a row, doubly: American and Polish, or even triply. When we lived in San Francisco, our friends were Chinese. Since then we have celebrated Chinese New Year as well. At Christmas and Easter we have dishes from both cultural traditions.

Chris: This year, on Thanksgiving, we baked two turkeys because there were so many people. As usual, we served creamed corn, cranberries, cooked sweet potatoes, green beans with almonds and bacon, four types of turkey stuffing and pumpkin soup. On Thanksgiving Day people gather together to say what they are thankful for, and you may hear some emotional speeches. We do it as well, and I think it is cool. There is no tension, disguise, presents, or high-gloss polishing.

Beata: We celebrate Halloween as well as All Saints' Day. We organize Halloween a little bit earlier so that there would be no dissonance between these two traditions. I think that our tradition is less cool because it does not have this neighborly dimension. In the States, people go to visit one another, i.e., one house visits another, children and adults, all dressed up. And this

is the best. Here children go after sweets; teenagers go as well and this may turn into a minor vandalism. We also make dreadful dishes. My specialty is cut-off fingers made of sausages with nails made of almonds and ketchup sprinkled gently on top.

Chris: I come from a place near the United States-Mexico border, where we celebrated Mexican All Souls' Day with our neighbors. They have a different attitude towards death: It is not the end of which one should be afraid. Children dance with skeletons, and death is de-demonized. Mexicans do not have a problem with that. Pictures of dead people can be placed on the table at a wedding. They are in constant touch with ghosts. What a wonderful tradition!

Beata and Chris emphasize that their house is open to everyone. Neighbors and friends of their four children know that they can always come to visit them.

As my research shows, the variety of traditions the partners decide to maintain depends much more on the female partner than on the male one. More Polish dishes are eaten and feasts celebrated in the families in which the female partner is Polish. They also adopt US traditions and the traditions of a third country as in the case of the couple living in Germany. There are frequently no Polish dishes in the families in which the female partner is from the US, as Polish male partners rarely cook and attach less importance to customs, especially when they are not religious. After the years spent together, Polish American couples adopt the traditions of the country in which both partners live, or the ones that they care about. The ones of lesser importance disappear.

6 Cosmopolitanism and the Sharing of Duties

Cosmopolitanism assumes the equality of cultures and ascribes equal value to all people regardless of sex or nationality. If an individual's identity can be fluid, the social roles of men and women can evolve as well (Spisak 90). The way a couple shares their household chores reveals whether the relationship is traditional or based on partnership. In many Polish families, even though both partners work the same hours, a vast majority of duties related to housekeeping and the upbringing of children still, in the twenty-first century, lie with women. In the United States, in well-educated Caucasian families in which spouses are between 30 and 60 years old, like those of my respondents, both partners often work, trying to share duties in a just way, even though women are observed to be more overloaded.

6.1 Couple 1: Kasia and Ben

In Kasia and Ben's relationship, the responsibilities are shared fairly, without a pre-established plan, depending on the availability of either partner. There are no mis-

understandings. Knowing that Ben arranges clothes in drawers more carefully, Kasia does not insist on doing it:

Ben: We do not make a list, or anything of the sort. When I am in the kitchen and see something dirty, I wash it up. Kasia does the same. When something needs to be done, it is done.

Kasia: We share all our duties. We have similar salaries. We work the same hours. When I do not have enough students, my mother's voice says: "You have to be independent." I prefer earning more money than Ben rather than less.

6.2 Couple 2: Maciej and Sandra

Maciej and Sandra's relationship is a real partnership. They share their duties related to housekeeping and the upbringing of their two little daughters fairly. This is indispensable so that both of them can develop their careers: Sandra is an academic, whereas Maciej is a film producer. With small children and without the help of grandmothers and nannies, this would be impossible were it not for the fair sharing of their responsibilities. Sandra's work not only involves hours spent at the university with her students, but also frequent conferences and research. She recently went to China for five weeks to do research for a book about the Chinese precariate.

When I was in Ann Arbor, interviewing Maciej, Sandra was in China, and Maciej took care of their daughters alone for five weeks. Soon after her return, Maciej was to leave for Brazil for a longer period of time to work on a new documentary. I could observe his professionalism and engagement in the care of the girls. While answering my questions, he prepared their dinner, made sure that they finished the meal and put away the plates, corrected their language mistakes, supervised their play (Ola read a book in Polish to Teresa), and helped his younger daughter in the bathroom. In the morning, before driving the children to the kindergarten, he gathered raspberries for them in the home garden so that the food in their lunch boxes would be healthy.

This is what Sandra says about her family life on weekdays:

Sandra: In the mornings before leaving for work, we share our duties equally. We prepare lunch boxes for ourselves and the children. In the afternoons, we make dinner and help the girls do their homework or prepare things for the next day. Maciej spends more time with them in the fresh air, while I clean the house, although we have only recently had a cleaning lady who comes to help us. On weekdays the girls start school early in the morning. I pick them up in the afternoon.

On Saturday mornings, Maciej drives the children to the Polish school and Sandra has the morning for her to work. On their return, they go to dinner at their friends', or somebody drops in. There are also meetings with Poles in Ann Arbor. On Sundays, they go swimming or skiing. Sandra usually works in the mornings on weekends, and the afternoons they spend together.

6.3 Couple 3: Anna and Ed

Anna and Ed's relationship, like that of Maciej and Sandra, is, again, a fair partnership. Nowadays, they justly share the duties related to housekeeping and raising their daughter, but it was not always like that:

Anna: The beginning was terrible. My husband could not do anything. Nothing at all. In his family house, the parents always hired household help because they were either giving concerts or rehearsing. Today Ed is the most organized man in the world. He can do everything, but, you know, he was willing to learn. Even if he had not been, he had to. But it is always like that: One has to be consistent and find motivation. It is the same with a child or a dog, only it lasts longer.

Anna claims that the most effective strategy was the use of the iPhone app *Habitica*, which she now recommends to all married couples. Users create a list, and they are rewarded for each completed activity.

Ed: At home we either do everything together or interchangeably depending on who is present and has time. I have been cooking since we bought the *Thermomix*, equipment for preparing meals. Today, when Anna returned home after the rehearsal, we had carrot rissoles with potato purée. It cannot happen that anyone says: "Is there no dinner? Did no one vacuum?" Today I have had more time, so I have cleaned the house, loaded and unloaded the dishwasher and walked the dog. When I am not here, Anna does everything. We simply swap.

6.4 Couple 4: Beata and Chris

When their other children were born, and Beata and Chris often moved house, it was only Chris who worked in the beginning. Beata looked after the house and took care of their four children. On weekends when Chris was at home, he helped with the children. Generally, this model has remained because Chris works all over Europe, travels a lot, and is not always at home on weekends.

Beata: On weekdays I am a mother as well as a father. I do everything: cook, clean the house, drive my son Max to classes, or take part in parents' evenings. Apart from that, I am writing another book and teaching German online. We solve behavioral problems on the phone. My husband returns home on weekends and devotes time to children. Since everyone is a different age and has varied needs, he takes them separately to the swimming pool, for a walk, or shopping.

All my respondents are curious about the world, open towards new challenges, and looking for changes in life. Their willingness to live in a distant foreign country and be in a relationship with a foreigner demonstrates that they are not afraid of leaving their sphere of comfort. The following components constitute their cosmopolitan identity: slight attachment to the country of origin and place of residence, mobility (frequent travels and international friendships), and the consciousness of a citizen of the world.

The married couples I studied are happy in their relationships. They successfully pursue their careers despite the obstacles as in the case of Beata whose husband Chris works far away from home. They feel supported by their partners. Their relationships are based on egalitarian partnership, which is characterized by lack of gender specification. They are successful partly because the partners are freelancers and share the same values, searching for a proper work-life balance. Although my respondents grew up in religious households, they are not very religious themselves. The women are strong, resourceful, independent, and optimistic. They have their own careers. According to the Bem Sex-Role Inventory (BSRI), a measure to account for an individual's gender, they would be categorized as androgynous, i.e., as assuming the complementarity of masculine and feminine traits (masculine women) (Bem 134). Men do not follow the model of hegemonic masculinity, based on male dominance (Connell), but are conciliatory. In Krzysztof Arcimowicz's typology, they embrace the model of a gentle man, i.e. a child carer (329), and in accordance with Bem's Inventory, they would be considered androgynous (feminine men) (Bem 117).

7 Cosmopolitan Identity and Cultural Transformation of the Country of Origin

The basis for developing a cosmopolitan identity is openness to change and the need and ability to transcend the normative identity boundaries imposed by a nation state (Hill; Spisak; Waldron). By transforming a "tribal identity" full of social rules and categories into a cosmopolitan one, people become unique and gain transnational awareness (Beck and Beck-Bernsheim 30–32). They do not, however, reject anything that shaped them locally, but distance themselves critically from their culture, using its potential to further develop their identity regardless of former norms and practices.

The national identity, norms, and categories which people internalize in the process of socialization do not define them permanently. Cosmopolitan identity entails remembrance of the past, because it has shaped us, and simultaneous oblivion to be able to evolve and create alternative ways of development. The US philosopher Jason D. Hill questions the notion of a national character, arguing that attributing permanent and normative characteristics to nationalities does not have any scientific basis (18). For Hill, the most paramount form is humanity and the identity of a citizen of the world who does not ascribe the horror of the Holocaust or the institution of slavery to one particular nation. A cosmopolitan has to remember the injustices of the world and remain vigilant against crimes committed in human not national terms. Then, gaining self-awareness, s/he will be able to fashion not only his/her cosmopolitan identity but also influence the culture of his/her country of origin by enriching and transforming it.

My respondents practice cosmopolitanism in pursuing their careers, working for their local and national communities, and drawing on their international experiences. Kasia and Ben run an international music school in the United States, where they teach Chopin's music; Sandra wrote a book on China; Maciej organizes an annual Polish film festival in Ann Arbor; and Beata has just published a book about her experiences in a binational relationship. Raised in several cultures, their children are citizens of the world.

By developing one's identity and raising self-awareness, one can gain subjectivity and deepen the understanding of one's own culture. Working towards the shaping of one's identity and refashioning constitutes the most significant value of cosmopolitanism (Spisak 90). Not only does cosmopolitanism contribute to the development of individuals, standing not in the way of patriotism and "small homelands," but it is in the best interest of mankind. The knowledge of cultural differences in today's world full of previously unknown dangers is indispensable. This is confirmed by Beck in *Cosmopolitan Vision*, who states that nowadays the former division between the inside and outside, national and international, us and them, has lost its weight. To survive one needs a new cosmopolitan realism (14). Hence the international experiences of "world families," who build on otherness and whose members live between cultures, are worth getting to know, for, as Beck states: "In the cosmopolitan outlook, ... there resides the latent potential to break out of the self-centered narcissism of the national outlook and the dull incomprehension with which it infects thought and action, and thereby enlighten human beings concerning the real, internal cosmopolitanization of their lifeworlds and institutions" (*The Cosmopolitan* 2).

Translated by Agnieszka Gotchold

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