

The aim of the project is to explore the transformation of civil society in response to two crises: 1) related to the Russian invasion of Ukraine and Ukrainian refugees in Poland; 2) related to the Polish-Belarusian border crisis. Each of these breakthrough events was accompanied by relief efforts by activists and NGOs. However, these support efforts were not exclusively from the so-called 'host society'. While traditionally social activism within civil society has been analyzed from the perspective of citizens' actions, new situations and circumstances require a modification of this approach: to include analysis of migrant and minority activism in the process of social mobilization. Migrants are not only passive recipients of aid activities, but also activists, initiating actions and creating aid institutions within civil society. The project will focus on the resourcefulness and agency of migrants in crisis situations. The context of Poland's intensely growing ethnic diversity has so far not been sufficiently addressed in research on transitions of civil society. The study will reveal new, non-traditional, innovative ways of community building and methods of social self-organisation in the new immigrant country facing crisis situations. It will highlight and analyze in depth the profound social change that is taking place in Poland in connection with its new status as a country of immigration.

The proposed project therefore offers a paradigm shift that defines civil society as pertaining only to national citizens: other groups, national and ethnic minorities, as well as immigrants (including refugees), also participate in its construction and consolidation. The ways in which they participate in social activities require an in-depth and comprehensive explanation, which is not sufficiently studied in existing approaches. The social activism of migrants and minorities in the face of migratory challenges is all the more important as these individuals are often deprived of full political rights: they cannot vote or be elected in general elections, so social activism is all the more important an opportunity for them to express themselves politically, address social problems affecting their ethnic group and participate in the public life of their country of residence. The practice theory approach will help to show how actions and daily routines at the micro-social level, undertaken by migrants and minority representatives, translate into the redefinition and reconstruction of civil society: multicultural and open also to non-citizens.

The project will use mainly qualitative research methods, such as interviews with migrants and members of national minorities, as well as case studies.