

# Tourism Master's Thesis

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## Culture's role in homeland imaginaries and travels

The case of the Polish Diaspora in Chicago



(Source: Goggle Images)

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## **Abstract**

The purpose of this thesis is to explore the role culture, used by Diaspora institutions, can have on creating and shaping homeland imaginaries and their impacts on homeland travels by Diaspora groups, where the case of the Polish Diaspora in Chicago will be in focus. The aspect of Diaspora tourism has a growing significance within the literature and its potential within the tourism field has been acknowledged. Diaspora tourism is referred to as the travels of Diaspora members back to their ancestor's homelands in the search for historical and cultural heritage. The possible tensions and implications that could arise on such travels would be important to identify in relation to the way the homeland is portrayed in the host country. The research was carried out by a fieldwork conducted in Chicago in order to identify and interact with the respective Diaspora institutions and their way of using Polish culture and identity, together with observations made within the Polish village and from events where the Diaspora community would be exposed to the narratives of the institutions. The research found that despite some sporadic focus on contemporary dimensions of Poland, the Diaspora institutions' main emphasis is on the traditional and historical aspects of Poland and Polish culture, resulting in that the Polish-Americans in Chicago are exposed mainly to such pictures and portraying of Poland. Furthermore the research identified that such portraying of Poland does not have a counterpart in form of the Polish Tourism Authorities, since the interest in promoting Poland in Chicago is very limited. The identified selective use of traditional aspects of Polish culture by Diaspora institutions for such a heterogeneous group as a Diaspora community can create certain implications and tensions to occur on homeland travels for latter generations of Diaspora members, especially for people born in USA or not being "home" in a long period of time. Aspects of feeling as "foreign" instead of "local" during the visits can occur for some travellers due to the homeland imaginaries created or shaped by the institutions in Chicago. Here some Diaspora members would not be able to relate to some aspects of Poland and Polish society, since such "myths" and "narratives" would not be in accordance of what was portrayed as "Polish" in Chicago.

## Table of Contents

1. Introduction.....	1
1.1 Background.....	1
1.2 Research question .....	2
1.3 Research Aims .....	2
1.4 Motivational background .....	2
1.5 The Polish Diaspora in USA.....	3
1.6 Introducing Polish Diaspora Institutions .....	4
1.6.1 Polish Cultural Institute in Chicago.....	4
1.6.2 Copernicus Foundation & Center .....	4
1.6.3 Polish Museum of America and Library.....	5
1.6.4 Polish American Chamber of Commerce.....	6
2. Methodology .....	7
2.1 Introduction.....	7
2.2 Research philosophy.....	7
2.3 Research approach .....	9
2.3.1 Qualitative approach .....	11
2.4 Data collection.....	12
2.5.1 Ethnographic fieldwork .....	13
2.5.2 Interviewees .....	14
2.5.3 Interviews .....	15
2.5.4 Further secondary data .....	17
2.6 Limitations .....	17
2.7 Reliability and validity.....	19
2.8 Sub-conclusion.....	20
3. Literature review – theoretical considerations .....	21
3.1 Culture and its complexity.....	21
3.1.1 The production of culture.....	23
3.2 Tourism Imagery and its effects .....	24
3.3 Towards a conceptualization of ‘Polonia’: defining Diasporas.....	26

3.3.1 Brubaker's three criteria's towards conceptualizing Diasporas .....	26
3.3.2 First criteria – caused by the aspects of time and place .....	27
3.3.3 The second criteria – the aspect of homeland orientation .....	29
3.3.4 The third criteria – boundary-maintenance .....	30
3.4 Root tourism and the myth of the homeland .....	32
3.4.1 "Local" or "Foreigner"? .....	35
3.6 Sub-conclusion.....	36
4. Analysis .....	37
4.1 Analysis introduction .....	37
4.2 The production of culture and identity of Poland .....	38
- Polish Diaspora Institutions in Chicago .....	38
4.2.2 Polish culture as objects .....	39
The Polish Museum of America.....	41
The Polish Village.....	42
4.2.3 Polish culture as performances .....	43
Celebrate Poland .....	43
Events at Copernicus Center .....	45
4.2.4 Tourism imagery of Poland - impacts on Poland's imagery as a tourist destination within the Polish-American community in Chicago. ....	46
4.2.5 The need for Diaspora Institutions .....	47
4.2.6 Interaction amongst Diaspora institutions – the picture of Poland in Chicago .....	49
4.2.7 Difficulties for Diaspora Institutions .....	51
Sub-conclusion: .....	52
4.3 Myth creating and implication in homeland travels .....	53
4.3.1 Diaspora Institutions as actors in creating homeland "myths" .....	53
4.3.2 Myth creation across generations: Differences in perception and desire to connect .....	56
4.3.3 Implications in possible homeland travels .....	59
Sub-conclusion: .....	61
4.4 Polish Diaspora Tourism .....	62
4.4.1 Current situation .....	62
4.4.2 Approaches by the Polish Tourism Office.....	64
Sub-conclusion: .....	67
4.5 Analysis conclusion:.....	68

5. Conclusion .....	70
6. Future research .....	71
<i>References</i> .....	72
Appendices .....	76
Appendix 1 .....	76
Appendix 2 .....	85
Appendix 3 .....	100
Appendix 4 .....	101
Appendix 5 .....	102
Appendix 6 .....	103
Appendix 7 .....	104
Appendix 8 .....	105
Appendix 9 .....	106
Appendix 10 .....	107

# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 Background

Poland, as a country historically surrounded by powerful neighbours in the central heart of Europe, has a long history of its citizens leaving the country. Due to 3 partitions, followed by 123 years without independence, a devastating Second World War and almost 50 years of a communist regime has resulted in a great number of Poles looking for a brighter future outside their motherland. These historical tragedies, together with other brighter aspects, such as the recent accession of Poland to the European Union in 2004, has resulted in Poles settling in various parts of the globe, making the Polish Diaspora, *Polonia*, one of the biggest in the world being estimated to around 15-20 millions (Ministry of Foreign Affairs – Republic of Poland).

In the past, The United States of America was long amongst one of the preferred destinations for the Poles, with the metropolitan area of Chicago being one of its centres, a fact that lies behind the choice for this research to focus on the Polish Diaspora in Chicago.

The importance for the Diaspora Communities to stay connected with their homeland has in a higher degree been described and grown in importance in the literature, with aspects of nostalgia tourism, Diaspora tourism and root tourism being addressed more frequently. The importance and potential of Diaspora Communities has been acknowledged in the tourism research field, drawing attention in the aspects of these Diaspora Communities and their returns to the homeland.

Here, this thesis will focus on the Diaspora and tourism connection where the existing literature is in a thriving phase and try to explore the connection between culture and it's impacts on homeland imaginaries and travels for Diaspora communities, with an emphasis on the impacts that Diaspora Institutions can have in the way they portray the homeland. Therefore, this thesis intends to use the case of the Polish Diaspora Institutions in Chicago and focus on their use of Polish culture in creating, re-shaping and preserving Polish identity in one of the biggest metropolitan areas of the USA. This thesis will look into these aspects by examining and investigating the complex structures in the constructions of Polish Identity in Chicago, where these concepts will furthermore be conceptualized in the research's theoretical section. Lastly, with the above in mind, the research intends to look into the aspects of the Polish Diaspora homeland-relations, perception and homeland orientation in order to examine such possible impacts on Diaspora tourism to Poland by Polish-Americans.

## 1.2 Research question

The research question for the thesis is:

- *What affect can culture used by the Polish Diaspora Institutions in Chicago have on the creation of homeland imaginaries? An examination of the cultural production's impact on homeland travels amongst Polish-Americans in Chicago.*

## 1.3 Research Aims

- Identify how culture is used by Polish Diaspora Institutions in Chicago and which impacts it could have on the tourism imagery of Poland amongst the Polish-Americans.
- Examine the role that Polish Diaspora institutions can have in the creation and reinventing of “myths” and “narratives” of Poland for the Polish-Americans in Chicago.
- Discuss the potential effects such “myths” and “narratives” can have on homeland travels for the Polish-American community in Chicago to Poland.
- Examine and discuss the approaches carried out by the Polish Tourism Authorities regarding Poland as a destination for the Polish Diaspora in Chicago.

## 1.4 Motivational background

The respective subject of this thesis concerning the Polish Diaspora was of a specific interest for me personally as a researcher due to my own ethnic background as being partly Polish and partly Danish, with strong ties to Poland and frequent homeland travels visiting family and friends. Therefore, the specific choice of USA and the Polish Diaspora was chosen due to the curiosity on the matter of a Polish Diaspora living far away from Poland and therefore not having the same easy access to Poland as myself living in Europe. Therefore since I personally could relate to the transnational nature of Diasporas and how such communities can be influenced by both the host country and the homeland, feeling a belonging to more than one country, such aspects were the main drivers for me choosing the particular subject of the research and examining dimensions I could relate to.



## 1.5 The Polish Diaspora in USA

The Polish community in the USA is the biggest Polish Diaspora community worldwide making up to 9,3 million (United States Census Bureau, 2013) with the two major concentrations of Polish-Americans residing in the metropolitan areas and states of New York and Chicago (Illinois) . In both areas the respective populations of Polish-American communities makes up to approximately 1 million people (US Census, 1990), where the migration from Poland to especially these two areas have come in “migration waves”. These “migration waves” in recent times starting from around the year 1900 and have been seen in close relation to the domestic situation in Poland and (Aroian, 1990). Aroian (1990) identifies 4 recent waves starting in the early 1990, when Poland were still partitioned and where Poles did not have an independent state, where many failed uprisings together with poor living conditions resulted in many Poles leaving the country in the hope for a brighter future in USA. The next wave of Polish migration to USA were in the aftermath of the WW2 due to the Soviet influence over Poland, which also was a factor for the next wave of migration in the 60s and 70s due to a less strict emigration policy in Poland which resulted in people leaving the communist Poland behind (Aroian, 1990). The fourth wave of Polish migration to the USA was caused by the martial law imposed in Poland in the 1980s together with the ban of the Solidarity-union by the communist regime, which caused further migration from Poland to the USA (Aroian, 1990).

The most recent wave of migration from Poland was in the aftermath of the fall of the Iron Curtain, where migrants left for the USA due to economic reasons and of family reunions with relatives already residing in the US. The many waves have in recent years stalled due to increased restrictions of US immigration law, together with the accession of Poland to the European Union resulting in new labour markets being more easily accessible for Poles (Consulate General of the Republic of Poland in Chicago, 2016). Even though the migration from Poland to USA has decreased in the recent years there is still around 1 million people of Polish origin living today solely in the state of Illinois, with approximately 85 % of them living in the metropolitan area of Chicago (65 % in the suburbs and 20 % within the city). The traditional Polish Village placed North-West from downtown Chicago has seen a drop of Polish residents from 70.000 to 20.000 in the last 2 decades, with Polish-Americans in a higher degree moving out to the suburbs of the city (Consulate General of the Republic of Poland in Chicago, 2016).

## **1.6 Introducing Polish Diaspora Institutions**

Different Polish Diaspora Institutions were identified when carrying out this research and the following subsections will give the reader a general overview of which specific Diaspora Institutions were encountered in Chicago and are addressed later in the analysis section 4. Apart from Diaspora Institutions some materials and aspects have been used from the Polish Tourism Authorities, where within this aspects The Polish Ministry of Sport and Tourism and it's sub organisation The Polish National Tourist Office, are the two main organisations for promoting Poland as a tourist destination. Therefore when referring to The Polish Tourism Authorities later on in this thesis such as in the methodology of section 2 or the analysis of section 4, these two above mentioned organisations are the ones to have in mind for the reader.

### **1.6.1 Polish Cultural Institute in Chicago**

The first Diaspora Institution identified for the research was the Polish Cultural Institute of Chicago which main aims were to promote different aspects of Poland, Polish culture, history, tradition and Polish people to the American community. Another aspect for the Polish Cultural Institute was to nourish a positive image of Poland and Polish people in USA and confront anti-Polonism. The founder of the Polish Cultural Institute, a Polish-born journalist named Ivo Widlak, was the person with whom the research was in contact with. The Polish Cultural Institute, even though it has ceased its operations, is included in the research in order to give an in-sight in the more modern approaches carried out by Diaspora Institutions and which difficulties such new institutions face, since the institute ceased its operations recently after around 6 years of operation. Even though that the main target group for the Polish Cultural Institute were the Americans living in Chicago, the Polish-Americans would still be exposed to such broad portraying of Poland.

### **1.6.2 Copernicus Foundation & Center**

Another Polish Diaspora Institutions is the Copernicus Foundation & Center which was founded in 1971 firstly as the Polish Cultural Foundation and later named Copernicus Foundation, with the aim to establish a Polish Cultural Centre in Chicago. The Center does only organize sporadic event

themselves such as a big Polish food-festival called “Taste of Polonia” or other smaller events, but the majority of events held in the Center are organized by others, where the Center provide the facilities for such event to be carried out. Therefore the Copernicus Center is distributing the aspects of Polish culture and indirectly influences which aspects of Polish culture the Polish-Americans are exposed to in Chicago. Furthermore the facilities of the Center carry many Polish cultural objects as well, which the participants for the events are exposed to. After many financial problems which almost resulted that the Center went bankrupt in the 80s it today has changed to also have non-Polish events, even though with an emphasis on Polish events. The reality of the Center’s financial situation have resulted in the hosting of non-Polish events as well.

### **1.6.3 Polish Museum of America and Library**

A central Diaspora Institution in producing and showing the culture, history and identity of Poland is the Polish Museum of America and the neighbouring library in the same building, which was established in 1935. The museum started out solely as a Polish library, which today has around 1.400 guests monthly (according to the library’s guest register), where visitors come to read and borrow books of Poland both in Polish and English regarding Polish history, traditions and more contemporary literature regarding society, fiction etc. even though the majority of books are regarding more traditional aspects.

Located within the same building, The Polish Museum of America is the home to Polish artefacts, artwork, different objects of Polish folkloric traditions and other objects portraying Polish traditions and history. The museum aims to portray and preserve these above aspects of Polish culture amongst the Polish community in Chicago which therefore makes it a key actor within Chicago as a producer of Polish culture and identity. The Museum and Library are located in the old historical Polish Downtown in Chicago, which now has concentrated further away from the museum.

#### **1.6.4 Polish American Chamber of Commerce**

A last Diaspora Institution identified for the research was the Polish American Chamber of Commerce, even though not having culture as a main aim, but rather to create a network for businesses of Polish-Americans descendants and other trade relations within the Polonia community and with Poland. The relevance for including the Polish American Chamber of Commerce in the research was their co-hosting of the “Celebrate Poland” event in downtown Chicago on 10<sup>th</sup> of April which was a showcase of Poland. To this event aspects of Polish culture and identity was portrayed towards both the Polish community and the Chicago community in general, which therefore made the Polish American Chamber of Commerce relevant for this paper as an indirectly producer of Polish culture and identity in Chicago.

## **2. Methodology**

### **2.1 Introduction**

The following chapter aims to provide an explanation of and describe the methodological considerations that were taken into account while conducting the research, where the respective aspects will be explained in details. The research philosophy of a social-constructivist way of exploring the respective aspect of the Diaspora and tourism nexus in addressing the aims for the research will be given. The data collection section will focus on the process of conducting the interviews with Diaspora Institution as well as the use secondary data for the research. Lastly the section of the limitations for this research will need to be addressed in order for the research to discuss and acknowledge its own limitations.

The focus of methods has in this research been made in a qualitative way, with an inductive research approach since the thesis, even though had to work from a theoretical positioning, where not being locked into one before carrying out the fieldwork, which allowed the research to flow freely in the direction that the data collection process took it.

### **2.2 Research philosophy**

For this thesis, a social-constructivist philosophy have been chosen as it will allow the research in evolving and reach an understanding of the role and impact that Diaspora Institutions can have on the Polish-American community. Within this aspect the thesis aims to examine the Polish Diaspora Institutions in Chicago and investigate their use of culture in its activities to see which affect this respective way of using Polish culture can have on homeland imaginaries and travels. Here, within a socially-constructed research philosophy there is a wish of understanding the world where the individuals live, with their subjective stances due to their experiences of certain objects or things (Creswell, 2003). For this thesis it would be about exploring aspects of how Polish Diaspora Institutions in Chicago can impact the Polish-Americans in their perception towards Polish identity, culture and homeland perception caused by experiences in the interaction with these Diaspora Institutions.

Another aspect of a social constructivist philosophy is the acknowledgment of the presence of multiple meanings and views, instead of narrowing these down but seeing their complexity (Creswell, 2003). In the case of the respective thesis this would result in the acknowledgment of the complexity of Diaspora communities and their different perceptions and imaginaries of Poland and instead of trying to generalize these perceptions, the research looks at its complexity and study it. An example here for this thesis is the complexity of the Polish Diaspora as a whole, worldwide, as well as the complexity of the Polish-American community in Chicago and its heterogeneous nature. Furthermore the complexity of the variety of actors within the city portraying Poland as the same homeland, yet differently, had to be acknowledged and studied instead of trying to generalize them as one uniform dimension. Differences in perceptions of Poland across generations are such and complexity which could not be generalized but need to be studied and acknowledged.

Within the social constructivist approach the need is to study the specific views of the respective participants and their lives which the research aims to investigate. Furthermore the participants that this research aims to investigate have subjective views of their world and the “reality”, which is present due to a social and historical negotiation where these views have been shaped in interactions with other individuals and experiences, e.g. being Polish-American interacting Polish Diaspora Institutions, which could lead to shaping their perception of Poland. These subjective views of participants lead the individuals to evolve their own meaning regarding respective matters e.g. Poland and Polish culture. To this, I as a researcher needed to address these respective “interactions” where the views and meaning of the participant were created and shaped (Creswell, 2003).

A social constructivist approach therefore allowed this thesis to have a framework in addressing the interactions between the Diaspora Institutions and the Polish-Americans in Chicago where the research addresses how culture is used by the Institutions. Together with this, the research had to address how these interactions could shape or re-create views and perception of Poland due to experiences and interactions between Institutions and individuals in Chicago.

Lastly, my own background as a researcher needs to be recognized in a socially constructive approach, where my own background will be “positioning” myself in the research (Creswell, 2003). Here, my own cultural and historical background as partly being of Polish origin living in another

country, can provide a similarity in the interpretation of meanings and views by Diaspora Institutions in Chicago, due to the aspect of being able to relate to these situations of being a "Diaspora-representative".

## **2.3 Research approach**

A social constructive research opens up for an inductive approach, where this thesis will use the qualitative data techniques in inducing theory from the collected data (Phillimore & Goodson, 2004). Even though working with an inductive approach, without having to stick strictly to a theoretical framework, I as a researcher should not ignore the existing theory or literature before the data collections process is carried out. This has been pointed out by Phillimore & Goodson (2004) where the use of existing theory is being related and re-examined to the data analysis, where already established theoretical frameworks need to be kept in mind, which the thesis therefore cannot ignore the already present literature on the Diaspora and tourism nexus due to its increased significance in the tourism literature. When concerning the case of the Polish Diaspora Institutions in Chicago and their use of culture, it will allow the research in inducing theory by interpreting the data collection, since the research will not be locked in a fixed theoretical position before the data collection. The thesis needed a certain theoretical position of the Diaspora and tourism nexus, before testing it through interpreting the collected data and analyzing it. This inductive approach was carried out by conducting a fieldwork in Chicago regarding the cultural production of Polish Diaspora Institutions, where the collected data from conducted interviews and ethnographic observation later was analysed and induced into giving indication of theory generating. As stressed in Thomas (2006) an inductive approach can help the researcher in developing a framework for the raw collected data which for this thesis have been an ethnographic fieldwork in Chicago concerning observations and experiences together with conducted interviews and lastly the secondary material.

Despite the inductive approach not being as strong as some developed strategies for theory generating, in identifying trends and indications from the data that could be more structured on certain theories in a mixed inductive/deductive approach, a solely inductive approach helped this research in that sense, as stressed in Thomas (2006), in being a straightforward approach for the

analyzing of data in relation to the focused question for this respective research. This straightforward dimension allowed the research to be guided by the objectives set by the research, in the case of the thesis to look upon the cultural production by Polish Diaspora Institutions in Chicago. Despite these objectives of the research an inductive approach allowed the thesis to draw concepts and themes found in the collected data (Thomas, 2006), due to the observations made in Chicago and the conducted interviews where studied repeatedly in order to find major themes or indications regarding the case of the thesis.

With the above mentioned aspects in mind I therefore found an inductive approach useful in that way that it allowed the research to work without any pre-set goals or expectations towards how culture was used by Polish Diaspora Institutions but that it allowed themes to evolve in the analysis based on the collected data.

When conducting an inductive research approach I as a researcher needed to be aware and have in mind the dimension of being independent of what is observed when analysing the data. In this respective thesis the conducted interviews have been an important dimension where I as a researcher have had to be aware of my function when interviewing the respective representatives from the Polish Diaspora Institutions in Chicago, when examining the operations of these Diaspora Institutions and later conducting the interviews with these respective actors.

The relevance of the interviews and their function for the thesis had to be taken into consideration on beforehand, since the aspects of Diaspora and culture are perceived broadly by different actors and I had to be aware of keeping these interviews on the right track, in order for them to stay relevant to the conducted paper. This need of relevance had to be kept in mind, despite following an inductive approach some theoretical positioning still had to be present.

As this thesis also concentrates on conducting a qualitative research, dimensions as the norms, values and perceptions of the interviewer and the interviewee had to be acknowledged as it could in one way or another be influenced when conducting the interviews with the Institutions, aspects which have been acknowledged in Creswell (2003). Therefore when interpreting the conducted interviews I had to be aware and acknowledge certain values and perceptions that interviewer and interviewee might have.



### **2.3.1 Qualitative approach**

Following a qualitative approach for this thesis, the research will put emphasis on the aspect of understanding the world from the side of the participants and their perspectives, where the research will need to acknowledge the interactions and interpretations the participants (e.g. Polish-American community) can have, which affects the shaping of their meanings and values. Therefore as a researcher I need to develop an understanding of "the real cultural world" (Phillimore & Goodson, 2004) of the individuals being observed in this thesis, being the Polish-Americans and the Diaspora Institutions' impacts on them. Within this "real cultural world" in the tourism studies and the aspect of tourism, lies the implication to have certain ethnic and cultural aspects in mind (Phillimore & Goodson, 2004). For this thesis it would be the dimension of how the use of culture by Polish Diaspora Institutions would affect the homeland perception and travels of Polish-Americans in Chicago in relation to Poland.

To this above aspect, the thesis will have to acknowledge the aspects of a qualitative approach in the conducted interviews with Diaspora Institutions in Chicago, where I as a researcher needed to understand their approaches in creating of homeland imaginaries and use of culture in the creation of Polish identity and "Polishness". Thus there is a need to see upon the Diaspora Institutions and Polish-Americans in Chicago in term of examining the interactions and interpretation that would have created their social life's, being present in USA.

In this qualitative nature of the thesis, there will be a need to study the aspects in their natural surroundings, while interpreting the respective dimensions where people give it meaning (Phillimore & Goodson, 2004). For this research the 2 semi-structured interviews conducted with the Polish Diaspora Institutions in Chicago, would help to get an inside view of the use of cultural aspects in the creation of homeland imaginaries and "re-creation" of Polish identity.

A qualitative approach for this thesis will allow the research to explore and interpret the respective problems for the paper, which avoids the research in being "locked" (Phillimore & Goodson, 2004) to a certain issue but allow the research to evolve as the research develops, but still having a certain theoretical positioning before conducting the empirical data.

Thus the interpretation of the conducted interviews with Diaspora Institutions in Chicago, would need to have in mind the context of the respective space and place where the Polish identity is being re-created and shaped, by acknowledging these natural surroundings of the research's

participants. These aspects would fit in the social constructivist nature of the thesis, by acknowledging and studying the complexity of such issues as the surroundings of the Polish-Americans and the Diaspora Institutions in Chicago in the processes of production of culture and in creating or re-shaping homeland imaginaries. Both interviewees for this thesis are central in the data analysis since they are representatives and cultural producers/re-producers of Polish identity in Chicago.

The representatives for the two Diaspora Institutions therefore offer this thesis important in-sight information regarding the cultural production by Diaspora Institutions in Chicago with both Institutions having different but yet connected activities and therefore vital insights for the thesis.

## **2.4 Data collection**

The data for this thesis will be concentrated on qualitative methods in conducting the research, most dominantly seen in the form of the two conducted semi-structured interviews with Diaspora Institutions from Chicago.

It is my conviction that the use of semi-structured interviews was a fruitful approach to follow, which provided me with insights and information that for instance a close-ended question-approach could not have given me. Semi-structured interviews provided me with information regarding the cultural production of Polish identity in Chicago together with insights in the Polish-American community within the city. In this process the semi-structured nature of the interview-approach provided me with additional and unexpected information since the interviewees could freely add any additional insight to the interviews, together with me as an interviewer coming with possible objections and ask sub-questions if I saw relevance for it. The interviews will be explained more thoroughly in section 2.5.3 later in this methodology part of the thesis.

An interview was requested with the Polish Ministry of Sports and Tourism together with the Polish National Tourism Office, due to their responsibility regarding Diaspora Tourism activities in order to gain in-sight information regarding the specific case of the Polish-Americans and due to the lack of focus on such dimensions in the reports published from the Ministry of Sports and Tourism and from the National Tourism Office. Unfortunately these requested interviews were not possible, argued as lack of time, but with the reports in mind this current situation could reflect an

situation of the Ministry and Tourism Office being aware of the potential that Diaspora Tourism has, also seen in *“Polonia tourism areas: Current status and needs”* (2015), but lacks real approaches towards these matters, which has been observed and experiences in the two conducted interviews with the Polish Cultural Institute (I. Widlak, personal communication, Apr. 3, 2016) and the Copernicus Center (G. Kobelinski, personal communication, Apr. 5, 2016). In both interviews the lack of real contact with Polish authorities regarding tourism promotion was stressed, where both actors welcomed such potential approaches and collaboration, but pointed out a total lack of desire from the Polish side, from their experiences. Therefore books, articles, journals together with the official reports are used as secondary data in this research, in order to provide an increased validity for the thesis and back up the conducted interviews. Lastly, additional data have been collected in a conducted fieldwork in Chicago, where besides speaking with Polish Diaspora institutions, a further investigation was made in order to identify the cultural production of Poland which has been examined in the city, in form of experiencing the Polish museum in Chicago and visiting the local Polish amenities from restaurant to libraries. The fieldwork has allowed me to gain valuable insights into how Poland is portrayed and the cultural production of Poland and Polish culture, together with examining the potentials for Diaspora tourism engagement by the Polish Tourism Authorities.

### **2.5.1 Ethnographic fieldwork**

Apart from the conducted interviews with the Copernicus Foundation and the Polish Cultural Institute in Chicago, there was for this research also conducted an ethnographic fieldwork in Chicago which took place from the 2<sup>nd</sup> of April until the 12<sup>th</sup> of April, in between the semi-structured interviews.

As stressed in Altheide (1987) ethnography and ethnographic research consist of describing people and their culture, for the thesis being the Polish-American community in Chicago. This research will use ethnography as a methodological tool in order to observe social interactions between Diaspora Institutions, their production of culture and the Polish-Americans in Chicago, which follows the inductive and constructivist approach for this thesis.

The fieldwork conducted in Chicago consisted of observations, field notes, photos and impressions gathered from around the city in places such as the Polish Museum of America and the old Polish neighbourhood, together with visits to local Polish amenities in forms of restaurants, grocery stores, shops etc. These visits and observations were made in order to examine the question of the research, regarding how the cultural aspects are used by Diaspora Institutions towards the Polish-American. These observations would furthermore help on examining the impacts that the respective use of culture by the institution might. The semi structured interviews that were conducting in Chicago, also makes up a part of such an ethnographic study (Goetz & LeCompte, 1981), where this research focuses on a traditional ethnographic study. Such a traditional ethnographic study concerns the aspects of describing and explaining the reality which is observed through observations in order to use the collected data into some degree of theory generating, which accompany the constructivist and inductive approaches (Goetz & LeCompte, 1981) which the research leans towards.

The inductive approach of the thesis and its simple structure of not following specific analysing models, have to my conviction being helpful as it has allowed the thesis in gaining a higher degree of flexibility in the design and conclusions of the collected data.

### **2.5.2 Interviewees**

Before addressing the actual interviews conducted for the thesis, it is important for this section to firstly give a description of the interviewees, in order for the reader to be familiar with the respective interviewees, their background and the Diaspora Institution they represent. Therefore this section can be used by the reader to reference when reading the data analysis section, in order to have the respective interviewees and their Diaspora Institutions in mind.

Ivo Widlak is one of the two interviewees for this thesis and is the founder of the Polish Cultural Institute in Chicago. The main mission of the Polish Cultural Institute is to promote Poland in Chicago together with Polish culture, history and the traditions. An aim for the Polish Cultural Institute is to create a new and positive image of Poland and Polish People in USA and to prevent anti-Polish sentiments. Ivo Widlak and his organization wanted to address the above mentioned aspects by cultural events, concerts, seminars and workshop.

The inclusion of Ivo Widlak and his Institution would to this thesis provide in-sight knowledge as it concerns some of the main aspects of using the cultural aspects and production in the creation of new imageries of Poland in the area of Chicago, where Ivo Widlak as a founder of this respective Diaspora Institution can provide legitimate information concerning such aspects.

The other of the two interviewees for this thesis is Gregg Kobelinski, the managing director of the Copernicus Foundation & Center in Chicago. The Foundation concentrates on hosting cultural, educational and entertainment event and fairs. The Foundation is the old Polish Cultural Center which today still has a main emphasis on Polish culture but today also hosts other ethnic events in the center. The Copernicus Foundation & Center is an important actor within the Polish-American Community in Chicago, since it allows being a centre for Polish diasporic activities, as concerts, performances, seminars, conferences, classes, baptisms, birthdays, weddings etc. The Foundation therefore acts as a bonding link for hosting Diaspora activities and can therefore provide important information since it is a partly co-producer of Polish culture where Gregg Kobelinski as a managing director is the appropriate representative to speak on behalf of the Foundation.

### **2.5.3 Interviews**

The interviews took place in Chicago, Illinois, in USA on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of April 2016 with Ivo Widlak from the Polish Cultural Institute in Chicago and on the 5<sup>th</sup> of April 2016 with Gregg Kobelinski from the Copernicus Foundation. The interviews and its questions where based on a semi-structured model which would allow a more natural interaction with interviewees, compared with following a structured interview model. Both interviews were recorded by phone in order to transcript it later on and analyze it, but despite the fact of recording both interviewees it didn't seem to have an affect regarding the willingness in answering questions by the interviewees.

Both actors where targeted for conducting interviews, due to the fact that Diaspora Institutions make up a central role in the research question of the thesis, where these two Diaspora Institutions could help in getting insights and information that could help on answering the research question, regarding the Polish cultural production in Chicago. These actors where therefore chosen due to the basic fact that they are some of the very same "producers" of Polish

culture and identity in Chicago, that the research aims to explore. Both interviewees were encountered online when researching the Polish-community in Chicago and vast mail correspondences were carried out before agreeing the specific dates and terms of interviews. Correspondence with the interviewees prior to the interviews secured a higher degree of trust between interviewer and interviewee which helped on the willingness in their answers.

The interviews took place on locations chosen by the interviewees, which was intentionally in order to secure that the interviewees could feel as natural and comfortable as possible during the interviewing. The interview with Ivo Widlak from the Polish Cultural Institute in Chicago was set in a local café chosen by Ivo Widlak as a neutral place where he was already familiar with the themes of the interview-questions due to the fact that they were sent two weeks prior.

Even though that the themes of the questions for the interview were only requested by Ivo Widlak, both interviewees received these themes in order to give them an idea of the subjects that would be addressed during the interviews and giving them a chance to prepare themselves.

The interview with Gregg Kobelinski from the Copernicus Foundation & Center was carried out on the 5<sup>th</sup> of April in his office at the Copernicus Center, due to such a wish stressed by Gregg Kobelinski. It is this thesis' convincement that this allowed the interviewees during the interview to secure a sincere and natural interview since both above mentioned interviewees chose the place and time they were most comfortable with, together with the extensive correspondence by mail which created a higher trustworthiness and familiarity between interviewee and me as an interviewer.

Within the interviews the common aspects such as the internal tensions of the Polish community in Chicago were related, but both interviews gave me completely different sides of the spectrum within the Polish Community in Chicago, yet connected as it allowed me to see the differences and diversity of the Polish Diaspora in Chicago. A surprisingly element in both interviews were the acknowledgement of the great internal tensions that were present between the Polish Diaspora Institutions in Chicago.

Interactions with the employees at the Polish Museum furthermore broadened the spectrum of views within the Polish-American community as it allowed me to gain insight regarding their operations and their visitors. The interaction with the Polish Museum in Chicago opened up for yet another point of view and use of Polish culture in Chicago.

#### **2.5.4 Further secondary data**

Besides the primary data collected for this thesis in form of two conducted interviews and the insights from the fieldwork in Chicago, secondary data have been collected and used as well. Secondary data for the thesis consists of books, academic journals and reports which have been examined to contextualize and contest the insights from the conducted interviews and fieldwork. Regarding the interpretation of the secondary data, it will be important to stay as objective and independent as possible.

Materials provided from the Polish National Tourism Office and the Polish Ministry of Sports & Tourism makes up a central role in the analysis of the approaches of the Polish Tourism Authorities towards the aspects of Diaspora Tourism to Poland.

Amongst these materials, the most central is the book *“Polonia tourism areas: current status and needs”*, send by the Ministry of Sports & Tourism by post. The respective book will allow the research an insight in how the status on the Diaspora tourism is and which aspects are addressed by the Ministry it its further development, which can be related to specific aspects in the case of Chicago.

Besides the above mentioned book, two official reports from the Ministry of Tourism will be included: “Program Rozwoju Turystyki do 2020 roku” (Tourism Development Program until 2020) and „Marketingowa Strategia Polski w sektorze turystyki na lata 2012-2020” (Marketing Strategy of Poland in Tourism Sector for 2012-2020). Both reports can help in getting an insight in the overall aims of the Polish Tourism Authorities and try to identify if Diaspora tourism constitute a significant dimension within this.

#### **2.6 Limitations**

One of the limitations of the thesis is the lack of real contact with the Polish tourism authorities, in order to get an insight of how they approach Diaspora tourism and its potential together with their approaches towards the Polonia communities across the world. Although the secondary material provided on this matter from the Ministry of Sports and Tourism regarding the above mentioned dimensions, it lacks a relation to this specific case on Polish-Americans in USA which a conducted interview with the Polish Tourism Authorities could have provided.

Real contact with the Polish National Tourism Authorities could have helped the research in reaching an understanding of which measures are undertaken from the authorities in approaching Diaspora Tourism in USA, where the current secondary data only provided the research with the possible measures the authorities would like to take, but not measure already taken by them. This would have allowed the research to come up with certain “suggestions” for the tourism authorities to derive from.

Another limitation was that the conducted fieldwork in Chicago, didn't give me the possibility to speak with more than two Diaspora Institutions, which could have heighten my insights in the Polish community in Chicago and get a broader view of the Polish cultural production within the city. Since the initial aim for the research was to get an insight in the cultural production by Diaspora institutions within the city of Chicago as a whole, contact with more institutions would have resulted in a higher degree of a representative spectrum of institutions. The current two institutions and their views used for the research cannot be seen as representative for the whole Polish community in Chicago and its institutions as a whole.

Conducting the fieldwork with a social constructivist nature of the thesis, an implication was that I as a researcher started to same extent think as the interviewees, e.g. regarding some views of Ivo Widlak and his critique of the unity in the Polish Diaspora, which later on was also present in the interviews with Gregg where I starting to think more like Gregg regarding the more positive aspects of the Polish Diaspora and cultural event. I as a researcher was influenced by the subjective opinions by the interviewees, but despite this implication one might argue that the idea of social constructivism is to be in the place of the participant's reality and observe it as that. Regarding the conducted ethnographic fieldwork in Chicago, such fieldwork is time-consuming and therefore need time to be well-conducted, where an insufficient data collection during the ethnographic research would affect the consistency of the results. Here, where the few observations I as a researcher made can seem to not be enough in inducing any significant theories based on the findings but rather as indications on certain trends that could be induced by further research. Lastly, the use of a solely inductive approach is not as strong as compared with other models for theory developments e.g. those being partly inductive and deductive and opening up for already established theories in a higher degree, but despite this induction was the most straightforward way for the analyzing of the conducted data.



## **2.7 Reliability and validity**

This subsection aims to discuss the “reliability” and “validity” of the data for the thesis, which needs to be taken into consideration when carrying out the research and to be seen upon with the qualitative approach in mind.

Regarding the aspect of “reliability” this dimension needs to identify if and to which degree the findings or the research are consistent (Hernon & Schwartz, 2009; Saunders 2009).

Looking at the conducted interviews and fieldwork for this thesis in Chicago, with the social constructivist nature of the thesis in mind, the case of the thesis covers a specific case of the Polish-American community and cannot be seen as consistent findings in a broader spectrum of a case of the Polish Diaspora as a whole. This lack of consistency on a macro-level cannot be seen as consistent due to the differences within such many communities in different countries that makes up the Polish Diaspora worldwide. Despite these implications of the case of a macro-level, the research can be seen as more consistent in the term of theory consistency on a micro-level which can follow further investigations and researches in theory generalising and conceptualising. Returning to the micro-level and the specific case of the Polish-American community in Chicago, the interviewees of the research can be seen as reliable representatives of these Diaspora institutions in Chicago and their views on the approached matter. An aspect that could implicate the validity of the conducted interviews would be the lack of representation, since the two Diaspora institutions would not be the only representative of the large Polish-American community in Chicago.

Looking towards the other of the two aspects, validity, and the external validity (also called generalisability) concerns the aspect of the collected data carried out for the respective thesis would be generalisable (Saunders, 2009). The aspect of validity for this thesis would be to acknowledge that the conducted interviews with the Polish Diasporas in Chicago cannot be seen as final answers but solely as certain indications of the theoretical positioning that the thesis uses and indications towards theory generating, as mentioned as well above regarding the aspect of reliability. Within the specific case of the thesis, interviews with more Diaspora Institutions in order to give a broader representative view would heighten the validity of the respective case of the thesis, as well as a throughout fieldwork conducted for a longer period of time within the Polish community in Chicago that could allow more detailed observations to take place.

Despite this, due to the lack of data provided in the form of numeric data the validity of the findings of the ethnographic fieldwork can have difficulties in being validated.

Furthermore the aspects regarding generalisations of the finding of the ethnographic fieldwork would be hard to achieve since this research concerns the specific case of the Polish Diaspora in Chicago and therefore would be hard to generalise upon Diaspora communities as a whole or the Polish Diaspora as a whole worldwide or even in the USA.

## **2.8 Sub-conclusion**

This thesis will follow a social constructivist philosophy which will mean that the aspects of Diaspora communities, culture, homeland perceptions and travel will be viewed through such a lens of understanding the subjective reality and life within the Polish Diaspora in Chicago, shaped by the surroundings. Therefore an ethnographic fieldwork was carried out to accomplish such matters regarding the research where observations, interactions and interviews within the Polish-American community, with the qualitative approach of the research in mind, to see the world from the participants side alongside with their subjective views.

### **3. Literature review – theoretical considerations**

This part of the thesis aims to conceptualise some of the aspects that will be addressed later on in the analysis section 4, regarding culture, Diaspora communities, homeland travels and its implications in order for the reader to familiarise such terms when reading the data analysis part later on.

#### **3.1 Culture and its complexity**

This subsection aims to get a grasp on the term “culture” due to its importance in identifying the cultural production of Diaspora Institutions, where there is a need to define how culture and its production will be utilized in the research.

The term of “culture” is broad and complex with many widespread definitions and ways of perceiving the term, which therefore calls for an attempt to relate the aspect to the tourism “world” and draw upon conceptualizations related for this specific thesis and its research (Hughes, 2002; Smith, 2009; Swidler, 1986; Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner, 1998).

When speaking about culture in its broadest possible dimension and when portraying a destination it can be seen in forms of the arts, religion, language, traditions, food, dresses etc. (Hughes, 2002). If putting this matter in the perspective of this thesis, which adopts this respective view, the aspect would be concerning how the Polish Diaspora Institutions in Chicago are portraying these above mention dimensions to the Polish Community within the city.

As argued in Smith (2009) regarding the term of culture, it is hard to reach a universal definition where “culture” is used in many contexts (e.g. work-place culture). Therefore, in the context of culture and tourism, which can be argued as two vital aspects of this thesis there is a need to see culture as an ordinary aspect and in its broad term as “the way of life” for various individuals and groups of people. This specific perception is stressed by (Smith, 2009) when conceptualizing “culture”. Furthermore Smith (2009) argue as the way of life in the perspective of specific people, both individuals or groups with distinctive social activities and with this “way of life” giving importance to the heritage and traditions, together with moderns aspects as the lifestyles of these individuals or groups of people. For these individuals or groups, they are seen upon as actors sharing common ethnic or linguistic features, together with common customs, lifestyles and

traditions. Smith (2009) describes the view of culture in the contemporary aspect, stressing that in the light of globalisation these individuals or groups can feel a need to protect this “way of life”, being especially challenged if living in a foreign country.

As pointed out by Hughes (2002) culture can also be seen in the form of “types”, such as “objects” being buildings, items in museums, paintings, sculptures or as “performance” seen in the form of plays, music and dance in theatres’ or as productions of arts and craft. Both “types” of culture will be taken on by the thesis as “objects” e.g. artefacts in museum can be seen in the way of how Poland is portrayed by the Polish Museum of America in Chicago.

The aspect of “performance” can be viewed by how and in which plays, music festivals and dance shows Poland and its heritage is showed in the events of the Copernicus Center in Chicago.

As argued in Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner (1998), another way of perceiving culture can be in the form of “layers”, consisting of an outer layer, middle layer and a core.

The “layers” will for the thesis be used for the sake of operationalization in defining the aspects of culture for this research, in order to look upon the cultural production of the Polish Diaspora Institutions in Chicago. Here, the outer layer (observable level) is present and would consist of some of the above mention aspects in the form of observable things in the culture as e.g. objects.

As pointed out by Swidler (1986) culture can also be seen as beliefs, rituals, practices and rituals of the daily life. Regarding rituals and beliefs it would be for this thesis to look upon how Polish historical, religious and traditional beliefs are portrayed by the Diaspora institutions in Chicago as well to look upon which set of values they try to “send” to the Diaspora communities.

The above mentioned beliefs could e.g. be regarding how to “live life” being a traditional and conservative or a “modern and liberal” set of mind and beliefs regarding various aspects of life (differences in views upon marriage, abortion, gay-rights, religions etc.). Therefore it would be to see upon which “values” and “beliefs” are set out by the Diaspora Institutions, being e.g. either traditional or contemporary ones as mentioned above. Relating this to Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner (1998) these above mentioned dimensions would be seen in the “middle layer” of the culture, as being aspects within the culture regarding “right” norms and “wrong” norms. Lastly, Hughes (2002) furthermore points out that culture and cultural travels can also be divided in the aspect of “time”, in an historical and contemporary way. This historical dimension can be seen again as e.g. artefacts in museums or content of historical buildings. The contemporary dimension

of “culture” tends to be more mixed and can e.g. be seen in the form of contemporary performances, plays and music, but these dimensions can often have a “traditional” background as well.

### **3.1.1 The production of culture**

Regarding the “production” of the term “culture”, it will be about for this thesis to look upon how the Diaspora Institutions in Chicago “produce” the aspects of culture which were explained in the earlier section. This “production of culture” needs to be identified in order to examine the “productions” of Polish Diaspora institutions.

As pointed out by Richards (1996) cultural productions is the process of culture and its development but is as well the “product” that comes out of the respective cultural process. Therefore, for this thesis the importance will be to look upon both the process of culture that is carried out by the Polish Diaspora Institutions in Chicago, but as well to look for “the product” that these Diaspora institutions generate in their way of processing culture.

Here, the thesis will need to identify the “producers” of these “products”, being the Diaspora institutions, and the “consumers” which the “products” are addressed towards.

The consumers of the “products” by the Polish Diaspora institutions are therefore by this research being seen in form of the Polish-Americans residing in the city of Chicago.

As seen in Richards (1996), the production and hence product of culture can be carried out by either groups (such as institutions) or individuals, which attach their specific meanings to these cultural “products” through the production of it. To this, the thesis will have to identify and examine the respective Diaspora Institutions as well as individual actors in the Chicago area, regarding their “processes of culture” and look upon their respective meaning and values that they attach their “products” of portraying Poland.

As stressed by Peterson and Anand (2004) production of culture is therefore to be seen as symbolic elements of culture in a process and being shaped by the actors who are creating, distributing, teaching and preserving it. For this respective thesis it would be about looking into the operation of the Polish Diaspora institutions in Chicago regarding how they use the culture and

symbolic elements in the process of creating, distributing, teaching and preserving their perception of Poland and Polish identity. As Peterson and Anand (2004) furthermore points out the process of production of these respective elements of culture are being shaped by the different actors, here in this research being Polish Diaspora Institutions.

### **3.2 Tourism Imagery and its effects**

This section aims to identify the importance of tourism imageries for a destination, where this thesis looks upon how the cultural production of Diaspora Institutions can affect these aspects. Tourism images and imagery have been seen as strong tools in tourism, which importance has been approached and acknowledged in Buzinde et al. (2006) and in Jokela (2011) where the importance of ethnic symbols within tourism imagery is acknowledged stressed.

Jokela (2011) stresses the importance of the affect imagery can have on the way people perceive and approach a destination and its people, where one can focus on certain elements and neglect others due to the impacts that the imagery has on tourists.

This above problematic aspect that tourism imagery often can stereotype certain social realities and “select” in promoting certain realities and not others have been stressed by Buzinde et al. (2006) and Foley & Fahy (2004). As emphasized in Foley & Fahy (2004) the imagery can both stereotype a nation and its “people” and affect the way others perceive the inhabitants of the country, but can as well be seen as “self-images” of the destination and people regarding to portray themselves to others from “outside”. Therefore, the thesis would need to look into the way Poland is portrayed by the Diaspora institutions in order to identify if and which aspects of Poland would be stereotyped and neglected in the imageries that later on would be perceived by the Polish-Americans. The thesis would need to examine in which way the cultural imagery by the Diaspora institutions would be perceived by the different members of the Polish-Americans and how it would affect the way they would perceive and approach Poland as a place and destination.

There is therefore a need to look upon if and which certain subjects would be highlighted or neglected by the Diaspora institutions in their production of the cultural imagery of Poland in Chicago. Certain aspects would have to be identified to look upon if the Diaspora institutions portray Poland in the same way as they would want to be perceived?

The aspect of looking upon the Diaspora institutions as a presentation of Poland in the USA would require examining if their “self-image” and the way of portraying Poland, would be same that the Polish Tourism Authorities are trying to give Poland in their promotional activities.

Jokela (2011) stresses the importance of tourism imageries’ role in appealing to the desires of the respective “receivers”, where one can see and experience a place before travelling there. For the thesis it would concentrate on the aspect about which imageries the Polish-Americans would be exposed to in their pre-travelling state while in Chicago and which “imaginaries” they would have been exposed to and could evolve into individualised images of Poland within the Polish-Americans communities residing in the windy city. To this aspect, as pointed out by Jokela (2011) tourism images is most importantly used in creating and maintaining such communities in an imagined dimension, together with enhancing national identities and images of countries.

These above mentioned strong dimensions of tourism imagery would be central for the thesis in exploring which “imagined communities” the Polish Diaspora Institutions in Chicago would be creating and maintaining for the Polish-American for them to be in such an “imagined community” as a Diaspora in Chicago. Therefore it would be vital to look into how these tourism imageries are enhancing the Polish national identity amongst the Polish-Americans and their “images” of Poland as a country.

An interesting aspect for the research of this thesis have been addressed in Buzinde et al. (2006) where it is pointed out that imagery that create myths and expectations is affecting the respective groups of travellers and that these imageries often re-affirm certain stereotypes instead of eroding them. For this respective research this matter would be important in how the cultural production by the Polish Diaspora institutions in Chicago is affecting the tourism imagery of Poland, where there would be a need to examine the myths and the expectations.

The myths and expectations would be investigated to see if the Polish cultural production by Diaspora Institutions in Chicago would affect the Polish-Americans and thus if any myth or expectations would create any stereotypes of Poland amongst the Diaspora and if so, which stereotypes?

### **3.3 Towards a conceptualization of ‘Polonia’: defining Diasporas**

This section aims to conceptualize the term of Diasporas and for how it will be utilized and seen upon within this research, where different aspect regarding Diasporas will be discussed. First, the section aims to define which groups can be perceived as Diasporas and which “criteria’s” are used in the definition of the term, secondly different impacts on the shaping of a Diaspora community will be identified together with the orientation towards “home” and the bonds that could be present here. The definition of a “Diaspora” and its matter for the specific context of this thesis needs to be clearly conceptualized and understood due to the fact that the term isn’t always perceived in the same way by different actors. Despite the fact that this thesis will focus on Diaspora institutions and their way of portraying Poland, there is a need to conceptualize the term of Diaspora in order for the reader to gain a knowledge regarding who is addressed when speaking about the Polish Diaspora in the analysis section 4.

#### **3.3.1 Brubaker’s three criteria’s towards conceptualizing Diasporas**

As seen in Brubaker (2005) the term ‘Diaspora’ has seen an increasingly inflation outside the academic writing, such as in mass medias describing more and more distinct groups in the society (religious, sexual, racial etc.). Therefore, for the sake of operationalization this thesis will lean towards 3 criteria’s set up by Brubaker (2005) in order to conceptualise its view on Diasporas. The first criteria stressed by Brubaker (2005) is the one of dispersion, regarding a forced migration or otherwise people being dispersed under circumstances that could be defined as traumatic, resulting them to be living outside of the state-borders of the homeland.

To put this into an example, the Polish minority living in Lithuania would be seen for this thesis as a Polish Diaspora, resulted from the traumatic event of being placed outside of Poland, due to the loss of eastern territories in the aftermath of the WW2. An even more ‘ideal’ or ‘classic’ example would be the pre-war situation of the Jewish people living across the Western world, due to the dispersion of the Jewish people from Judea due to forced or traumatic circumstances, where to this criterion, similar stances have been stressed in the literature (Reis, 2004; Cohen, 2008).



The second criterion argued in Brubaker (2005) is the one of homeland orientation, concerning the Diaspora's identification and loyalty towards a real or imagined 'homeland'. This second criterion therefore broadens the spectrum of who can be considered 'Diaspora', not taken the aspect of dispersion into account. Similar conceptualizations have been argued in Coles & Timothy (2004) as well, defining Diasporas broadly as people residing outside of their native homeland, or people indentifying themselves with a homeland, in which they or their ancestors originate from. Coles & Timothy (2004) argues to see Diasporas as communities located outside of their native homeland, but still remaining with strong sentimental relations to the country of origin.

The last criterion set by Brubaker (2005) concerns the aspect of 'Boundary-maintenance' seen as the Diasporas preserving a distinctive identity from the host country. This would be that the Polish immigrants coming to the area of Chicago remain as a distinctive community. Furthermore as seen in Brubaker (2005) the aspect of time can cause the boundary-maintenance to evolve into a boundary-erosion. The tension between the maintenance and erosion of borders will be addressed in the section regarding the third criteria of Brubaker (2005).

### **3.3.2 First criteria – caused by the aspects of time and place**

The aspects of time and places are vital in the creation and shaping of Diaspora communities and therefore this subsection will try to identify and discuss these aspects and their impacts on the shaping of such communities.

When conceptualising Diasporas, as argued in Cohen (2008) the aspects of time and place are affecting the shaping of Diasporas as well, where e.g. the development of the Polish Diaspora in USA would differ depending on the time the respective groups within the Diaspora community emigrated from Poland to e.g. Chicago due to the different period of time.

This thesis will try to identify if the aspect of time would affect the perceptions and homeland imaginaries regarding the period of migrating. To this aspect of time it has been stressed in Reis (2004) and Cohen (2008) as distinguishing between a "classical Diaspora" and a "contemporary Diaspora". Both authors make certain distinctions especially between the "classical" term of Diasporas and the contemporary one of Diasporas. This distinction between a "classical" and a "contemporary" Diaspora will for this thesis be used in trying to identify any differences between

the homeland imaginaries and perceptions of Poland that could be present in Chicago, since both term, regardless of time, will be seen upon as part of the Diaspora community.

When speaking of a “classical” Diaspora, the literature (Reis, 2004; Cohen, 2008; Coles & Timothy, 2004) agrees upon it matches the “classical” conceptualization of Diaspora being a dispersed group of people, usually forced across borders due to wars, conflicts etc. The primary example would here be the Jewish Diaspora, but the dispersion of Polish people in a wake of the partitions of Poland would for this thesis be seen as a primary example as well. This was due to the loss of total sovereignty in 1795 where Poland was erased from the map of Europe, which also led Poles to leave e.g. Russian- or German-controlled areas of their old nation-state.

The classical term of Diasporas described above, is in accordance with the 1. criterion set up by Brubaker (2005), as mentioned earlier, whereas a “contemporary” conceptualization is not as central in Brubaker’s criteria’s (2005). Despite this, the thesis will acknowledge the first criteria of Brubaker (2005) but broaden the aspect to include the “contemporary” definition including a more “voluntarily” migration. The “contemporary” Diaspora would on the contrary to “classical Diasporas” not necessarily be due to forced migration but could be voluntary, which broadens the spectrum of defining Diasporas for this thesis, where the contemporary view on Diasporas is stressed in Reis (2004) and Cohen (2008). To this, the contemporary Diaspora could be seen in the form of the voluntary migration of Poles in the aftermath of the Polish accession to the EU. For the sake of operationalization, both the “classical” and “contemporary” will not be distinguished as “less” or “more” Diaspora and therefore the Diasporas will be perceived as Diasporas if complying with one of the 3 criteria’s of Brubaker (2005).

The need to see Diasporas through a contemporary lens is stressed by Coles & Timothy (2004) to look upon Diasporas through the contemporary lens, where for this thesis it would be about identifying if any differences in homeland imaginaries or the perception of Poland could be an issue. The aspect of Diaspora communities as heterogeneous groups is seen in Iorio & Corsale (2013), where it is argued that the same ethnic Diasporic groups across countries are different and will vary from each others, despite the connectivity to the homeland. The thesis finds it important to have the internal difference of Diasporas in mind, due to the fact that the migration have spread over different periods of time, where historical background varies from each another.

Especially the historical context can be a decisive factor in this heterogeneous development of Diaspora groups, located in the same host country. To exemplify the aspect: Polish migrants in Chicago, that left Poland during the Second World War was most likely forced, whereas Polish migrants after the collapse of the Eastern Bloc in 1989 would have been migrating voluntarily. One could still argue that even migration that is done voluntarily it always has a reason that would therefore make it forced, due to e.g. an unsustainable economic situation etc. “forcing” people to emigrate.

Returning back to the conceptualization of Diasporas, this thesis furthermore shares the view of Coles & Timothy (2004), where diasporas is seen as people living outside their homeland, but despite this fact still have a certain identification and connection with a “homeland”. Such a homeland defined as one from which they or their ancestors derives from.

### **3.3.3 The second criteria – the aspect of homeland orientation**

This subsection aims to identify the dimensions of engagement in the “connection” with the homeland and discuss the importance of a “two-sided” connection between Diasporas and homeland, meaning that Diasporas should actively try to nourish the ties with the homeland. To address the above mentioned aims, Orozco (2006) argues that a definition towards Diasporas should not automatically come solely due to the result of being dispersed as a national group or community nor common national, cultural or ethnic connections.

Orozco furthermore argues that Diaspora groups are being motivated or influenced in order to become Diasporas, with therefore actively gaining a certain desire towards establishing a connection with the “homeland”. This stance would mean that e.g. the Polish Diaspora in Chicago and the USA should not be considered Diasporas per say, solely due to the fact of their ethnical roots, if there isn’t a desire to stay connected to the “country of origin”. This “desire” and connection towards the “homeland” should therefore be a conscious and actively established one. This more critical view towards the term of Diaspora have also been stressed in Cohen (2008), with the need of a “mobilization” of the “Diaspora Consciousness”, which due to being socially constructed, these actors should have a self-definition of themselves as a Diaspora, being a transnational community. Alongside this, the need would be to evolve this perception and

persuade others with the same bonds (cultural, national, ethnic) in approaches of evolving and lay out the status of the Diaspora community. Therefore there is a need to actively nourish the perception and imagery of the respective Diasporas, which could e.g. be seen in the form of different Diaspora institutions in Chicago who actively construct or nourish the idea and perception of Poland and Polish culture in USA. Therefore this thesis will conceptualise The Polish Diaspora in the Chicago area, as people or communities living outside of the state borders of Poland, but sharing one or more common bonds such as ethnicity, culture, national identity alongside a specific desire of connectivity to the “homeland”, being Poland.

### **3.3.4 The third criteria – boundary-maintenance**

The third criteria set by Brubaker (2005) concerns the Diasporas preserving a distinctive identity from the host country defined as a ‘Boundary-maintenance’. Seen in the transnational lens, this “boundary-maintenance” can evolve into a “boundary-erosion” which this section will try to identify. Therefore the 3 criteria’s set by Brubaker (2005) are useful as a framework for the thesis to position itself in terms of a conceptualization of Diaspora communities, but regarding the aspects of “Boundary-maintenance” the thesis will need to take a more “fluid” and “flexible” positioning than set by Brubaker (2005). This section will aim to identify the importance of Diasporas being transnational communities in the form of being a community with a variety of ties connecting people across state-borders and nation-states. This aspect is vital due to the changes and the development of these diasporic groups within their new “host countries” and regarding the relationship with the “homelands”. Regarding the transnational nature of Diasporas, there seems to be a blurring in the aspect of “Boundary-maintenance” and the thesis will therefore not see so strictly upon the last criteria of Brubaker (2005).

As stressed in Duval (2004) Diaspora communities do not solely feel a “belonging” to only one respective ethnic group, nationality or a social consciousness, but can have such a feeling of “belonging” to more of such groups. Due to the constant connections to both “homeland” and “host country” Diasporas can see themselves as a part of both ethnic groups and nationalities and therefore be in this state of “in-between”.

The above mentioned aspect is acknowledged in Tambiah (2000) as well, where it is pointed out that the Diaspora communities and its members are being exposed to engage in relationships between the different cultures and people of both the host country and the home country, where these transnational aspects evolves to apply as a dual consciousnesses in dual locations.

Furthermore as pointed out in Duval (2004) the aspect of trips between the “host country” and the “home country” it can be seen as a tool in the negotiation of the identity in both of the countries and strengthen the transnational aspect due to the connectivity of the Diaspora members to both places. To this, Duval (2004) argues that these visits can create the representation of an alternative “home” being socially-constructed in order for the social connectivity of the individual between both countries. Similarly, it has furthermore been addressed in Bhatia & Ram (2009) where it is pointed out not to see Diasporas as fixed non-historical conceptions of identity but rather to look upon them in a mobile way of identity and therefore not as being fixed to a space, place or nationality.

These transnational “flows”, as pointed out in Tambiah (2000), do not purely covers the flow of people but as well the flow of information and capital, where e.g. Polish-Americans would create flows not only of themselves physically but as well with e.g. money transfer to relatives or the flow of information e.g. in communication with friends of relatives in the homeland.

To the above mentioned aspect one question that may arise is the transnational aspect for Diaspora members that have never been travelling between the “homeland” and “host country” or does not have “real” relation with the “home country”.

Sökefeld (2006) argues that Diasporas may maintain “real” transnational ties between the “homeland” and the new country of living, but a part of transnational social relationships, the transnational “aspect” for the Diasporic community members can as well be a solely imaginary and symbolic one. To this, one might see Polish-Americans in the transnational dimension even though they would not have “real” ties with their “homeland”, but this “transnational identity” could be solely in its symbolic and imaginary form and therefore the thesis will adapt both forms as transnational.

Seeing upon Diaspora through a transnational lens can create an ambivalence in the definitions of Diasporas in the aspects of “boundary-maintenance”, as described in Brubaker (2006) where the tensions of “boundary-maintenance” and “boundary-erosion” is acknowledged.

As stressed by Brubaker (2006) the “boundary-erosion” across generation would be an interesting point to have in mind, when looking upon Diasporas. Therefore, in the case of this thesis it will make sense to see upon the Polish Diaspora in Chicago as Polish-Americans due to the constant change and development different immigrant communities undergo in the American society. With this in mind, the Polish-American will in this thesis be seen through a transnational lens where being both American and e.g. Polish at the same time is evident.

Despite the above mentioned aspect, the difference between generations needs to be acknowledged since e.g. the “boundary-maintenance” aspect stressed by Brubaker (2006) could be more throughout in 1<sup>st</sup> generations of migrants than in the latter generations.

The aspects of differences within the Diaspora community is acknowledged in Coles & Timothy (2004) where it is stressed that despite myths, nostalgia and imageries of the homeland, Diasporic communities across different countries differs due to the distinctive and contrasts they have experienced in their “host countries”. Therefore e.g. Polish-Americans and Polish-British’ even though similar, would still have differences in their identities due to the transnational co-relation between the homeland and their respective “host countries”.

### **3.4 Root tourism and the myth of the homeland**

This thesis will examine the impacts and influences Diaspora Institutions can have on the travels of Diasporas when travelling “home” with the mind full of “myths”, perceptions and idealised pictures of Poland. In the aspect of impacts by how culture is used by Diaspora Institutions in creation of imaginaries of the homeland, this section will try to look upon the aspect of the actual “home travels” done by such heterogeneous groups as Diasporas. An investigation of the different “myths” there exists within Diasporas will be needed as well in order to understand the processes before, during and after the “homeland travels.” Before stepping into the dimension of “homeland travels” there is a need to shortly define the cultural aspect.

The vast and complex definitions of culture have been discussed in earlier sections, but the travels that come along this are seen as cultural tourism. As argued in Smith (2009) cultural tourism is seen both as experiencing the history and heritage of a place as well as its people, together with

the contemporary aspects of the lives of the people. Therefore cultural tourism can vary depending on the travellers and their preferences but would be framed as travels to experience different cultures being e.g. the food, traditions, language, art, buildings, artefacts, music etc. of the visited destination (Hughes, 2002)

The thesis will not emphasize the aspects of cultural tourism as a central role in the research, as the term is described above, but instead the thesis will focus and emphasize the aspect of root tourism regarding the role of Diaspora institutions and their cultural production and its impact on the tourism imagery and travels of Poland within the Diaspora community in Chicago. Within this spectrum, there is a variety of definitions for covering the term of Diasporas travelling back to their “homelands” which include conceptualizations such as e.g. Diaspora tourism (Coles & Timothy, 2004), ethnic tourism (Ostrowski, 1990) and roots tourism (Maruyama et al. 2010), where these term in this thesis will be addressed as diaspora tourism. The thesis will not get into explaining the differences regarding the names of the respective terms from above, but will solely acknowledge this variety of terms within the literature. These above mentioned travels can be defined as travels back to the country of which one or ones ancestors originate from and the “home travels” would furthermore solely have the form of temporary stays (Drozdzewski, 2011; Ostrowski, 1990; Duval, 2004; Timothy & Teye, 2004).

The motivations of these “homeland travels”, as stressed in Coles & Timothy (2004), would not be about seeking and experiencing an “exotic” and “foreign” cultures and countries, but rather places where the travellers seeks similarity and belonging to the place. Here, it would be about Polish-Americans travelling to Poland not to experience a “new culture”, but to reaffirm and confirm ones ancestral ties with the destination.

As pointed out by Drozdzewski (2011) these travel are used by The Diaspora members to be searching for their own identities through travels to the country from which they of their ancestor originate from. The “myth” and perception of the homeland can be seen as a place that is remembered and/or desired and where the identity of the individual is originating from, which also regards later generations.

These respective cases of travels are set out by in the search for the roots and historical identity of the individuals, due to the stories about their ethnic and familial heritage told by one’s family or other Diaspora members (Timothy & Teye, 2004). The respective thesis will put emphasis on

looking at the Diaspora Institutions and their influence on these “home travels” carried out by Polish-Americans, where the cultural imagery and homeland imaginaries’ impact on these “homeland travels” will be in focus. This aspect is vital as to examine in “home travels” since as stressed in Timothy & Teye (2004) one do not solely conceive places as they have seen them, but as well as one have heard and read about them. It will be here, at this aspect, which the role of the Diaspora institutions in Chicago and their impacts will need to be examined.

The aspect of travels to “homelands” as a part of an “identity search” have been stressed in Duval (2004, pp. 53-54) and Drozdowski (2011) who furthermore stresses that these “home visits” differ from generation to generation. Apart from the identity search and “culture bonding” simple aspects of the “home travels” is the desire to visit family members, both distant and close relatives (Timothy & Teye (2004).

For the first generation, migrants desire to return “home” and reinforce their cultural ties to ones identity, which therefore carries certain nostalgic aspects. Regarding the latter generations where the nostalgic dimension could lack, these “home travels” would more be about “connecting” and discovering their ancestral homelands. Here, certain myths and narratives can influence younger generations since some might not have had personal encounters with the homeland (Drozdowski, 2011). For this thesis it would also be about seeing upon how Diaspora institutions e.g. in Chicago could be an actor in this creation of “myths” and “narratives” of Poland for younger generations within the Diaspora as well as reinventing “narratives” towards the first generation. Therefore the culture and its production by Polish Diaspora institutions would consist of valuable aspects in the creation of such “myths” and “narratives” where the aim of the thesis is to identify this cultural production and the impacts of the imaginaries of Poland on the homeland travels within the Polish-American community in Chicago.



### 3.4.1 “Local” or “Foreigner”?

The following subsection will identify the negative aspects that can evolve during “homeland visits”, done across generations, where tensions and confusions over identity can occur.

The aspects of “home travels” not always being trouble-free is stressed by Coles & Timothy (2004) where it is acknowledged that travellers can experience ambivalences in their connections to the “homelands” by not “fitting in” or being seen upon as “strangers” and “foreigners”.

These dimensions are fascinating to have in mind when looking upon different groups within Polish-Americans, where the “experiences” across generations could differ when visiting the “homeland”. These less positive aspects of “home travels” have been addressed as well in Hughes & Allen (2010), where issues of “returning home” can result in a lack of fulfilling the expectation as being seen upon as a ‘local’. During some of these travels the visitor can turn out to be seen upon by the locals as being a “guest” rather than a “local” in the homeland. The lack of acceptance as a “local” can result from an idealised picture of the homeland that one could had in the host country, alongside with changes in the homelands. These above mention aspects of difficulties during travels to the “homeland” are acknowledged in Mason (2004) and Orozco (2006).

In the case of the respective thesis, Poland statuettes as a perfect example since the great changes that have been happening in the country since the fall of the Berlin-wall, where an interesting aspect is to look upon the way Poland is portrayed by the Diaspora Institutions.

An aspect would be to see if the perception adapted by the Polish-American can cause these tensions in possible “home travels”. With this said, tensions can be both-sided, which has been stressed in the literature as well, where the perception on the Diasporas by the country of origin is an important dimension to have in mind (Mason, 2004; Orozco, 2006). This aspect has furthermore been examined in Maruyama (2010), where the aspect of the Diaspora’s desire of linking and creating ties with the homeland can depend highly on which perception the homeland have towards these emigrants living outside of the state-borders.

Maruyama (2010) argues that a positive attitude by the homeland towards Diaspora communities will result in a lesser degree of being “alienated” for the Diaspora tourists when travelling to the homeland. Therefore, in the case of the respective thesis, it will be necessary to look at the Polish Tourism Authorities and their attitude towards the Polish Diaspora and the treatment, in order to get the above mention aspects fully covered.

### 3.6 Sub-conclusion

The above theory part with its subsections have approached and discussed the various aspects relevant for this thesis, in order for the reader to identify the different dimensions later on in the analysis.

Diasporas are complex entities with several of definitions present in the literature and therefore for this thesis, the aspect needs to be seen in a broader lens where e.g. the cause of emigration will not be distinguished in the conceptualization of people being Diasporas or not.

Despite this, there is a need to be some kind of active connection between homeland and the Polish-Americans in order to conceptualize them as part of a Diaspora community.

Furthermore this section has addressed the need to look upon Diasporas as transnational communities due to the cross-connections the Diaspora member can have with the “host country” and “homeland” where they could be tangible or intangible, therefore “real” or “imagined”.

These “real” or “imagined” connections have been stressed in the section 3.4 of homeland myths, where home travels have been addressed and described in several terms within the literature such as Diaspora tourism, ethnic tourism or roots tourism, where Diaspora members are looking for an identification and affinity with the homeland, rather than an “exotic” experience.

Despite this search for a “belonging” home travels can have negative sides, where the Diaspora-members might be perceived as “strangers”. The perception of the Diaspora members, by the “homeland”, is vital for this aspect to be either positive or negative.

The above sections have addressed the aspect of culture and its production, where the need to see culture through a broad lens, since the cultural for this thesis consists of various of aspects such as the arts, religion, language, traditions, food, dresses and how these aspects are produced and portrayed as a “product” of Poland for the Polish-Americans.

Lastly, the aspect of tourism imagery had to be approached and defined in order to look upon how the cultural production can affect the tourism imagery of Poland, where this aspect have been stressed as a strong tool to create and shape different myths, perceptions and expectations of Poland, by the Polish-Americans.

## 4. Analysis

### 4.1 Analysis introduction

The analysis section of the thesis will consist of 3 major parts with smaller subsections, in order to have a clear structure of the different yet connected aspects of the aims stressed in section 1. The theoretical aspects from section 3 will help in the analyzing of the collected data from Chicago, which have been addressed in the methodology section 2, in order to answer the aims for the thesis. Each one of the 3 major parts of the analysis consists of a sub-conclusion in order to help the reader to summarise the finding continuously. The first section of the analysis will be concerned to the examination of the use of Polish culture by the identified Diaspora institutions in Chicago, how their specific use of Polish culture and identity can impact the way Poland will be seen upon as a tourist destination by Polish-Americans. The section will also look upon if the Diaspora Institutions are showing Poland in a uniform way, which could affect future homeland travels, which will be seen upon in the second section. The second section of the analysis will examine which role the identified Polish Diaspora Institutions, with their way of using Polish culture, can have in being producer and distributors of Polish identity and homeland “myths” and “narratives”. The section will also address the impacts such dimension can have on homeland travels to Poland by the Polish-Americans exposed to these “myths” and “narratives”. The 3<sup>rd</sup> and last section of the analysis will be concentrating on the approaches carried out by the Polish Tourism Authorities in targeting the Polish-Americans regarding showing Poland as a tourist destination. Identifying such dimensions can ultimately help the thesis in gaining an in-sight on if the tourism authorities are actively targeting the Diaspora tourism “market” and which picture they want to give Poland, which can be compared to the one given by the Diaspora institutions. Such comparison can help in identifying if the Polish-American community are also exposed to any “homeland imaginaries” from Poland.

## 4.2 The production of culture and identity of Poland

### - Polish Diaspora Institutions in Chicago

This subsection aims to examine and discuss the use of Polish culture and identity by Diaspora institutions in Chicago and furthermore examine which impacts it can have on the tourism imagery of Poland as a destination. Furthermore the possible interaction between Diaspora institutions and the difficulties they face have been addressed in order to look upon if there is a uniform picture of Poland in Chicago and which difficulties the Diaspora institutions face in achieving their aims. The way Poland is showed by Diaspora Institutions can affect the way the country will be perceived by the Polish-Americans as a country and destination, where the Diaspora institutions can neglect or stereotype certain aspects of Polish culture which they want to show.

The Polish Diaspora institutions that have been encountered during the fieldwork conducted in Chicago has been the Polish Cultural Institute, The Copernicus Foundation & Center, the Polish Chamber of Commerce and The Polish Museum of America & Library.

All Institutions have had Polish culture directly or indirectly in their activities, which therefore justifies the relevance of including all these organisations. Furthermore Polish culture and identity from the Polish newspaper of Chicago and observations from the Polish Village in Chicago will be included as well, due to the fact that these two aspects in a high degree are exposing Polish culture and identity in another way to the Polish-American community within the city and can as well affect the Polish Diaspora and their perception of Poland.

Due to the large amount of Polish people and Americans of Polish descent living in the Chicago area, the presence of Polish Diaspora Institutions could seem as obvious and easy accessible when searching online. During the research up to 20 Institutions were encountered, some easier to contact than others, but the vast majority of Polish Diaspora Institutions were invisible.

Surprisingly according to Ivo Widlak the total amount of Polonia Institutions is much higher:

*"...right now there are about 400 legally registered in the state of Illinois, organisations that have in their mission to do something for Polonia or Polish people or Polish-American relationships"* (I. Widlak, personal communication, Apr. 3, 2016). Such an invisibility of the many institutions can mean that only the most exposed organisations can get their take on "Polishness" out to the

Polish-American community. Amongst the majority of Diaspora Institutions identified for this research the main theme of the Polish identity and portraying of Polish culture lays on the traditional and historical dimensions.

#### **4.2.2 Polish culture as objects**

The Polish culture and identity in Chicago seen upon as “objects” (Hughes, 2002), has been identified during the fieldwork in the form of buildings, items in museums, paintings, sculptures etc. The majority of the dimension of “objects” on the outer level that is observable (Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner, 1998) has a traditional and conservative aspect. Such aspect was already noted on street level in front of the Copernicus Center (appendix 3) and the Polish Museum of Chicago, where the Polish flag was waving, but which was not the same flag one would have had observed or noticed by walking the streets of Warsaw. The version of the Polish flag that was observed in Chicago was not the national flag of Poland that is used in front of official building in the traditional horizontal red and white colours, but was the version with the Polish eagle (coat of arms) present on the flag. According to the Proclamation of the Polish Parliament from 2005, based on the 1980 amendments (The Polish Sejm, 2005) the flag without the coat of arms should be hanging in front of official buildings and institutions within the borders of Poland, whereas e.g. institutions outside the country can use the version with the coat of arms. When asked about this in the interview with the Copernicus Center, G. Kobelinski explained it as something traditional:

*“Because the old Polonia that came here, when the communist took the eagle off, not the eagle, the crown. So then you wouldn’t dare, well the consulate of course, but no one here in Chicago would fly a flag without the crown”.*

*(G. Kobelinski, personal communication, Apr. 5, 2016).*

Connecting this to the middle level of culture (Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner, 1998) regarding which values are send to the Polish-Americans, one can argue that the respective version is used due to the old resistance against the communist regime. Still waving this version in 2016 can reflect the old “values” and “beliefs” of the old Polonia sticking to more traditional and patriotic beliefs, even more than 25 years after the end of the Cold War.

The same Polish flag was observed in O'Hare international airport of Chicago, on a site with Chicago's sister cities, which can show a certain impact of these traditional views of the Polish community on the Chicago authorities. Such use of old "values" and "beliefs" used by a Diaspora institution as the Copernicus Center waving such flag in front of its facilities can affect the Polish-Americans attending to their events, as also pointed out by Jokela (2011) where such portraying can affect the way a destination is perceived and approached by its people. Such old "values" and "beliefs" creates homeland imaginaries of Poland amongst the Polish-Americans with the historical aspects in mind, dwelling at the nation's struggle for freedom and democracy. Such aspects can still affect Polish-Americans perceiving Poland as still not a fully democratic and modern country but as a country still fighting for freedom and being backward. Such cultural production does not help Poland to develop a contemporary tourism imagery but results in still dwelling on traditional and historical aspects.

Apart from focusing on performances of Polish culture The Copernicus Center hosts a lot of Polish objects of culture which the Polish-Americans are also exposed to, while attending events in the Center. The building of the Center is a replica of the Royal Castle in Warsaw (appendix 4) which as seen in Hughes (2002) can be a dimension of culture in the aspect of "time", in an historical dimension of a historical building, as in this case a replica from the home country.

Furthermore having Swidler (1986) in mind and seeing the cultural aspect as beliefs, one could argue that the Copernicus Center therefore, consciously or unconsciously, sends and portray historical and traditional beliefs which imply traditional values they expose the Polish-American too. The Copernicus bought the building relatively few decades ago as seen in the conversation with Kobelinski: *"in 1975 the Foundation bought this building, this was a old theatre"*, and therefore the fact that the monarchy in Poland ended more than 200 years ago and that the Copernicus Center built such a traditional facility instead of a more contemporary building can show a desire to show the "good old Poland". Inside the Copernicus Center the objects that are in focus are paintings of old Polish monarchs, sculptures and painting of Copernicus, wooden portraits of Warsaw Royal Castle and the Polish eagle, which all seems to fall under the category of historical and traditional objects of culture being exposed to the visitors of the Copernicus Center. The focus of traditional and historical "objects" of culture used by the Copernicus Center can create imagery amongst Polish-Americans of Poland as a traditional destination with conservative

aspects in focus and does not really give the Polish-Americans to get a view on the more modern aspects of Poland as a destination, since they are neglected in the Copernicus Center. Such dimension are emphasized in Foley & Fahy (2004) where such a neglecting trend from a Diaspora institution as the Copernicus Center is stereotyping Poland as traditional destination and neglecting the more modern aspects of the destination, which later on is perceived the Polish-Americans attending the events at the Center.

### **The Polish Museum of America**

Looking at another significant “producer” of Polish culture in Chicago is the Polish Museum of America and the Polish Library, this institution is another group which produce and hence create a product (Richards, 1996) of Polish culture. Through observations at the museum and engaging in casual talk with the employees, the emphasis on Polish culture and identity is based on traditional and religious themes which characterizes the visits that visitors gets exposed to.

The museum focuses on showing an old and traditional Poland through paintings of historic events, cities and landscapes, old Polish folkloric costumes (appendix 5), Polish national heroes and national events.

The traditional narrative of Poland that the museum is giving, can be partly explained by the fact that many of the artefacts were from the Polish pavilion from the 1939 World’s Fair in USA, but were stranded in the USA due to the WW2. Therefore many of the artefacts in the museum today are showing Poland in the same way that Poland wanted to be perceived by the world in 1939. After talking with the employees of the Library and Museum, I was informed that most guests are Polish-Americans, many of them who don’t speak Polish or have a very limited knowledge and furthermore doesn’t have a big knowledge about Poland, its culture, history, traditions, culture etc. and wants to reconnect. Therefore the Museum has a central role in the production of Polish culture, as for many Polish-Americans this will be the only or main source of “Polishness” that they will experience. Since the Polish Museum of America for many Polish-American will be a main source of information of Poland, it can have a significant influence on creating, shaping or re-shaping their perception of Poland, since the museum produce symbolic elements of Polish

culture in form of the objects present at the museum and such symbolic elements of culture being shaped by the actor that creates, distributes, teaches and preserves it (Peterson and Anand, 2004) The museum practices a partly subjective way of describing its exhibitions e.g. in phrases such as: “the great Polish composer”, “the brave Polish national hero”, which can affect the visitors in perceiving Poland in a specific way, with the self-identity being portrayed as superior.

### **The Polish Village**

Even though the thesis has an emphasis on Diaspora institutions and their production of culture, groups are not the only producers of culture where individuals also play a role in the production of culture with attaching their specific values to their “products” like the group-producers (Richards, 1996). Such individual producers of Polish culture have been observed in the historical Polish Village, where individuals produce Polish culture by their amenities (appendix 7 & 8). Some of them that were observed were: grocery stores, kiosks, restaurants, pharmacies, law offices and cash- and package-delivery offices. The Polish stores and kiosks had a variety of Polish patriotic “souvenirs” with the Polish eagle (coat of arms) on t-shirts, mugs, key chains etc.

Other such patriotic aspects were present in the area of the Polish church Sw. Jacka (Saint Hyacinth) in front of memorials of the Smolensk 2010 plane crash, which killed the Polish president with other notable people.

Through further observations, other memorials were identified, mainly for victims of the communist regime in Poland, giving a narrative of a “suffering” and still dwelling of the past. The fact that a Smolensk 2010 memorial is already established shows a certain relation to the conservatives in Poland which have been advocates of putting such memorials up, whereas liberals have been more awaiting (The Guardian, 2010). Relating this to the “middle layer of culture” (Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner, 1998), such object in the form of memorial plates etc. are exposing to the Polish-American which aspects within the culture are the “right” norms to have, in this case more conservative and patriotic ones, instead of contemporary and liberal ones. Such “right norms” could also be indirectly observed while walking through Polish shops, where the Polonia newspaper “Dziennik Zwiakowy” was present in many places and looking through the newspaper I could observe that the first pages were of news regarding the renewed Smolensk



investigation by the new conservative government, together with news regarding the presence of US military in Poland due to the threat of Russia. Such news exposed to the Polish-American can be seen to further strengthen the exposure from Diaspora actors of what should be perceived as “right” and “wrong” regarding political issues. Since the newspaper was written in Polish, it requires the Polonia member to actively nourish ones language skills and actively buy such “cultural products”. Apart of looking upon objects by these individual actors the Polish Village, in some Polish bars and restaurants in the Polish Village during the fieldwork there were observed aspects of Polish culture that were not only objects such as the Polish eagle or paintings, but were also producing though “performances” (Hughes, 2002) such as traditional old Polish highlander and folkloric music, both from the countryside. Few places had more contemporary aspects e.g. as a bar with a live broadcast of Polish news.

#### **4.2.3 Polish culture as performances**

##### **Celebrate Poland**

Cultural production through performances and events has also been observed during the fieldwork in Chicago. Most notably was the event in downtown Chicago of “celebrate Poland”, where during a period of time the different communities could show their national heritage, exposing Polish culture and identity both to Polish and non-Polish and therefore be a important source of information regarding Poland for many participants due to the central location of the event and its free admission. To this event the lack of engagement by the Polish authorities was noted, since the event was co-hosted with the Polish Chamber of Commerce, but not the Consulate of Poland in Chicago. In comparison to the other event by other ethnic communities, the Consulate General of Lithuania, Greece, India and Mexico were cooperating in these events for their “days of celebrations”.

A lack of engagement from the Polish side in Polonia activities in general was stressed by both Ivo Widlak: “...there is a lack of advertisement and promotion to the general public about tourism to Poland.” and Gregg Kobelinski: “*we wrote the tourism agency in Poland and said: hey, what an opportunity for you to come here and showcase Poland.*”, “*...There was zero interest. They said to go on the internet and download some movies...*”. (G. Kobelinski, personal communication, Apr. 5,

2016). Therefore the Polish Authorities leave the whole production of culture in such an event on the different Diaspora actors, despite any differences there would be, such as self-identity and showing their take on Poland and its culture. This means that the Diaspora Institutions are left as the only “producers” of the Polish culture and developing as a “product” (Richards, 1996) towards the Polish-Americans, since there is no major counterpart in form the Polish Tourism Authorities. Therefore the traditional “products” (Richards, 1996) of Poland by the Diaspora Institutions in such an event as “Celebrate Poland” are the only ones exposed to the participants resulting in being the only “product” of Polish culture that can affect the Polish-Americans and their perception of Poland and the way Poland will be seen as a tourist destination.

Looking at the event of “celebrate Poland” in downtown Chicago it was co-organised with the Polish Chamber of Commerce and had the Polish Museum of America amongst its participants, alongside Polish catering firms and restaurants. Even though such an event was focused to show Poland to the people of Chicago, regardless of ethnicity, many Polish-Americans were present which could be observed in their use of Polish language or clothes with Polish symbols, such as the coat of arms. As seen within the production of Polish culture in the aspects of objects, the aspect of performances of culture has a grand narrative of tradition, folkloric and history as a main emphasis. Polish folk dance and music (appendix 9), together with folkloric clothing were some of the main aspects of the performances during the event, alongside traditional Polish stands with Polish food as pierogi (traditional dumpling) and highlander delicatessen (appendix 10), and with people dressed in traditional folkloric dresses serving these dishes.

Relating the above mentioned aspects to Peterson and Anand (2004), these Polish organisations which are present at such events as “Celebrate Poland”, are shaping, distributing, teaching and preserving certain aspects of Polish identity and culture which the participants are exposed to, in this case to the narrative of the old, traditional and historical Poland. Such a selective use by the Diaspora can significantly influence, create or even re-shape both Polish and non-Polish and their perception of what is Poland, its culture and Polish identity, where in this case very few contemporary aspects of Poland are present. Due to the lack of real interest from the Polish Tourism Authorities in participating in such an event, the “responsibility” of the process of production is left to solely the Diaspora institutions. Regarding those aspects to Richards (1996) the production and product of the Polish culture is carried out therefore by Diaspora Institutions

as the Copernicus Center which attach their traditional and historical dimensions to the “product” of Poland which they “produce”. The Polish Tourism Authorities are therefore not willing to be a “producer” (Richards, 1996) of Polish culture at such events as “Celebrate Poland”, which can result in that the aspects they would like to attach to Poland as a destination will not be exposed to the Polish-Americans, leaving the “product” (Richards, 1996) of Poland as a uniform traditional one, neglecting the contemporary picture of Poland as a tourism destination.

### Events at Copernicus Center

The Copernicus Foundation & Center is according to Gregg Kobelinski more a “distributor” than a “producer”: “. . .if there is a orchestra from Poland or a band from Poland or a speaker from Poland or any Polish group here, that wants to put on a performance that’s tied with Poland we provide the building”, (G. Kobelinski, personal communication, Apr. 5, 2016; appendix 1). Despite this, such dimensions still makes the Copernicus Center indirectly a producer of Polish culture, where the Center also directly “produces” culture, at a Polish food festival and at movies events. The Copernicus has a strong focus on the culture as “performances” (Hughes, 2002) food festivals, plays and other events showing Polish culture.

The Copernicus Center aims to show both sides of Poland, with the traditional aspects in mind, Gregg Kobelinski still emphasises the contemporary aspect: “we sponsor a big festival here every year. . . called the taste of Polonia and we have the Polish food and bands from Poland, so that’s more modern Polish culture. . .” (G. Kobelinski, personal communication, Apr. 5, 2016). Despite the desire to also show a contemporary side of Poland, the main festival of the Center, “Taste of Polonia” still seems to have the traditional aspect in mind, regarding Polish traditional food but the aspect where the mix of both contemporary and tradition seems to be the performances in the aspect of Polish cinema. The contemporary aspect of Polish movies were pointed out by G. Kobelinski during the interview: “half of them are travel logs which are visit Poland...”, “...last year we had one day that was a Polish film festival, those were all contemporary films and mostly Polish people came to see that. . .” (G. Kobelinski, personal communication, Apr. 5, 2016). Such above mentioned contemporary aspects of portraying Poland and Polish identity can make the “product” (Hughes, 2002) of Poland less stereotyped on traditional aspects which can help the

Polish-American in getting an “updated” view on their home country. Here, such contemporary showcases of Poland in the form of movies and music can help the Polish-Americans in giving their heritage a more modern aspect of the lifestyle shared by Polish individuals or groups of people through common linguistics features (Smith, 2009), the Polish cinema or music. Furthermore such contemporary aspects of Polish culture can affect the Polish-Americans as seen in Jokela (2011) where the Diaspora community in experience the contemporary side of Poland as well before deciding to go on homeland travels. Such pre-travelling contemporary portraying of Poland can give Poland more modern “imaginaries” resulting in the contemporary aspects also being part of the shaping of the images of Poland as a destination that Polish-Americans would develop. Since tourism images are strong tools in enhancing national identities and developing images of countries (Jokela, 2011) the use of contemporary aspects of Polish culture by Copernicus Center can help avoiding in stereotyping the traditional aspects of Poland towards the Polish-Americans.

#### **4.2.4 Tourism imagery of Poland - impacts on Poland’s imagery as a tourist destination within the Polish-American community in Chicago.**

The cultural production of Polish Culture and hence the portraying of Poland as country does not only have possible impacts on the Polish-Americans and their perception of their country of origin, but can furthermore affect the perception of Poland as a tourist destination and its tourism imagery for the Polish community. Relating the case of the Polish cultural production to Jokela (2011) the emphasis on certain aspects of a country, in this case the emphasis on mainly traditional aspects of the Polish culture, can neglect the more contemporary sides of Poland as a developed European country and show a stereotyped image of Poland.

Such a stereotyped version that is selective in the promotion of certain realities (Foley & Fahy (2004) such as the traditional culture and the historical aspects of the country can cause the Polish-American to create a “self-image” of themselves and their origins in such traditional ways and neglecting the more contemporary side of Poland, where such “self-portraying” later on can affect non-Polish people and their perception of Poland. Returning to Jokela (2011), a “self-portraying” of Poland with an emphasis on its traditional aspects of culture, can affect how Polish-Americans will perceive Poland as a destination and approach it, which ultimately cause certain

expectation to be created that Polish-Americans would have. Such expectations, created on the basis of stereotypes, can cause tensions and disappointment if travelling to the destination. Such aspects will be addressed later on in the analysis.

Therefore the vast emphasis on the traditional aspects of Poland that have been identified in the activities for the Copernicus Center together with the Polish Museum of America and the “Celebrate Poland” event have had, can create a picture of Poland as a undeveloped and traditional country. An interesting point that came across both conducted interviews was the lack of desire to visit Poland by Ivo Widlak: *“I don’t have any feel, I don’t feel a need to go and seriously, Polish people are very negative”*, which can seem problematic for the founder of an Diaspora Institution created to improve the image of Poland and the Polish-Americans.

Same lack of visits to Poland was acknowledged by Gregg Kobelinski from the Copernicus Center when asked about the last trip to Poland: *“. . .probably 10 years ago. . . I’m really interested in seeing the rest of the world. I would love to go back to Poland, but I wish I would have a lot of time to just travel”*. The lack of desire and travels to Poland in recent time amongst the representatives of Diaspora Institutions, can cause difficulties in showing Poland as a modern tourist destination since the “producers” of Polish culture are not “updated” on Polish realities, which can be hard to provide an new picture of Poland for the Polish-Americans that were exposed to the activities by the Polish Cultural Institute and still are exposed to the events hosted by the Copernicus Center.

#### **4.2.5 The need for Diaspora Institutions**

During the conducted fieldwork and interviews, aspects regarding the “need” for some Diaspora Institutions as the Polish Cultural Institute were raised, due to the fact that many of the Polish Diaspora actors seemed to be “competing” in the whole process of myth-creating in Chicago.

A common aspect that came across in the interviews and in the fieldwork, were the role of the Polish Saturday schools in teaching the younger generations of the Polish-Americans about Poland, Polish culture, identity etc. where it was addressed as a common aspects for the younger generations of the Polonia-community in Chicago. The aspect of Polish Saturday schools was addressed in the conducted interviews with Ivo Widlak: *“some parents are sending their American*

*born children to Polish schools some are not. "There's no requirement if you are Polish or born here that you have to go to Polish schools, no." (I. Widlak, personal communication, Apr. 3, 2016).*

Furthermore Gregg Kobelinski addressed the size of the Polish Saturday-schools and suggested its commonness: *"There are a lot of Saturday schools, in a matter of fact I think I heard a number that there is like 20.000 students in the Saturday schools."* (G. Kobelinski, personal communication, Apr. 5, 2016). Despite the apparent commonness of Polish Saturday-schools in Chicago, during conversations with a local shop owner in the Polish village, the other side regarding Saturday-schools came across. The shop owner stressed that all his children were send to these Polish Saturday-schools in order to learn about Polish language, history, culture and traditions, alongside being taught through the family members. Despite all children being send to these schools they didn't have a desire today to connect to Poland. Surprisingly the aspect as stressed in Timothy & Teye (2004), family members seem to have a central role amongst others in the story-telling regarded the homeland within the Diaspora, but as seen above such aspects do not always stick to the latter generations. Despite the frequency of Saturday-schools and the amount of children send there by Polish parents, the different point of views suggest that even though latter generations of the Polish-Americans are taught Polish culture and identity, there is still a lack of it sticking to these generations. These same above aspects were acknowledged by Ivo Widlak: *"there are some children that refuse to speak Polish or to have anything to do with Polish culture because they are being Americanized."* (I. Widlak, personal communication, Apr. 3, 2016). With the above mentioned aspects in mind it could suggest the need for Diaspora institutions to exist in targeting Polish-Americans, even though Ivo Widlak said there were no need for it, the indications from above could suggest another picture of some of the Polish-Americans connection to Poland: *"... there is no organisation or any entity that targets Polish people and promote Polish culture, there is no need for that. There is no such a thing."* (I. Widlak, personal communication, Apr. 3, 2016). Furthermore the claims from Ivo Widlak can seem to be contradicting since there are institutions targeting Polish culture to Polish-Americans, such as the Copernicus Center and the Polish Museum of America, but both these organisations were disregarded by Ivo Widlak in off-record conversations even though through this research both actors have been identified as "producers" of Polish culture and identity.

Due to the indications regarding that ties to the homeland can gradually vanish across generations, and the indications that in some cases even family members can have problems to keep such a connection active for their descendants, even though attending to Polish Saturday-schools which seems to come across a vast spectrum of “Polishness”. Here, Polish Diaspora institutions such as the Copernicus Center and the Polish Museum of America and its library can help people in reconnecting to Poland, long after e.g. some Polish-Americans family members have passed away or long after attending to Saturday school as children, these identified institutions could take over. Despite this possibility, the need for a wish from Polish-Americans to re-establish and have an active connection is as well their own responsibility.

#### **4.2.6 Interaction amongst Diaspora institutions – the picture of Poland in Chicago**

This subsection will intend to identify if the Diaspora institutions are giving a unified picture of Poland or if any differences are present, since either differences or a unified picture could neglect certain aspects of Poland e.g. contemporary, in the way Poland is showed and later on perceived by Polish-Americans.

Through the conducted interviews with the Polish Cultural Institute and the Copernicus Center, together with interaction and observations of the Polish Museum of America, Library, “Celebrate Poland” event and actors in the Polish Village, the main aspects portraying Poland are the traditional and historical ones, with some contemporary exceptions such as film festivals or tourism brochures. Despite this, a main aspect which has come across during many of the interactions with the Polish community has been the lack of a unified community and a community with internal fights. Such aspect of internal fights and tensions within the Polish community were stressed by Ivo Widlak: *“Polish people don’t like each other, that’s a huge problem and the reason that the Polish-American community is where it is and why are not going anywhere.”* (I. Widlak, personal communication, Apr. 3, 2016). Relating this statement to Iorio & Corsale (2013), Diaspora communities are heterogeneous groups across host countries, but one might need to also take regional and local differences in mind, since Diaspora communities can be heterogeneous groups not only across host countries but also within these countries and within the same city. Iorio & Corsale (2013) stresses that such tensions can happen due to the different time periods where the migration has happened, in the aftermath of different historical contexts,

which was “confirmed” during the conducted interviews with the Copernicus Center:

*“Unfortunately now there is a clash between the generations”, “so they actually fight so much between each other and there are organisations that have basically fallen apart and there’s absolutely no respect in the political community”* (G. Kobelinski, personal communication, Apr. 5, 2016). These two above quotes shows what has been addressed in Iorio & Corsale, since the different waves of migration across different periods of time can be one of the causes of the internal difference that are present on such a local level as amongst the Polish-Americans in Chicago. Since the historical context still can show different perceptions of Poland, it calls for a uniformed picture of Poland, focusing more on the contemporary aspects and remembering the historical ones. Therefore Diaspora Institutions as the Copernicus Center could be an important actor in eroding these differences, in showing a varied picture of Poland in its events and not mostly on traditional, since the newer generations can be “lost” if the “Old Poland” and traditional dimension are the only ones being in focus.

Furthermore to get a more casual and objective view on the matter, during observations and engaging in casual conversations with local Polish shop owners in Polish the same aspect came across, where individual Polish-Americans acknowledged that there was a lack of unity of the Polish-Americans with many discussions and internal tensions. Besides this, shop owners agreed that such a lack of unity had increased in the past 20 years ago, where they compared themselves to the Ukrainian neighbourhood that still were sticking together, while the Polish were gradually eroding and moving out to the suburbs. Another interesting fact that appeared during engagement with local Polish amenities was the disbelief of Diaspora organisations, where some shop owners didn’t believe that e.g. The Copernicus Center was functioning properly. Relating to Iorio & Corsale (2013) again, the historical context of time for the respective Diaspora members, seems to be present for the Polish Community in Chicago as well, where the heterogeneous development can be caused by the time of migration e.g. Polish migrating after the WW2, during the Cold War and after the Cold War. Such impact by time of migration and time of generation in Chicago of Polish people was most accurately addressed in the interview with the Copernicus Center: *“...there is a clash between the generations, there’s the old generation that came from Poland that still wants to raise an army and go free Poland. . . then there’s a generation that maybe came 10-20 years ago that wants to move on, and then there’s a generation born here that*



*really doesn't care about any of that*". Therefore with the above in mind, it should not only look differently across host countries (Iorio & Corsale, 2013) on e.g. the Polish Diaspora in USA and the UK, but the statements seems to show a need to address the Polish Diaspora communities separately even within the same city due to the historical context of migration which causes these major differences (Iorio & Corsale, 2013). Such differences within even the same city causes major difficulties for institutions in addressing the Diaspora members through its activities, which can affect the engagement by those Polish-Americans in the different events carried out by Institutions. Furthermore such major differences even within a city as Chicago calls for a varied image of Poland to be shown to each generation due to differences in perceptions and to avoid an stereotyping of one or another aspect of Poland.

#### **4.2.7 Difficulties for Diaspora Institutions**

Together with the internal tensions within the Polish Community, the lack of finances causes a major difficulty for the encountered Diaspora institutions in Chicago. Both the Polish Cultural Institute and Copernicus Center has experienced financial problems, causing the Polish Cultural Institute to cease its operations after less than 6 years in operation: *"The problem is that there is no sponsors, you cannot get anything done if there is no sponsor, if there is no money."* (I. Widlak, personal communication, Apr. 3, 2016). The financial situation of the Polish community can seem to affect the attempts of cultural production by the Diaspora Institutions, which in the case of the Polish Cultural Institute forced it to cease its operation or as the Copernicus Center mix it's activities with non-Polish cultural events in order to survive: *"we're trying not only to be an exclusive Polish centre. You can't do that. That's why the foundation almost went bankrupt in the 80s"* (G. Kobelinski, personal communication, Apr. 5, 2016). According to Gregg Kobelinski one of the reasons behind the financial difficulties can be found in the reverse trends of the Polish Diapora together with the Polish economic growth: *". . .promoters that brings these accents from Poland are having less and less financial success because there is less people. . .and Poland has grown richer"*. (G. Kobelinski, personal communication, Apr. 5, 2016). Relating the above mentioned difficulties for the Diaspora institutions to transnational "flows" (Tambiah, 2000), the transnational nature of Diaspora groups and the flow of people and capital has to some extent been causing a shrinking or erosion of the Polish community in Chicago making it harder in

targeting and attracting an audience. Such homeland-orientation has to some extent therefore been causing benefits for Poland in form of flows of capital and people, but creating a lack of the same in the host country and city, as in this case of Chicago.

### **Sub-conclusion:**

This subsection of the analysis examined and discussed how the Polish Culture was used by the Diaspora Institutions as the Copernicus Center, Polish Cultural Institute, Polish Museum of America and at the event of “Celebrate Poland” and how it could impact the tourism imagery of Poland and amongst the Polish-Americans exposed to these activities. Aspects that could influence the imagery of Poland were also looked into, such if there were any differences amongst Diaspora Institutions in portraying Poland and which difficulties were ahead of these institutions.

The use of Polish culture and identity amongst the majority of the examined institutions were focused on the traditional dimensions and showing the “old Poland” to the Polish-Americans, despite few contemporary aspects in the events at the Copernicus Center. The main emphasis on the old Poland causes a neglecting of the contemporary aspects of Poland. Such a selective use of traditional aspects of culture, both in objects and most performances as well, results in these focused social realities can cause that the Polish-Americans will perceive Poland solely as an backward country, due to the neglecting of contemporary aspects. Such aspects can later on create tensions on homelands trips were the reality showed in Chicago will differ from one the Polish-Americans will experience in Poland, being a more varied one. The internal fight amongst some within the Polish community in Chicago and the financial problems can cause that Poland and Polish culture will not be exposed as much or seen in a greater picture, by the Polish-Americans. Therefore the emphasis on traditional Polish culture and neglecting the contemporary (besides some few events at the Copernicus Center) can cause that Poland will solely be perceived as such a “old-style” destination by the Polish-Americans.

### 4.3 Myth creating and implication in homeland travels

This subsection aims to examine and discuss the role that Polish Diaspora institutions can have in the creation of homeland “myth” or “narratives” of Poland amongst the Polish-Americans in Chicago, both for the younger generation which tend to have more imaginary ties with Poland, and the older generations as well with more real ties to the homeland. To these aspects, the desire to connect to Poland and difference in the homeland perception across generations will also be addressed in order to address the complexity such matter can ultimately have on possible homeland travel for both younger and older generation within the Polish community in Chicago. The need for Diaspora Institutions in Chicago and others actors will be discussed as well.

#### 4.3.1 Diaspora Institutions as actors in creating homeland “myths”

The different Polish Diaspora actors within Chicago that were identified for this research, such as The Polish Cultural Institute, The Copernicus Center and The Polish Museum of America all had their way of showing Poland and therefore affecting the Polish-Americans that were exposed to their activities. The production of Polish culture from Diaspora institution and possible creation of “myths” and “narratives” of Poland towards Polish-Americans, could seem as a natural aim for all the identified Diaspora Institutions for this research, but when asked, the Polish Culture Institute were not interesting in targeting the Polish-Americans at all. Ivo Widlak from the Polish Cultural Institute did not see a need for such a targeting of the Polish-Americans in the activities of the Polish Cultural Institute due to the lack of relevance from his point of view: *“First of all Polish people know what their culture is about, they are creating their culture and there is no need to promote something that they already are so the Polish Cultural Institute was more towards Americans”* (I. Widlak, personal communication, Apr. 3, 2016). This above stance from Ivo Widlak is interesting in that aspect that it contradicts the further observations and conversations with Copernicus Center, within the Polish Village and with Ivo Widlak himself, which will be addressed in the next subsection 4.2.2. Relating it to Brubaker (2006) such “boundary-maintenance” is generally most present in the 1<sup>st</sup> generation of migrants and erodes in the latter generations. Therefore a Diaspora Institutions as the Polish Cultural Center could be important as an actor in

re-creating myths and shaping perceptions of Poland amongst these younger generations, where the “boundary-maintenance” is not as strong as in the older generations. Having in mind the great number of Americans of Polish descent living in Chicago such younger generations would consist of a great audience for such activities. When comparing with the Copernicus Center, Gregg Kobelinski had a focus more on the Polish community and such events for them, but could not exclusively target Polish-Americans: *“we’re trying not only to be an exclusive Polish centre. You can’t do that. That’s why the foundation almost went bankrupt in the 80s”* (G. Kobelinski, personal communication, Apr. 5, 2016). Not trying to adapt to the respective situation and focusing solely on one target group, targeting only Polish or non-Polish, resulted in that The Polish Cultural Institute ceased its operations: *“I ceased the operations of the Polish Cultural Institute, because I don’t think there is any point to it anymore especially since there is not much going on”* (I. Widlak, personal communication, Apr. 3, 2016). It is worth questioning if The Polish Cultural Institute would still be operating if it had been more flexible in its approaches and tried to adapt targeting the Polish community as well in its activities, since at the “Celebrate Poland” event, described in the Cultural Production section, showed a big interest for Poland and Polish culture by Polish-Americans. “Celebrate Poland” took place in downtown Chicago on the 10<sup>th</sup> of April, where at the event even though there were a large number of Americans participating, the vast majority of all participants that were observed, were Polish-American both younger and older people. Relating this to Cohen (2008) the large amount of Polish-Americans at such event shows that there are still across generations of the Diaspora, who see themselves as a part of the Polish Diaspora and this interest in the events shows the desire to connect to the homeland, having an active connection as a transnational community. Therefore the large presence of the Polish community to such an event, both older and younger generations, shows a place where Diaspora institutions can have an important role in the creation of homeland myths and narratives for both the older and younger generations, where the emphasis on traditional aspects will be seen upon later on in this section. Looking at other Diaspora institutions targeting Polish-Americans in their activities, such as the Copernicus Center and the Polish Museum of America, especially for the younger generations within the Polish Community in Chicago, such institutions can play an important role in creating and shaping people’s perception of the homeland. For the older generation such Institutions can help in maintaining a connection to Poland, but for latter generations myths cannot be created if

there is not a desire from e.g. 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> generation of Polish-American to connect with Poland: *“..the first generation after the immigrant generation tends to have some stronger ties but usually by the third generation most of that is lost.”* (G. Kobelinski, personal communication, Apr. 5, 2016). This respective aspect stressed by G. Kobelinski shows the vast “boundary-erosion” (Brubaker, 2006) that have been happening in the Polish-community in its latter generations. Whereas the transnational nature of Diasporas could suggest a mix of Polish and American identity being identified across generations, the findings of the conducted interviews and the fieldwork shows that such a “boundary-erosion” has happened to such a degree where the host country’s identity takes over the identity from the homeland. This above aspect where stressed as well by Ivo Widlak (appendix 2), where in some cases the transnational identity of the Polish Diaspora not only erodes borders across generations (Brubaker, 2006) but even within the first generation of Polish-Americans such erosion can be observed: *“I know so many Polish people who took a chance or they were given a chance to work in American companies, they switch immediately, they don’t have Polish friends or Polish people, no contact with them. . .”* (I. Widlak, personal communication, Apr. 3, 2016). The above mentioned aspects can show a loss of desire to stay connected to the homeland and not actively nourish the relation with the homeland. The tendency of a higher degree of “boundary-erosion” (Brubaker, 2005) amongst latter generations could reflect a lack of interest for Poland due to a traditional way of showing Poland such as seen by the activities from some Diaspora institutions as the Polish Museum of American or Copernicus Center. Such emphasis on traditional aspects can be related to Jokela (2011) where the way a destination is showed and given an image can affect the way people perceive and approach it, where in the above case such focus on traditional aspects could result in the younger generations perceive Poland as something from the past and not approach it due to a lack of interest, which could be caused by the lack of more contemporary aspects of the imagery of Poland, produced by Diaspora Institutions in Chicago.

#### 4.3.2 Myth creation across generations: Differences in perception and desire to connect

A contradicting aspect regarding Diaspora Institutions to promote the homeland's culture to the Diaspora Community was encountered during the conducted interview with Ivo Widlak, which as mentioned earlier didn't see any need for Diaspora Institutions to promote Polish culture to Polish-American, since they already knew about it. Despite such a claim, when asked about the connection to Poland as the homeland the answer was contradicting the above information:

*"You will have more chances to ask somebody about Poland if they have been there, and if it is the first generation and the 2<sup>nd</sup> generation (defined as 3<sup>rd</sup> generation in Europe but 2<sup>nd</sup> in USA), there is no connection anymore" (I. Widlak, personal communication, Apr. 3, 2016).* Similar aspects were acknowledged in the conducted interview with the Copernicus Center where Gregg Kobelinski confirmed the same statements as heard in the interview with Ivo Widlak: *"One of the people on our executive board. . . he never send his kids to Polish school so they don't speak Polish. . . they'll go to Poland if he buys them a ticket. . . but they don't do anything. . ."* (G. Kobelinski, personal communication, Apr. 5, 2016).

Relating these above mentioned aspects to Orozco (2006) such aspects of a lack of desire to stay connected with Poland and have a conscious and actively established connection would mean to have excluded some "apparent" members of the Polish-Americans living in Chicago, as a part of the Polish Diaspora, due to this lack of desire in connecting to Poland. Similar statements were met during the conducted fieldwork within the Polish Village in Chicago, where one shop owner addressed the issue of his own children, which he claimed would not have gone to Poland if he hadn't bought them the tickets and taken them there, which he saw as the last chance for them to visit Poland. Furthermore even though the shop owner had sent all his children to a Polish Saturday school in Chicago to learn about Poland, Polish culture and history, he stated that the children didn't have a desire to connect to Poland and were sometimes answering him in English, even though he spoke Polish to them. As seen in the above statements, the exact same aspect came across during the interview with the Polish Cultural Interview, regarding the use of Polish as a main language: *"I see it all the time, when Polish parents are talking to their American born children in Polish, the children responds in English, so is it really a main language that is spoken?"* (I. Widlak, personal communication, Apr. 3, 2016). Here, the shop owner furthermore claimed as Ivo Widlak and Gregg Kobelinski that many Diaspora members amongst the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> generation

of Polish-Americans didn't have a desire to be connected with Poland compared with the older generations and that amongst his children the one that was born in Poland was more interested in Poland compared with the ones born in Chicago. Therefore one would argue that such cases of a lack of desire to connect with Poland shows a lack of "Diaspora consciousness" and a self-definition of being a part of a Diaspora (Cohen, 2008), since as stressed in Orozco (2006) the connection between homelands such as Poland and Diaspora members needs to be an active connection which is being nourished and kept "alive" from both sides. Therefore if Diaspora members of the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> generation of Polish-Americans have a desire to keep an active connection to Poland, institutions such as the Copernicus Center and The Polish Museum of America could affect this through its activities, but it can be hard if the Diaspora-members do not wish to establish and have such a "connection".

Despite the fact that some members of 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> generation of Polish-Americans does not wish or desire to have a connection with Poland, for others such a connection could be very limited, even if such a wish would exist. These aspects regarding the little knowledge and connection that latter generations within the Polish-American community can have, came across the conducted interview with Gregg Kobelinski: *"first generation after the immigrant generation tends to have some stronger ties but usually by the third generation most of that is lost."* (G. Kobelinski, personal communication, Apr. 5, 2016).

With the above mentioned aspects in mind, in order for any of the identified Diaspora institutions to get to the Polish-Americans regarding portraying Poland and Polish culture, an important actor is related to the aspects of the loss of connection to Poland by latter generations for Polish-Americans. Such an actor was during the conducted fieldwork identified in the form of the Polish Museum of America and Library.

After engaging in casual conversations with the employees in the library department of the museum, employees informed that around 1.400 monthly guests visited the library to borrow books regarding Poland, Polish traditions, history and so forth. Books were available both in English and Polish, were Polish-Americans who didn't know Polish good enough were borrowing the same books in English. Therefore such places were places where Polish-American with little or no knowledge about Poland could reconnect through different literature and the exhibits in the section of the museum. Furthermore the library department carries out genealogy searches for

people who want to reconnect and discover their roots, from where their family has their origin from and where these Polish-Americans can descend from. With this in mind, compared with institutions such as the Copernicus Center which focuses on events, places like the Polish Museum of America and its library can be important actors for people wishing and having a desire to reconnect with Poland and its culture, even in the form of gaining knowledge regarding the history of one's family.

The way Poland is portrayed in such places, as seen above, also constitutes important aspects in the myth creating of Poland amongst latter generations of Polish-Americans, since due to the lack of knowledge they would have institutions as the museum and library are they only or first places where they will be exposed to Poland and Polish culture again. The way Poland is portrayed in such places will in such aspects influence those Polish-Americans with little knowledge of Poland, but with a desire to establish and nourish a connection with Poland, even if it's only an imaginary one (Sökefeld, 2006).

With the above mentioned indications in mind, it can suggest a difficulty for Diaspora institutions and their activities regarding who is being targeted and who should be targeted due to the vast heterogeneous composition of the Polish-Americans. It can be questioned if the Diaspora institutions should even reconsider the size of the Polish Diaspora in Chicago, if following the stance on Orozco (2006), where a two-sided connection between homeland and Diaspora members should be present in order for the Polish-Americans to be considered as a Diaspora.

In the conducted fieldwork and interviews for the research, such aspects as e.g. desire to connect have been stressed to be missing amongst some latter generations of Polish-Americans who's transnational nature as people with initial connections and ties to more than one culture and country, have lost a desire to keep on having established connections to Poland that should be nourished and actively maintained (Orozco, 2006; Cohen, 2008). Such a lack of desire in terms of being aware of one's origins amongst some Diaspora-members in Chicago, therefore can question if such dimension does not qualify them to be seen as non-members of the Polish Diaspora in Chicago and USA.



#### **4.3.3 Implications in possible homeland travels**

The lack of desire, lack of language skills, knowledge or solely having a perception of Poland through an imaginary way can cause that possible home travels for some Polish-Americans can turn out to cause implications and tensions instead of being trips of reconnection with the homeland. Due to the use of mainly traditional aspects of Poland and portraying Polish culture through a traditional lens, as identified amongst some Diaspora institutions in Chicago and at events, the home travels, or diaspora tourism, could have the opposite effect of what has been stressed in Coles & Timothy (2004) regarding the motivation for the “homeland travels” where the aim for the travel would be to seek a belonging instead of an “exotic” experience. Here, Polish-Americans who do decide to visit Poland seeks similarity and a feeling of belonging while visiting Poland, but due to the vast emphasis on traditional aspects, travels can cause Polish-Americans who have been exposed to the portraying of Poland in Chicago, might feel foreign and experience Poland as different from their firstly imaginary perception of the country.

The emphasis on the historical and traditional aspects of Polish culture by the Diaspora institutions in Chicago might not create tensions on homeland travels for those Polish-Americans travellers who set out in the search for their roots and historical identity while visiting Poland.

The lack of tensions for such travellers and those above mentioned homeland travels will probably be “tension-free” since it will show most likely the Polish-Americans the same aspects of Poland as e.g. in the Polish Museum of America or at event at the Copernicus Center. The aspect where the emphasis by the Diaspora institutions in Chicago on the traditional dimension might cause tensions on homeland travels can be for Polish-Americans travellers on homeland trips who have not been born in Poland. Such Polish-Americans born in the United States and engaging on homeland travels, might not be able to relate to being a part of the Polish society and the modern mindset in e.g. metropolitan areas in Poland. On one hand travellers where the “boundary-erosion” (Brubaker, 2006) is significant might not be able to relate being a part of the Polish society regarding both the historical aspect nor the contemporary society. On the other hand for travellers who has a desire to connect to Poland and who has been exposed to Polish culture in Chicago, might only be able to relate and feel a belonging when visiting historical sites in Poland, but might feel alienated while interacting within the more contemporary aspects in Poland, e.g. in non-historical and non-touristic areas in major metropolitan cities. Even visits to some places such

as big cities of Warsaw or Krakow can result in implications, since as pointed out in Timothy & Teye (2004) places such as big Polish cities or family hometowns, are not only conceived of what is being experienced while there or watching pictures of it, but also of how e.g. Polish-Americans have heard, read or been told of these places. Therefore even visits to some rural hometowns or modern big cities in Poland can cause tensions within the Polish-Americans emotionally, since those places might differ or have been developed over the years, that does not match the stories or the way being portrayed “back home in Chicago”.

Diaspora Institutions therefore can be indirectly causing such tensions in possible home travels for Polish-Americans who visit Poland for the first time or after a long time, due to the uniform way of showing Poland, despite certain changes which have been happening in the homeland.

Such tensions can cause that the search for one’s identity, which the Diaspora members aim for with these travels (Drozdowski, 2011), can inflict in the way that the myths Polish-Americans can have of Poland regarding its history and traditional aspects, these aspects can maybe not be encountered in the way that it was wished for. Such dimensions can cause the root-tourists in not fully getting the feeling of finding one’s identity, which such travels would help with and therefore some Polish-Americans can return to Chicago more confused and divided than before the trips.

The “identity search” (Duval, 2004; Drozdowski, 2011) can lack a feeling of fulfilment amongst generations or Diaspora members who visit Poland for the first time or after a long period of time. Therefore the vast use of nostalgic, traditional and historical aspects of Polish culture and identity used by some of the identified Diaspora institutions in Chicago can as acknowledged in Coles & Timothy (2004) cause implications in these home travels, eventually leading for some Diaspora tourists not feeling to “fit in”. Here, misunderstandings or misconceptions with a more modern Polish society, than the one portrayed in Chicago, can make travellers feel like “strangers” and “others”, instead of feeling as a part of Poland and the Polish society. Therefore a bigger variety between contemporary and traditional aspects of Polish culture amongst Diaspora Institutions would minimize such above implications for Polish-Americans living in Chicago and visiting Poland. Returning back to the aspect of “interest” towards Poland for some latter generations of Polish-Americans, such lack can cause a weakening of maintaining a homeland orientation, as Orozco (2006) stresses the importance of a two-sided connection of the Diaspora and the homeland. A total lack of such a two-sided connection between the Polonia community and Polish Authorities

could cause the Polonia in perceiving Poland differently than wished by the tourism authorities, causing possible tension in “home travel” as well, since the perceptions of Poland only could come from the Polonia and if such side differs vastly from the homeland’s, tensions in home travels could become present (Coles & Timothy, 2004). Such tensions in home travels of Polish-Americans visiting Poland could lead to the Polonia not fulfilling their expectations of being perceived as “locals” (Hughes & Allen, 2010).

### **Sub-conclusion:**

This section aimed to address the aspect of Diaspora institutions and their role in the creation of homeland “myths” and “narratives” for Polish-Americans in Chicago and see how those aspects could affect possible homeland travels by the Polish Diaspora.

The identified Diaspora Institutions for this research have the potential to create “myths” and “narratives” but not all have such an aim, such as seen in the interaction with the Polish Cultural Institute which simply doesn’t see any need or relevance to appeal to Polish-Americans.

The conducted fieldwork have shown that there is a need to appeal to some parts of the Polish community where a “boundary-erosion” has happened to such a degree that there is little left of the connection to Poland. Therefore Diaspora institutions which aims to appeal to the Polish-American community such as the Polish Museum of America or the Copernicus Center can create “myth” and “narratives” of Poland for such generations with little connection to Poland, but as well re-shape the perception of the country for people who haven’t been to Poland for many years. Relating these aspects to possible home travels for the Polish-Americans the emphasis that the identified Diaspora institutions have on showing Poland through a historical and traditional lens could cause tensions for some “homeland travellers”.

A lack of “belongingness” for latter generations with little connection to Poland could cause that they would feel alienated since they would not be able to relate to either the Polish traditional aspects of society or the modern mindset of Poles, if it hasn’t been shown to them in Chicago. Regarding Polish-Americans with a greater knowledge, both first time travellers or travellers coming back after a lot of years, the traditional aspects shown in Chicago would not cause any

major tensions since there would be a coherent picture from what they knew from Chicago and what would be seen in Poland, if the knowledge they got about Poland was not solely from the identified Diaspora Institutions. The aspects where tensions could arise would be in the modern spheres of Polish society where Polish-Americans would not feel a “belonging” since such aspects would not have been in accordance of the way Poland was shown in Chicago.

#### **4.4 Polish Diaspora Tourism**

This subsection will analyze and discuss the actual goals set out by the Polish Tourism Authorities regarding to target the Polish Diaspora in order to visit Poland on such home travel, where reports and books published by the Polish Ministry of Sport and Tourism and the Polish National Tourism Office will be used. This will be done together with and an examination of which actual step are carried out by the Polish National Tourism Office in targeting the Polish Diaspora in Chicago, where gathered material from the National Tourism body from an exhibit on Poland in Chicago where a large amount of Polish-Americans were gathered in celebrating Polish identity. Examining the actual approaches by the Polish Tourism Authorities towards the Polish Diaspora will help the thesis in gaining an in-sight on if the Polish Tourism Authorities are trying actively to target Diaspora tourism and which way they want Poland to be perceived by Polish-Americans. Finally, it can help the thesis to identify if the Polish-American are also exposed to any “myths” or “narratives” from Poland.

##### **4.4.1 Current situation**

The two main actors in promoting and developing Poland as a tourist destination in order to create and increase the domestic and international tourism flow to the country is respectively The Polish Ministry of Sport and Tourism together with the National Polish Tourism Office as a sub-institution, both located in Warsaw (Tourism Development Program until 2020 - Polish Ministry of

Sport and Tourism, 2014) (*Marketing Strategy of Poland in the Tourism Sector for 2012-2020*, Polish National Tourist Office, 2012). The fact that the tourism sector does not have its own ministry but has to share it with the sector of sports, can be seen in that way that the tourism sector could still be focused on in a lesser degree or haven't reached such a significant level for Poland, to make a separate ministry for the sector.

Regarding the aspect of Polish Diaspora tourism and its situation reports as: *Tourism Development Program until 2020* (Polish Ministry of Sport and Tourism, 2014) and the *Marketing Strategy of Poland in the Tourism Sector for 2012-2020* (Polish National Tourist Office, 2012) has been used together with the book *Polonia tourism areas. Current status and needs* (Polish Ministry of Sport and Tourism, 2015) to get an insight in the current situation of the Polish Diaspora Tourism and which steps are planned to be taken.

Diaspora tourism to Poland made by Poles living abroad of people with Polish ancestry is acknowledged to make up an important dimension of the general tourism flows, where this respective aspect made up to 18% (2,7 million) of the total of the 16-18 million international tourist arriving yearly in Poland for the last years (*Polonia tourism areas Current status and needs*, 2015). As seen in the material from the Polish Ministry of Sports and Tourism, these 2,7 million Diaspora tourist constitute around 18% of the total potential Diaspora market for Poland, where around 21 million people worldwide are considered as Poles living outside of Poland or being of Polish descent, where a majority (up to 60%) does not use Polish language in their everyday life. The examination of the numbers of Polish Diaspora arrivals were carried out by the Polish Ministry of Sport and Tourism were 2,7 million people of the international tourists in 2012 answered that they were Poles or of Polish descent and feeling some kind of connection to Poland, even though the exact number of such arrivals are hard to exactly measure (*Polonia tourism areas Current status and needs*, 2015).

Furthermore it is stressed that the percentage for Polonia tourism should reach a level of 20% of the total international tourist arrivals (*Polonia tourism areas Current status and needs*, 2015), which can be seen as contradicting in the *Tourism Development Program until 2020* (Polish Ministry of Sport and Tourism, 2014), where the development of Diaspora Tourism is not amongst one of the general aims for the future goals, neither in the report of *Marketing Strategy of Poland*

*in the Tourism Sector for 2012-2020* (Polish National Tourist Office, 2012), where the Polish Diaspora does not appear in the “target groups” for the approaches for the American market. In comparison Polonia does appear as a target group on the market approaches for Belarus and Brazil, even though with high numbers of Polish communities, are far less than the number for Polish residing in the USA.

Markets as the Belarusian and Brazilian in terms of Diaspora tourism can seem as less developed to Poland compared with the American, but the grand potential of the many Polish-American still calls for approaches to target those groups, even in aspects of latter generation having a weaker connection to the home country, as it has been observed in the conducted fieldwork carried out in Chicago.

#### **4.4.2 Approaches by the Polish Tourism Office**

As stressed in the report of the Polish Ministry of Sport and Tourism (Polonia tourism areas: Current status and needs, 2015) an important approach to follow for Diaspora Tourism dimensions is for Poland to create positive “homeland memories”, which can leave positive impressions on the Diaspora tourists after their visits and to keep their connection to Poland together with maintaining a positive image. As stressed, myths and national symbols together with religious places should be main aspects in attracting Polish Diaspora Tourism, where the Tourism Authorities stresses a need to show Poland not only from its traditional sides but as well from a contemporary side and as a modern country.

During the conducted fieldwork in Chicago, the material from the Polish Tourism Office was encountered at a cultural fair in Chicago downtown, celebrating different ethnic communities in the city, on different days. One day was the celebration of Poland, where the only material encountered from the office was promotional material regarding Polish cities and culinary trips. The material mainly consisted of flyers regarding places to go in Poland, where the main cities that were in focus, together with cultural “objects” mainly historical building, neighbourhoods and cities, showing the cultural heritage and folklore of Poland in the traditional sense.

As pointed out in Swidler (1986) such aspects of culture can be seen in which “values” are sent to the target groups, where in this respective case the gathered flyers from the Polish Tourism Office,

is trying to portray the more historical aspect of time in portraying these cultural aspects (Hughes, 2002), where the traditional and historical heritage of Poland is shown and therefore a more traditional picture. Such “values” can be seen as pointed out in Foley & Fahy (2004), as a “*self-portraying*” of themselves as a destination of how “outsiders” will perceive it, which therefore can lack a bit of what have been stressed in Polonia tourism areas (Current status and needs, 2015), where a more contemporary picture of Poland was stressed to be portraying Poland alongside a more traditional one. Relating this to what was shown of Poland at the “Celebrate Poland” fair, showed a lack of contemporary aspects of Poland and was rather concentrated to be on historical aspects.

Such a monotone portraying can result in old stereotypes still being present or having problems creating new ones (Foley & Fahy, 2004), such as Poland being a modern society.

A problem can seem to be the lack of “real” contact with Polish Tourism Authorities that Polish-Americans would encounter, where the Ministry (Polonia tourism areas: Current status and needs, 2015), emphasise modern technologies on social medias etc. these medias shows a more mixed picture of Poland, compared with the “real” material provided to the “Celebrate Poland” fair in Chicago. The Ministry wants to show Poland both as a traditional and modern destination, which unfortunately only seems to be present online (Polish Tourism Office), whereas flyers and brochures, which The Polish-Americans came in contact with on the fair, is more traditional oriented. As stressed in the conducted interview with the Copernicus Center (G. Kobelinski, personal communication, Apr. 5, 2016) the different Polish events hosted in the Center, e.g. the annual Taste of Polonia festival attracts a big variety of the Polish community, but lacks representation of the Polish Tourism Authorities. Gregg Kobelinski informed (personal communication, Apr. 5, 2016) that possibilities of setting up a stand for tourism information would have been highly welcomed, but were instead discarded in favour of online sources for tourism information.

As stressed in Jokela (2011), tourism imageries have an important role in the appealing and creating desires amongst people to explore a destination, where a higher degree of engagement of the Polish Tourism Authorities in Chicago could affect imageries amongst the Polish-Americans which could create specific individualised images of Poland within the Polish-American communities regarding seeing Poland both as a destination of both tradition and modernity.

Both Ivo Widlak (I. Widlak, personal communication, Apr. 3, 2016) and the Copernicus Center (G. Kobelinski, personal communication, Apr. 5, 2016) stressed that the Polish Tourism Authorities were very invisible in their promotional activities in Chicago and were not doing any significant in the Chicago-area. This means that the Polish-Americans, if not self-searching for the Polish Tourism pages, are solely left for the more traditional aspect that are shown of Poland in the Copernicus Center, Polish Museum, Cultural Fairs and newspapers, which pointed out by Jokela (2011) such images can maintain already established national identities and images of countries, in this case being the traditional aspects of Poland as a destination.

The above aspects furthermore confirms the lack of engagement by the Polish Tourism Authorities in the area of Chicago, even though the Authorities (Polonia tourism areas Current status and needs, 2015), argues for a higher collaboration with Polonia organisation abroad, the only slight collaboration observed in Chicago, was at the office of the Polish Chamber of Commerce, where I was told that just lately the Tourism Office had been sending sporadic promotional materials and had been in contact once in a while. Such lack of prioritising in the Chicago area, can result in Diaspora institutions being the only actors together with family households and Saturday schools, which both are regarded as important players in the conducted interview with the Copernicus Center and in observations made with Polish amenities in the Polish neighbourhood.

As argued in Mason (2004), Diaspora members can experience tensions in homeland travels and a lack of being accepted as a “local” on such travels, due to idealised pictures of the homelands that could be shaped in the hosts countries, together with the home country undergoing changes. Such aspects could likely occur for Polish-Americans on home travels due to the lack of engagement by Polish Tourism Authorities, where they fail in their “willingness” in creating a more contemporary image of Poland, instead of the Diaspora actors in Chicago focusing primarily on more traditional and historical aspects of Polish identity and culture.

Such a mixture in portraying of Poland, polish culture and identity can be needed, especially taking the internal tensions and diversity of the community in mind, as argued by Ivo Widlak: *“Polish people don’t like each other, that’s a huge problem and the reason that the Polish-American community is where it is and why are not going anywhere. Actually we’re declining, we’re going backwards”* (personal communication, Apr. 3, 2016) and the by Gregg Kobelinski: *“And so they*



*actually fight so much between each other and there are organisations that have basically fallen apart and there's absolutely no respect in the political community."* (personal communication, Apr. 5, 2016).

#### **Sub-conclusion:**

Due to the great number of people with Polish ancestry living abroad, the "market" for Diaspora tourism for the Polish Tourism Authorities is an aspect with a huge potential and a big target group. This subsection aimed to analyze and discuss the steps taken by the Polish Tourism Authorities towards the huge market of Polish Diaspora tourism and to look upon what have been carried out. The Polish tourism authorities stresses the importance on keeping the connection between Poland and Diaspora communities with emphasis on sharing positive images of Poland, showing the country as both a traditional and contemporary destination. The potential of the great market for Polish Diaspora tourism has been acknowledged in the obtained materials from the Ministry but the Tourism Authorities do not focus on the American Diaspora as a target group nor do they show an interest in promoting Poland towards Polish-Americans in one of the major areas with Polish-Americans, being Chicago. As identified through the fieldwork the different Diaspora institutions as the Polish Cultural Institute and Copernicus Center were both open for collaboration with the authorities but were met with no interest from Poland. Furthermore at events with a great potential of targeting a large amount of the Diaspora as at the "Celebrate Poland" event, the Polish Tourism Authorities were not present and only send some flyers through the Polish-American Chamber of Commerce, where no contemporary aspects of Poland as a destination could be found. Therefore the Polish Tourism Authorities do not take the possibility in creating a varied picture amongst Polish-American even when they get the possibilities and even though the potential and desire is acknowledged in some of their material, it has not been seen in any significant way during the fieldwork in Chicago.

#### **4.5 Analysis conclusion:**

The analysis of this thesis aimed to address the aspects on how the use of culture in a certain way by different actors could affect the imaginaries amongst a Diaspora community and which implications those specific ways of portraying the homeland could impact on the perception and the homeland travels. By addressing the different ways of how culture can be used the complexity of such dimensions have been aimed to show the many ways the culture and identity of a country can be used. Even though culture would be used in a certain way by one Diaspora institution it could be perceived differently across generations within the Polish community which called for having such matters and their complexity in mind when embarking on the analysis of the collected data. The emphasis on the traditional aspects by the Diaspora institutions, identified in the first section of the analysis, showed that the institutions were neglecting the reality in the Polish society with more contemporary dimension and the major changes that Poland have been going through in the last 25 years. This selective use of Polish culture and identity in Chicago could therefore impacts on the Polish-Americans in perceiving Poland as an “old-style and traditional” country that might could be perceived as less developed. As identified in the second section of the analysis these perceptions of Poland could create tensions on some homeland travels since the experience in Poland would be more varied from the “Poland” the Diaspora members would have been “informed” about in Chicago. For Polish-Americans having little background knowledge of Poland, such portraying of Poland could create bigger tensions on homeland travels and make the travellers feel like “foreigners” instead of “locals”. It was identified that Diaspora institutions in Chicago could have a certain role in creating and re-shaping “myths” and “narratives” of Poland amongst especially those Polish-Americans never before visiting Poland and people not being “home” in a long period of time. Due to the vast emphasis on the “traditional Poland” in Chicago tensions could happen across generations for these travellers since they would only be able to relate to certain aspects of Poland, being the historical ones shown in Chicago, whereas interactions with the contemporary Poland could be more problematic. Another important actor which could help minimize such tensions and implications of homelands trips could be the Polish Tourism Authorities, since if actively promoting Poland towards the Polish Diaspora, a more varied picture of Poland could be created and would be a counterpart to the Diaspora institutions. The findings in Chicago showed that such Polish tourism organisations, even though acknowledging

the aspect does little to create awareness about Poland as a tourist destination for the Polish Diaspora. An active and constant campaign from such organizations showing both the contemporary and traditional side of Poland could both help minimize tensions in homeland travels and might create a higher interest for Polish-Americans to visit Poland, since many Diaspora members still have an interest for Poland as seen at the “Celebrate Poland” event with participants across all generations.

## 5. Conclusion

The connection between Diasporas and tourism is in a growing state and can in some aspects have a great potential for countries with a relatively new tourism market. The Polish Diaspora is one of the biggest worldwide with half of it living in the United States and therefore represents a great potential to target for the Polish Tourism Authorities. An important dimension in targeting such Diaspora communities in embarking on homeland travels known as “Diaspora tourism”, is the way such groups perceive Poland as a country and a destination. One of the main aspects for this thesis was to look upon which affects culture used by Diaspora institutions could have on creating or re-shaping the perception of Poland amongst the Diaspora members. The focus on certain aspects and neglecting of other aspects were also important dimensions to have in mind during the thesis, where the aspect of culture have been identified as a broad term being present not only on streets, buildings and so on, but also in events, performances etc. The Diaspora institutions as the Copernicus Center and the Polish Museum of America can have a decisive role in the creating and re-shaping of homeland imaginaries amongst Polish-Americans born in the USA, Polish-Americans never been to Poland and Diaspora members that haven’t been on homeland travels for a long period. Polish-Americans with little knowledge or people who want to find their “roots” can furthermore be exposed to such Diaspora institutions and their use of culture. The emphasis on portraying the “old historical and traditional Poland” has been identified at the Diaspora institutions to such a degree that it can affect homeland travels for the same groups that the institutions would create or re-shape their perception of Poland. The selective use of traditional aspects of culture both as object and performances, is neglecting the more contemporary sides of Poland, polish culture and the country’s appeal as a tourist destination which ultimately causes that the Diaspora institutions are indirectly part of tensions and implications that can occur for Polish-Americans visiting Poland. An actor which could help create a counterpart to the Diaspora institutions and which could make a more varied picture, ultimately minimizing implication of homeland travels, are the Polish Tourism Authorities. Even though the importance and potential for further development of Polish Diaspora tourism to Poland is acknowledged and stressed, little has been done and carried out to target the great number of Polish-Americans living in Chicago.

## 6. Future research

This research relied on the collected data from the conducted fieldwork in Chicago, with interactions with the respective Diaspora institutions, observations and other interactions within the Polish community. The developing field of Diaspora tourism calls for future research to be done in many aspects and regarding the case of this research some future research might worth looking into, would be how to use such a large Diaspora as ambassadors for the homeland. Here, the use of Diaspora communities in promoting Poland and affecting the non-Polish in Chicago into a positive perception would be aspects that could be looked into. Here, dimensions worth investigating would be how and if non-Polish people in Chicago interacting with Polish-Americans could gain a bigger knowledge of Poland and ultimately leaving a positive perception of the country with the possibility of creating awareness of the Polish-American's homeland as a tourist destination for Americans. The aspects of the focus on traditional aspects by Diaspora Institutions and the traditional perception amongst Polish-American would not cause implications for Americans in future travels to Poland, since the difference would be that the Polish Diaspora embarks on homelands travels for finding their roots and feeling a "belongingness" while the Americans would look for an "exotic experience", an experience which is already being created in Chicago. Therefore such implications would not constitute any significant problems for conducting a future research on that path.

Relating future research on Polish-Americans and their perception of Poland and home travels an interesting dimension to look into would be to identify how much the traditional use of culture is exposed to the large Polish-American population. Here, other actors such as Polish Saturday schools could be investigated and identified if their way of showing Poland would be a more significant actor as a producer of "homeland myths" and "narratives" for the younger generations for Polish-Americans. Within such aspect interesting dimensions would be to see upon how the use of Polish identity and culture in these educational institutions would affect the latter generations of Polish-Americans in their desire to connect with Poland, their perception of the homeland and the implications it might have on solely these younger Diaspora members and their homeland travels.

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# Appendices

## Appendix 1

Interview with Gregg Kobelinski – Managing Director of the Copernicus Center & Foundation

Conducted on 5th of April 2016, Chicago.

**Martin: So first of all I would like to thank you for taking your time with me**

Gregg: No problem

**Martin: and the first question would be if you could tell me some general aspects about your organisation, the Copernicus Foundation and Centre, of what your aim is and of what you're doing , just in general.**

Gregg: Sure, well the Foundation started in 1971. At that time the Polish museum was in existence and that was obviously a place where all the different artefact from Poland and historical thing were being kept and there were Polish art society, there was a Polish lawyer society, there was a Polish-American Association which was founded to help immigrants in Chicago when they came here settled and with all their social needs, but there wasn't a cultural foundation, so the Copernicus Foundation was founded as Polish Cultural Foundation as just to be part of the whole Polish view of organisations. So we started in 1971, the idea was to create a Polish Cultural Centre and so the Foundation started looking for sights in order to establish a center. In the meantime, I don't know if you have been downtown to the Planetarium?

**Martin: No, not yet.**

Gregg: Okay, well right in front of the Planetarium, the most prestigious spot is a statue of Copernicus which is an exact replica of the one in Warsaw, except it's reduced down I think 20 %, so it's not exact of it, the exact dimensions, and so the city of Chicago came to the Polish community and suggested that they sponsored a monument, so there was a big fundraising ride, which many of the original founders of the Copernicus Foundation participated in and it was a huge success, they collected more money then they need for the monument and so some of that leftover money was then donated to the Copernicus Foundations and that was the money, some of it, to start the Foundation to be established and about in 1975 the Foundation bought this building, this was a old theatre, it was built in 1930. It's actually the first theatre built in Chicago for the talking movies, before then they were all silent films, so it was a pioneer theatre. Anyway the foundation bought the building and then started fundraising to established what we have here now. And it's mission is to promote Polish Culture here in Chicago.

**Martin: So in your approaches and step you take, how do you use the Polish identity and Polish culture, in which ways does it come, like, how do you use it. Which aspects of Polish culture and identity?**

Gregg: Well, with the direction we have chosen is, I mean there is a huge investment in this building, I think it's probably the largest physical Polish centre in the United States and so there's a huge investment in the building itself, it was an old building tremendous amount of money needed to keep it up and about back about 1985-6 the foundation almost went bankrupt, the building was falling apart, there were not enough revenue to keep it functioning so there were made great effort to expand the activities inside the building to help it generate funds to support itself and so the termination of the board was to use the building itself, because that where all the money was going into, to support the Polish culture so what we do is if there is a orchestra from Poland or a band from Poland or a speaker from Poland or any Polish group here, that wants to put on a performance that's tied with Poland we provide the building, the venue for them to do that and I'm not talking about private companies now, because they pay, but I'm talking about all the non-profit types of activities that would be associated with Polonia and there are a tremendous amount of Polish clubs that are need here, some Polish clubs has offices in the other part of the building and other groups have, there's theatrical group that meets here twice a week, there's a dance group that practices here, the Ludowe, folk dancing, practice here twice a week and there are a lot of different Polish related benefits that raises money, you're familiar with Wielka Orkiestra, that has been sponsored here by different organisations in Chicago for many years as part of the world wide fundraising effort and I think it's in January and we took it over years ago and our first year we raised 75.000 dollars for them, and then the next year it was about 85.000 dollars, it went to 95 and then this year we raised over 140.000 dollars, so we provide them with the building, the staff and the actual institution because you have to have an institution that sponsor it and organise it, so those are the type of things we do.

**Martin: So in the events that you have about Poland which aspects are shown? Is it more the traditional, from what I can hear, the historical aspects that's showed? Like the event you host.**

Gregg: Right, it's, a lot of it has to do with the traditional aspects but not all. I mean we are, we sponsor to addition to the dance groups, the theatrical groups, the main sponsors, the Paderewski symphony, which would be good for you to interview them and their main focus is to bring Polish culture through the fine arts and so they'll do concerts here very often from Polish composers but not only the Polish composers, because we're trying to bring not only, we're trying not only to be an exclusive Polish centre. You can't do that. That's why the foundation almost went bankrupt in the 80s. We're a community centre that's focused on supporting Polish culture but we're also supporting our general community as well. So a lot of our events are traditional Polish culture, but then also other Polish, I mean modern Polish culture, we sponsor a big festival here every year outside that takes about this whole area these 3 streets here that's called the taste of Polonia and we have the Polish food and bands from Poland, so that's more modern Polish culture there and we have 25-35 thousand people come out to that every year. A lot of them are, over half are Americans, not born in Poland but maybe Polish descent, but not born in Poland.

**Martin: So the Polish-Americans who come to the event to host in the centre, in the broader spectrum, which kind of narrative do they get? Do they both get traditional and historical one together with the contemporary? For people who e.g. does not have a direct connection with Poland and have never been to Poland and when they come here to see the events you host, which kind of narrative would you say you are giving Poland?**

Gregg: Well, what we do is the taste of Polonia, this festival is a good example. As I said about 50% of the people that come are American born. Probably 70 or 80% of them have some Polish heritage, but most a

mixed and the Americans come mostly for the Polish food and the Polish people don't come for the Polish food but they come for the Polish bands. The Americans aren't interested in the Polish bands so we have American bands for them and it's just a big melting pot. So the Polish people eat some of the Polish food but their grandma can cook it better than we can. The Americans love the Polish food and they don't get it anywhere else so they come here. What we do in terms of presenting the Polish culture then all of the groups that we support here, the Paderewski symphony, the theatrical group, the folklore groups and the many folk dancing groups in Chicago that we also support, have their sites here. We asked them all to perform inside the theatre and so all of that culture most of it I guess would be traditional. Except maybe for Paderewski, I don't know how you wanna call that, I guess it's the classic art and traditional as well. So we present all of that which both Polish people and Americans come to see. I think a lot of Americans come to see that because that's very new to them, it's very different. And we also present, because it's a 4 days festival, we also present travel logs about Poland and history of Poland and films about Poland so if somebody is interested they can sit down and see all that in the theatre.

**Martin: And those films, which kind of main theme do they have?**

Gregg: I don't think that there's any theme, you know, we do a little, half of them are travel logs which are visit Poland, go to Gdansk, go to Krakow, here's Warsaw, so...

**Martin: So they are more contemporary?**

Gregg: Those are contemporary, so people come here, they have some Polish food, there are Americans, they are maybe thinking about visiting Poland. They can come in the theatre, they can sit down with the air conditioning, because this is held in September so it's hot and they see maybe a performance and they see a film and last year we had one day that was a Polish film festival, those were all contemporary films and mostly Polish people came to see that, because they are interested in the contemporary film that comes from Poland.

**Martin: so the Polish-Americans that comes to the centre, have you experienced any differences across the generations of the people who come, I mean in their perception of Poland or the connection they have to Poland. Have you experienced any major differences e.g. of people who came, emigrated from Poland compared with their children and grandchildren?**

Gregg: Of course, there's a huge differences. I mean, people that... there's different immigrations from Poland, I'll give you an example, there's an organisation now, very old organisation, it's been around for a long long time, it was formed to be the political voice for Polonia, because of our status as a charity we're actually prohibited by law for having any political activity. SO this organisation was formed strictly to be the political voice and it used to be back in the, oh gosh, back in the 60s, when Nixon was president and Ford. It was a very powerful voice for Polonia, they were very well respected. Unfortunately now there is a clash between the generations, there's the old generation that came from Poland that still wants to raise an army and go free Poland, because they still think it's communist, I guess, I don't know. And then there's a generation that maybe came 10-20 years ago that wants to move on, and then there's a generation born here that really doesn't care about any of what. And so they actually fight so much between each other and there are organisations that have basically fallen apart and there's absolutely no respect in the political community, and they actually have to have security guards to their meeting. One of them, they called out a

meeting here next month and they told us they want security guards here, because of the people fighting. And I'm not talking about bringing guns and all that but just shouting and screaming, so there is this clash between old, old Polonia and old Polonia, meaning born in Poland and then new Polonia who's born here and you see that in the dying organisations and in the new organisations that are thriving. If you go to the Polish-American Chamber of Commerce which have their offices in the next building, I don't know if you're going to be interviewing them.

**Martin: I haven't spoken with them yet.**

Gregg: Okay, so I don't know how long they have been around but as of late my experience they've become extremely dynamic. They have young people in there, and by young, I know, I'm old, I'm 56, but by young I mean 40-50. They have younger people in there that are now just business men, they are in their prime of their career and some are born in Poland and some are born here. And maybe their parents were born in Poland so they have a very tight tie and that organisation is extremely dynamic, they have meetings every month, they interact with the city of Chicago, the Polish-American chamber is sponsoring an exhibit on Poland at Navy Pier, which is being organised by the city of Chicago, organising a showcase of ethnic communities in Chicago, so they're taking the forefront in the doing that.

**Martin: Is that present now on Navy Pier or?**

Gregg: I'll have to look and see when it is. It's an specific event, but you see that organisation is very dynamic and their members participate every month and they are all more or less a cohesive unit and they want to present Poland and they want to present it from a commercial viable standpoint, not only just the culture, they are focusing more on the present business. And then you have these old organisations that all they want to do is about whether the Polish flag should have an eagle on it or shouldn't have an eagle on it.

**Martin: Yeah, actually I've seen that on the flags it's always with the eagle, I was just wondering why?**

Gregg: Well, that was the eagle, the crown and the eagle the sound of the old Poland and the monarchy right?

**Martin: Yeah.**

Gregg: So most of Polonia associates that with rebellious.

**Martin: So even the flag is still used like the more traditional version?**

Gregg: Because the old Polonia that came here, when the communist took the eagle off, not the eagle, the crown. So then you wouldn't dare, well the consulate of course, but no one here in Chicago with fly a flag without the crown.

**Martin: So that rebellion...**

Gregg: Well, that tradition stays. I remember my family that the Polish eagle always had a crown on it.

**Martin: Yeah, so across these Polish-American generations, do you see a difference in the engagement towards Poland and Polonia activities. Do you experience that maybe the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> generation maybe doesn't feel the same desire to connect to Poland?**

Gregg: Absolutely, yeah, absolutely. When you get to that 3<sup>rd</sup> generation. Well first I think that the 1<sup>st</sup> generation in Poland is the immigrant generation, but in the US we call it the 0 generation.

**Martin: Ah, okay. Yeah.**

Gregg: Like the floors right? In Europe the first floor is 0.

**Martin: Yeah, exactly.**

Gregg: Anyway, so the first generation after the immigrant generation tends to have some stronger ties but usually by the third generation most of that is lost. My brothers children they know their Polish, they maybe like the Polish food but I don't think they would know very much about Poland at all.

**Martin: What about Saturday schools?**

Gregg: There are a lot of Saturday schools, in a matter of fact I think I heard a number that there is like 20,000 students in the Saturday schools.

**Martin: But do you know if it still applies for, like does parents still send the 3<sup>rd</sup> generation to Saturday schools?**

Gregg: I think that's very rare.

**Martin: So it kind of stops at the 2<sup>nd</sup> generation?**

Gregg: Yeah, I'll give you a for instance. One of the people on our executive board, I mean, his mother was one of the founders of the Foundation along with my father and he never send his kids to Polish school so they don't speak Polish at all. I mean, they'll go to Poland if he buys them a ticket and they like touring around Poland but they don't do anything, they don't belong to any Polish clubs. They come and help here because they are helping their father but they don't do anything else outside of that once a year when they come and help with the festival, because they are helping their father, but they are not associated with any Polish activities beyond that and their mother was a founding member, born in Poland, he (the father) speaks Polish, you know, he was been involved here with me in the foundation for 20 years and yet that next generation is... they know their Polish, they are not embarrassed of Polish, just no Polish clubs, no nothing.

**Martin: So relating it more to the travels, you said you had some stands here where you show movies about going to Poland and destinations and stuff like that. Have you had any contact with any Polish Tourism Authorities about showing Poland as a tourist destination or trying to inform people of travels there?**

Gregg: Our festival is probably the largest Polish festival in the country and when we tried to turn to both the consulate and we wrote the tourism agency in Poland (National Tourism Office) and said: hey, what an opportunity for you to come here and showcase Poland.

**Martin: Exactly.**

Gregg: There was zero interest. They said to go on the internet and download some movies.

**Martin: So a lack of desire from the tourism authorities.**

Gregg: I get the sense that, I'm told in terms of Poland allocating money to the Diaspora around the world that the United States gets the smallest part, because I would guess that probably the largest and wealthiest Polish population outside of Poland so I'm told that a lot of money gets donated to maybe the Polish groups in Ukraine or Bulgaria or something, some of the poorer countries and I think there is a strong tourist business here with the United States so maybe the thought is not to advertise, even the Polish airlines don't advertise here.

**Martin: No? Not even in Chicago with LOT (Polish Airlines)**

Gregg: Well, I mean at a festival you have airlines, we have AirBerlin, KLM, Lufthansa...

**Martin: But not LOT?**

Gregg: Not LOT. You never know in what pocket that money is going in.

**Martin: How do you think an institution or foundation like the Copernicus Centre could be a way to be useful for the Polish Authorities to try to get the Polish-Americans to visit their home country or their country of origin?**

Gregg: Well, we get an over 100.000 people come through this centre every year and if you look around we have the mural of Copernicus of there, we have his name, we have the write-ups, we have the explanation of the foundation on the wall so when somebody comes here they know this a part of Polish culture. I mean there has been a fight over the years, constant fight as we expanded into all the other communities and we have a tremendous amount, we have Ukrainians, Russians, Pilipino, Mexican, Jewish and we have symphony concerts here. I was just told here today that the president of Ecuador is going to come here in two weeks and have a, some kind of event here. We have had the president of Bulgaria here, not one president of Poland by the way. The president of the United States yes, but all the presidents of Poland they go somewhere else. Anyway, everybody that comes here, sees that this is a Polish centre, we fly the Polish flag. There has been a big fight to change the name to something easier for Americans and I've absolutely fought that every time. Copernicus is a Polish name, we're going to keep the name as a Polish Centre, so that's what we're trying to do to tell everybody: okay, we're a Polish centre, we are here for the whole community but it's sponsored by the Polish community and we're going to stay a Polish centre.

**Martin: So as far as I can hear...**

Gregg: By the way, yes the Polish Authorities do nothing, we're glad to work with them, but they do nothing to use any of this.

**Martin: So as far as I can understand, you would be happy to work with them and have some kind of collaboration?**

Gregg: Of course.

**Martin: But there is no desire for from their...**

Gregg: We don't sense a desire. I mean, we're more than willing but I don't think they would do anything.

**Martin: Okay, could you...**

Gregg: Excuse me. I should say, they do come to us to help which we always do. The ministry of health sometimes sponsors seminars of retired people..

**Martin: The Polish?**

Gregg: Yes, the Polish Ministry of health, where they have their pensions, there's still getting pensions from Poland or they get health benefits so when they need a large facility they'll come here and they say: can we use theatre, can we use the meeting rooms. So we do cooperate in that sense, I mean they do come here at times when they need to use the room or physically use the facilities.

**Martin: But not the Ministry of Tourism for example?**

Gregg: I don't think they use us at all for marketing actually. They always use us when they need somewhere to meet, because this is a central location that all of the Polish people of Chicago can find. But I think they really dropped the ball for using us for marketing.

**Martin: Okay, great. Could you mention some of the difficulties that, I know that you told me that in the 80s you had financial problems, but today which kind of difficulties do you face in Chicago as a organisation?**

Gregg: In Chicago or we as a organisation?

**Martin: In general, which difficulties does the Copernicus Centre face, if any, in Chicago, in achieving your goal?**

Gregg: I think the biggest impact over the last maybe 4-5 or 6 years, I guess you could call it difficulties, has been the tremendous amount of people that went back to Poland.

**Martin: Ah, so the reversing trends..**

Gregg: Right, we have a lot of Polish cultural shows, if you pulled up, you can see there's 3 or 4 advertised on...

**Martin: Yeah, I've seen that.**

Gregg: So we have a lot of Polish cultural shows and as I see some of these promoters that brings these accents from Poland are having less and less financial success because there is less people. Well, there is less people and Poland has grown richer so these acts from Poland, bands or theatres where they would have been more than happy to have come to the United States to make 5 or 10.000 dollars, now they are making much more in Poland, so it cost so much more to bring them here. So your Polish culture, to bring it here is more expensive and your audience is smaller.

**Martin: So exactly to get into that with the reversing trends with the Polish Diaspora that it's shrinking and there isn't coming any "new blood", do you think that you could, if there is a solution how could you approach that, or is it just a natural thing that doesn't really have a solution?**



Gregg: I don't know how we as a foundation would change that.

**Martin: I don't mean how people are coming in (to the country), but how to face that situation make it less significant to feel the impacts? If you have any, I know it's a very hard question.**

Gregg: Yeah, I know that our focus is on the Polish culture that's presented here, in the centre now and we see that the Polish population doesn't have the amount of money it used to have to spend on these things, so our focus on the things we control, to make it as economically feasible for someone to participate as possible. That's what we can do.

**Martin: Yeah, do you think, if going back to Polish-Americans, that they in one way or another can affect the non-Polish people here in their perception that they have of Poland and maybe create a desire for them to visit Poland.**

Gregg: Absolutely, I think that if someone sees a successful Polish business person, I mean, it presents a very positive image of Poland. I think a lot of Americans here have no idea how economically successful Poland has been in the last 8 years and have no idea and think that all of Eastern Europe is a backward country. But you have to take that into the context of, they did a survey, it might be 10-20 years, but I'm sure it probably holds true today, and they showed Americans they map of the world and 50 % of them couldn't point to Europe. SO the fact that somebody might not be familiar with what's going on in Poland it ties in into this whole thing in the interest of Americans about what goes on internationally.

**Martin: And what about, you said you had some American people coming to some of your events, have you seen any desire from them to, like an interest in Poland?**

Gregg: It's hard to say, people come here for an event, we don't talk to everybody, I mean it would be wonderful if, we have big shows and tv's around the lobby, you would think that a Polish Tourism bureau would sponsor some kind of an exhibit, we're 100.000 people come, hahaha.

**Martin: I just have one last question, and it would be more about if you could tell me about your own connection to Poland, like your own perception or your real connection to Poland, if you have been to Poland the last time or any connection with family members or just your general perception or imaginary?**

Gregg: Well, I studied there, I studied when I was in high school and I studied one year when I was at the University in Poland and then I had a company there for about 10 years and I still do business with Poland, I just actually left the company in Poland right when the whole economic climate was changing and I was more focused on Korea and China and so on, I had a trading company there as well so I left my business in Poland to my manager that was running the business and parts of that company he still runs today. I mean it his company now and I still do business with him and I do business with a company in France which trades in Poland, they export, they buy from the United States and bring dental products into Poland.

**Martin: When was the last time you went to Poland for a visit?**

Gregg: Ah, I knew you were going to ask me that. Well last time would have been, gosh, probably 10 years ago. So I used to travel there every six weeks and I used to live there. I'm really interested in seeing the rest of the world. I would love to go back to Poland, but I wish I would have a lot of time to just travel.

**Martin: Of course, do you still have any family members in Poland that you have any connection to?**

Gregg: I do, I have a, lets se.... a second cousin, so it would be the son of my father's cousin.

**Martin: Okay, so not any closer relatives like..**

Gregg: No, we don't really communicate that often. I would like one day to go back there and just see them. He was here, he worked in the United States, and we worked together when I had the business in Poland, but you know, everybody gets busy. I wish, I should keep in touch with him.

**Martin: Of course, a last question, where you born in Chicago or in Poland?**

Gregg: No, in Chicago. My grandparents came from Poland.

**Martin: Okay, that's it. I would say thank you a lot for answering all my questions.**

Gregg: Sure

**Conversation ends.**

## **Appendix 2**

Interview with Ivo Widlak – Founder of Polish Culture Institute in Chicago

Conducted on 3rd of April 2016, Chicago.

**Martin: Well, I would just like to start to say thank you for taking your time here with me and regarding the first question I would like to ask if you could tell me something about your organisation/institute, The Polish Cultural Institute in Chicago, what is your aim, just in general aspects?**

Ivo: I have created and established the Polish Cultural Institute in march of 2010, the mission statement and the whole goal of this organisation was to really create an organisation that will promote Poland and Polonia (Polish Diaspora) in the United States and fight against anti-Polonism, that was the main goal. And to promote Polish people from Poland and Polish people who are living in the United States and also to get every organisation to work together because for decades there was a problem that the Polish Community does not communicate with themselves so there were so many organisations, you know right know there are about 400 legally registered in the state of Illinois, organisations that have in their mission to do something for Polonia or Polish people or Polish-American relationships. So get them together to create something bigger and unfortunately that's a goal that's not accomplishable.

**Martin: To united the Polish?**

Ivo: Yeah, there is no possible way to unite Polish people. They are Polish individuals or Polish organisations because like with every Polish person we are very individual, we are individualists and nobody want to be, even if they don't know anything, they have no clue what they are doing or how to do something, they really do not want to take any tips or advices how to do things. So that whole idea with that just, you know, stopped. So since I'm a journalist and I'm founder and president of the Polish Cultural Institute and I'm also a journalist with over 25 years of experience and with my knowledge and experience with PR and marketing I was going to be kind of a spokesperson for the Polish things that happens, promote Polish events, promote Polish talents and that I accomplished as much as I could. There was definitely, because of my contacts with journalists in American mass media, for whom I promoted, they showed up to a different concert they never heard about or never showed up or paid any attention to, so the Polish community per say, I'm making the community in quotation, getting a little bit of exposure, you know different talents, giving them a little exposure in American television stations.

**Martin: Well, so the aspect of Polish identity and culture, how do you use it in your approaches?**

Ivo: You know, here's the problem with the Polish identity, how we Polish people like to be perceived and seen is a different thing how other people sees us, okay? The Polish people are...we are been in the United States from the beginning, you know..let's start with Kościuszko and Pulaski right? SO American people were very familiar with Polish people and some of their accomplishments, less or more, but everybody knew, everybody in Chicago knows about pierogi, everybody know about kielbasa, everybody knows about bigos, everybody knows about golabki (Polish food dishes), and this is how people sees us. Especially in Chicago which is a food Mecca for everybody. So this is how people are seeing us, like if somebody will ask, I don't look Polish at all, so when people ask me: Ivo what is your nationality or your heritage, and they guess German, thats what I hear the most, but when I say I'm Polish they are like: Ah, alright you're Polish, let's drink vodka, because this is what people, regular American people, people living in America regardless their ethnicity, everybody knows about the Polish food and that we drink a lot. This was one of the goal the the Polish Cultural Institute to change the perception of regular Americans on how they see us, to see that we are very talented, that we have and we are inventors, wer are leaders, that we have scientists, Dr. Maria Szymono, who was one of the first who made a face-transplant. Then you have a lot of great people that...we are not about pierogis and bigos and vodka and golabki and being drunk as fuck all the time. But you know this is very hard to do..and you will never change the perception.. also....

**Martin: What about the perception more towards Polish people that are in Chicago?**

Ivo: No, here's the thing...it's....the perception about Polish people in Chicago is that we drink a lot, that we are a kind of drunks, okay?

**Martin: I just mean more in general how you are trying to show Polish culture to the Polish community and the Polish people in Chicago?**

Ivo: Okay, you know I'm not going to bring the hay to a hay house, you know, you don't..I don't want to promote Polish culture to Polish people, that's stupid for me. First of all Polish people know what their culture is about, they are creating their culture and there is no need to promote something that they already are so the Polish Cultural Institute was more towards Americans.

**Martin: And not so much Polish?**

Ivo: Not so Polish people because bringing ... Nie nosisz wody do studni (You don't bring water to the well).

**Martin: What about more to people who haven't been to Poland? But have Polish origins?**

Ivo: You know, the thing is that they are still Polish so it's not really my responsibility to promote Polish culture to the first or second generation or Polish people because another thing is in Chicago, seriously every other person is Polish, go and ask somebody, somebody is quarter Irish, quarter Danish, quarter Polish and 1/3 indian and something right? There are organisations that is

doing, it's called first generation initiative targets Polish people for born here, so they are first generation Americans right? But they are trying to promote themselves for which is a good idea but they are trying to help each others but they are...you need to understand something...that Polish people who have decided to stay here or their children who is first generation (American), some of them are being taught how to speak Polish still and some not, some parents are sending their American born children to Polish schools some are not. There's no requirement if you are Polish or born here that you have to go to Polish schools, no. And there are some children that refuse to speak Polish or to have anything to do with Polish culture because they are being Americanized. So, but there is no organisation or any entity that targets Polish people and promote Polish culture (to them), there is no need for that. There is no such a thing.

**Martin: So the narrative of Poland that your institute is trying to give to the Americans or not, which narrative or way to you want to show Poland? The more traditional or...how do you want them to see Poland?**

Ivo: At this moment, as I've told you off record I seized the operations of the Polish Cultural Institute, because I don't think there is any point to it anymore especially since there is not much going on. There is a problem from the marketing point of view, you need to know your target if you are doing something to know your addressee. Since 2000 we really don't know how many Polish people are living in Chicago or the United States and that's a huge problem, because in 2000 that was the last census where the American government was counting people based on where they live, what is their age, their ethnicity, their needs and stuff like that. In 2010 there was another census because the census in the United States is done every 10 years. So it was 2010 and the census that was in 2010 was 1 page/9 questions-form and there was nothing about ethnicity or nationality so we really know how many Polish people there are. There are people and organisations that claims that there is still 1 million Polish people in Chicago, it's not true okay? I wasn't true since about 2000, definitely it was not true for 2000 census and for 100 % it was not true for the 2010 census. The only data that we have about Polish people in Chicago and the metro area, Chicago the city and the surrounding suburbs that after the general census the government send out people to speak with people, so they went door to door. So the only data that they could retrieve was that in whole Chicago land metro area there is 280, about, it's still statistics on average right, there is 280.000 household where Polish language is the first main spoken language. So let's say going back to sociology and statistics Polish families are usually 2+1, 2 parents and 1 child. We have 280.000 households times 3, but I would question those statistics because as I said a lot of, I see it all the time, when Polish parents are talking to their American born children in Polish the children responds in English, so is it really a main language that is spoken? So that's the problem, how can you target something, anything, to someone you don't know what to target to. Another thing is, there are organisations, political organisations who are claiming that there is 10 million Polish-Americans. Another thing is that there is no definition what is Polish-American. Is a Polish-American person who was born in Poland and lives in the United

States or is it a person who is born in the United States and has a Polish ancestry? And then, if so, how many generations back you go to be a Polish-American. So the Polish-American organisations that are political organisations, they are saying that there is 10 million Polish-Americans that they can address to. No you cannot address to because my wife she's latina, she's Mexican and she says that she is Polish, now you have to censor it, by injection, okay? So is the Polish-American organisations targeting my wife since she is just saying she is Polish-American? Are they including her in those 10 millions? And that's the problem with the Polish community, we don't know who we are, that's the first thing, that's the never ending question, que vadis Polonia? Dokad idziesz Polonia? Where are you going Polonia? We don't go anywhere because we don't know who we are. So that's why the Polish community and Polish people doesn't have an impact on what really is going on in the daily lives, we haven't any impact on what's going on in the political life.

**Martin: But I mean in the generations you have come across of Polish people, do you see any differences in the 1<sup>st</sup> generation, 2<sup>nd</sup> generaton and maybe 3<sup>rd</sup>, in the perception they have of Poland or the connection they have to Poland as well?**

Ivo: Of course there's a huge difference. If somebody, just like you, 1<sup>st</sup> generation, has a parent or parents and they are going to visit, if they can afford because flying the whole family to Poland it's..

**Martin: It's gonna cost a lot**

Ivo: It's gonna cost a lot, a 2 way ticket is a 1000 dollars, get the mother, father and the daughter or a son....

**Martin: But I mean, have to experiences any differences in the way they perceived it, imaginary as well, the way they see Poland as a country.**

Ivo: You know what, that's a very good question and I can't really answer it because I never saw it that way. How they perceive Poland, I don't know how they perceive Poland. I really don't know, it never, it wasn't...

**Martin: You haven't come across any of those differences, speaking about Poland with a 1<sup>st</sup> generation or 2<sup>nd</sup> generation?**

Ivo: Okay, this is what I know. If it is the Polish generation (1<sup>st</sup>) there is they more chances that they visited Poland. But I have no idea what is the perception or opinion or how they perceived Poland, I have no clue.. But the 2<sup>nd</sup> generation is not Polish at all, because..

**Martin: So they (2<sup>nd</sup> generation) don't have a desire to connect with Poland?**

Ivo: Not really. Based on what I know, no. No, because.

**Martin: Based on what you have come across with.**

Ivo: No, they are....You will have more chances to ask somebody about Poland if they have been there, and if it is the first generation and the 2<sup>nd</sup> generation, there is no connection anymore, you know.

**Martin: And they don't desire it as well?**

Ivo: Not that I'm aware of, no.

**Martin: Okay, so another aspects...**

Ivo: Just a couple of days ago a went to a store and I was buying a Polish ham right? And they guy next to me said: is it a good Polish ham? And I said, I don't know, I don't eat it. And he said, oh because my mother was Polish and I never asked her about that ham.

**Martin: Well, that would be an example of a 2<sup>nd</sup> generation...**

Ivo: Yeah, so yeah, maybe this guy was even a 3<sup>rd</sup> generation and his mother was Polish right? And he never had a Polish ham, and I met him in a regular American grocery store.

**Martin: So then you have experiences that people don't really have a desire to link, not even...**

Ivo: No, another thing is, you need to take into consideration that mentality of a regular American person. If you, Americans are very small, they live in their small world, if you're going to go and ask on the street: where is this and this street, then they don't know. Americans they just know all the stuff they really critically need to know. Going and asking an American for directions is a really huge problem because they don't really know, okay?

**Martin: So returning back to the Polish people in Chicago, based on what you have said so far, the engagement they have towards Poland and Polish identity, culture and those kinds. Do you think there is an engagement, do they engage in this or how?**

Ivo: No.

**Martin: Any unity?**

Ivo: But you are asking about Polish people who are speaking Polish or?

**Martin: No, I'm speaking about the Polish people who came from Poland, their children, their grandchildren...**

Ivo: Okay, so everybody.

**Martin: Yeah.**

Ivo: That's a huge problem.

**Martin: Just on what you have come across.**

Ivo: Yes, so you see that a huge problem because we are talking about if you want to address something you need to know what your alias is, and based on my own journalistic experience here so for me right, let's even say that there is 1 million Polish Americans in Chicago, my question is: how many of them are speaking Polish? Because it doesn't matter what I will do is a show, a tv show or a radio show or an article, I really would like to know how many people can I reach? And there is no knowledge of that, because even if somebody is speaking Polish, are they reading Polish newspapers? Or Polonia newspapers? Or do they watch Polonia television? Or do they listen to Polonia radio? There is a lot of people who speaks Polish, who are from Poland, who are here, they speak fluent Polish because it's their first language but they don't access anything that was created in Chicago.

**Martin: So based on your experiences, they don't engage in those....**

Ivo: No, here's the thing, you see.. To get the whole view of Polish-Americans and Polonia in the United States is very hard. Based on sociology and psychology, sociology is because there is a lot of different people, from different backgrounds, from different parts of Poland with different mentality, that's a huge problem. So how can you unite people who are so different, so the same thing is how, you will never unite Polish people in Poland so don't expect, this is what I learned the hard way, not to expect to gather, to unite people from different lives, different regions, different locations in a small city like Chicago, you will not be able. Another thing is everybody comes here with a different goal. Some come here to just make a living, get the money and leave after a few years, then you have people who wants to stay here forever and then you have people who are just going to work and get their retirement and go back to Poland and die there. Then you have Polish people who, you know for different reasons, of lack of knowledge of language , they are doing businesses or they are part of the Polish language people, Polish circle. And then you have people who come here and they don't what to have anything to do with Polish people whatsoever, they are going to straight to American circles and they assimilate like that, so that's the thing that it's hard to really say what is the perception of Polish-Americans about Poland, because you have to many generations, too many variables in it. So that's the problem.

**Martin: So based on this, if I could relate a bit to tourism, have you or your institute had any contact with Polish national tourism authorities?**

Ivo: No, because.. What is your study? What do you study?

**Martin: It's tourism. It was regarding Polish people here and their visits to the home country, so I wanted to hear if you've had any contact with any tourism authorities?**

Ivo: Okay, so here's the thing. There is no organisation that would ever put their goals or mission statement to promote tourism to Poland. Every Polish person know were Warsaw is, they know



were Auschwitz is, they know where Wroclaw is. Or Gdansk. They know how to get home. So the thing is promoting tourism to Poland for Polish-Americans is stupid, because everybody... and seriously the only airline that flies non-stop from the United States is LOT Polish Airlines.

**Martin: Yeah, but this was more about people who maybe doesn't have been to Poland before or haven't like 2<sup>nd</sup> generations, who doesn't even speak Polish but still would like to go back.**

Ivo: Okay, so who's responsibility is it to promote Poland, to visit Poland? That's the main responsibility for our Polish government, Polish Embassy and Polish Consulate.

**Martin: Yeah, but how could your institution for example be a help in portraying Poland and Polish culture to people who hasn't really an idea about Poland or haven't been to Poland before?**

Ivo: Because as I said, the main fundament is already built how Americans are perceiving Poland, you know or Polish.

**Martin: From the households?**

Ivo: You mean what?

**Martin: That you mean that the foundation is already made from the parents? From what they learn...**

Ivo: Yeah, yeah. You know, as I said. To be honest with you, and I know a lot after the past 7 years of being part of Polonia on a very intensive level, I really haven't meet any 1<sup>st</sup> generation person or 2<sup>nd</sup> generation person that were excited to go to Poland, and as I said, you are not promoting Poland to Polish people. So there is no, have never been and probably will never be any organisation that would promote tourism in the United States, regardless if there are Polish or Polish-Americans or Americans, because the problem and the responsibility of promoting the tourism lays on the Polish government and that doesn't work. Well you contacted me in the middle of February and I didn't pay attention, but I just crossed my eyes that there was a huge expo on tourism in Chicago, where every nation was promoting their country so there were people from Sri Lanka, promoting tourism to Sri Lanka or Mexico or Ireland and believe me... Question, which country wasn't there?

**Martin: I guess Poland wasn't there?**

Ivo: Poland. Yes the Polish consulate in Chicago did not take any...

**Martin: So there were on (Polish) stands for tourism?**

Ivo: No stands at all about Poland and whatsoever. There is... I don't know why... Well actually I know. Why was nobody promoting tourism to Poland? First of all Poland was a communist country

so everybody wanted to get the hell out of there, not to go there. And then you have the internet, nobody is buying tickets in tourist agencies. If somebody wants to fly to Poland they go online and buy the tickets, so there is nothing. And another thing is the Polish government, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, they are trying to promote Poland but you see even the Polish government didn't not put and impact or emphasis on tourism to Poland. All the promotion was about Poland in general. There was a 5 minutes promo video where some journalists were interviewing different tv and movie stars who were Polish-Americans, so there were Cristina Baranski, Marta Stewart and the actress from The Black Swan, she is partly Polish, so that was five minutes about how wonderful Poland is.

**Martin: So you haven't come across the Polish government trying to get people with Polish origins to come back and visit the country where there came from.**

Ivo: No, no, no. SO here's the problem, there is a lack of advertisement and promotion to the general public about tourism to Poland and nobody's mind was crossed about promoting tourism to Poland amongst Polish-Americans, it's non-existing, nobody will think about it, that's something that...

**Martin: Yeah, but how do you think that maybe, I know that your organisation doesn't maybe have that focus, but do you think that institutions as yours could, not help, but kind of create or help on the perception that people could have and that could affect indirectly on people going (travelling) back or get an interest of Poland.**

Ivo: But the question is, why would I do that? Why would my organisation, or any organisation, do that, to promote something that I'm not going to get any, we are human beings and everybody is doing it to gain something. What would the Polish Cultural Institute gain by promoting tourism to Poland? Nothing. Because even if somebody will decide to go to Poland, visit Poland, or stay in Poland for the holidays, I have to spend a lot of money on promotion right? On advertisement, and I'm not going to get anything because I'm not going to get commission from the Airlines company ticket sold, I'm not going to get any money for somebody to stay in this hotel or that hotel.

**Martin: I just meant that not directly you should target tourism, but if you could affect people if your organisation was targeting Polish people, that they could get an interest in that (going to Poland) that would lead to tourism later on, but not you directly targeting for tourism.**

Ivo: But there is no need for that. As I said, you don't promote something that people already know. You don't promote Polish things to Polish people, it's pointless.

**Martin: As well as to people who doesn't have an clear idea about Poland or doesn't know much about Poland?**

Ivo: You know, there are some people, maybe 2<sup>nd</sup> generation or 3<sup>rd</sup> generation, like Polish-Jews, they are looking for...I heard...Many people contacted me but mostly on a private level, not through the Polish Cultural Institute, where they already.... You go online and see on different message boards or forums or facebook: I already bought the tickets. Because they know that they have Polish ancestors they will go there because they know they had ancestors and they go. SO they know where Poland is, why they want to go there and then when they have book tickets, then they ask: where should I go or what should I see? And stuff like that, or what should I eat? That's it. So the question is really, all the question you have about tourism, what you should, you should go to Ministerstwo Spraw Zagranicznych (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Poland).

**Martin: I've been trying to contact them.**

Ivo: And ask them why they don't promote Poland to Americans, because they really don't. They don't.

**Martin: Well, I requested to speak with the Polish Ministry of Tourism and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, but I couldn't get any... They didn't have time. Well, if you could tell me some more about, I know you said some difficulties, but do you have more difficulties your Institute is facing in Chicago. Is it mainly the lack of the Polish people? Or other difficulties?**

Ivo: Okay, so about the difficulties. There are some many difficulties, because of the Polish people. What have happened: we don't like each other. Polish people don't like each other, that's a huge problem and the reason that the Polish-American community is where it is and why are not going anywhere. Actually we're declining, we're going backwards. So in march I registered the Polish Cultural Institute with the Office of the Secretary of the State, as I was required, and the next day nobody even knew that I registered it, I got slammed online that I had stolen the name of the Polish Cultural Institute from an organisation in New York, because in fact there is a Cultural Institute, later I found out, in New York. But first of all, it's in New York and first of all it's not an American organisation, it's not an organisation registered in the United States, it's an affiliate of the MSZ (Ministry of Foreign Affairs). So I had not stolen the name and I wasn't trying to steal the identity from the Polish Cultural Institute in New York. But this just shows that there is a lot of people in the Polish community who are claiming that they are leaders, that they are activists, but they don't do anything. Because what happened.. When there are all the organisations that doesn't do anything, but they claim that they do... whatever right. Until someone new shows up and then you can see clearly that they don't do anything. So whenever a new initiative comes up to the surface, everybody just wants to destroy it, because....

**Martin: So a lack of support?**

Ivo: There is no support whatsoever. But you know, as I told you, there are 400 or 500 organisations to...

**Martin: Compete?**

Ivo: Just to be somebody, to have a title of a organisation but they don't do anything and there is so much negativity and frustration amongst Polish people, so believe, and everybody that I know, they are mixing the community. This is my personal opinion that Polish community mingle together for no reason whatsoever, but if somebody is doing something they will go and try to destroy it and there is so much frustration and negativity, so you know a lot of people that would, the first generation, if they would just, I know so many Polish people who took a chance or they were given a chance to work in American companies, they switch immediately, they don't have Polish friends or Polish people, no contact with them. They really want to get out of Polonia and I don't blame them so that's the thing. The problem is that there is no sponsors, you cannot get anything done if there is no sponsor, if there is no money. You can't do anything without money so the Polish Cultural Institute was trying to promote Polish people and they first project I had was the 100 faces of Polonia. I chose 100 people from different, Polish people, living the United States, living in Chicago from different faces of life, from a priest to a prostitute and get a really huge display in downtown Chicago to show that we the Polish people are different. We are doctors, we are not only bigos and we are not only drunks and blue collar workers, but we are doctors, we are priests, we are scientists, we are nurses, we are attorneys, we are doctors and everything you know. And of course I couldn't manage it because I couldn't get any sponsors, why? Because the Ministry of Foreign Affairs they don't care, they don't, they American companies why would they have participated or sponsored that kind of event? And Polish businesses they don't have the money because all the Polish businesses are what? A little grocery store, a little restaurant and they don't have money like that. So that's why the Polish community are just living on the margin of society.

**Martin: So do you see any approaches to take and tackle these reversing trends of the Polish community in Chicago, regarding the shrinking and declining? Do you see anything or any approaches to take to try and turn it around?**

Ivo: So get the Polish community bigger?

**Martin: No, not bigger but just turn it around. Tackle the declining of the Polish community, compared with 20 years ago maybe. How to kind of turn around the negative development.**

Ivo: I don't understand the question.

**Martin: I mean how to tackle the declining of the Polish..**

Ivo: But nobody has a real impact on that.

**Martin: So you don't have any suggestion on what could be done? Maybe support from Polish sides, sponsors or whatever.**

Ivo: First of all, the current prime minister of Poland and president wants every Polish person to migrated across the border to come back to Poland, right? They really want Polish people to come back home, so no, I don't think ...This is 2016 and reality is much different than it was 20 years ago. Why? Because of September 11<sup>th</sup>, The United States are not immigrant friendly anymore and it progresses more and more every single year so if you don't have a green card, why would you come here?

**Martin: Maybe not to come but just to kind of tackle the negative situation or development that the Polish community, so to speak, has come to here in Chicago. Do you see any solution?**

Ivo: No, there is no solution for that. Maybe I think, I'm taking it personally because it's like: Oh Ivo, where are you from? I'm from Poland. Oh, yes, Magda, my cleaning lady she is from Poland, do you know her? So it's the same thing. Oh Masha, you are Jewish? Do you know Itzek because he's Jewish. So am I taking it personally because Magda is a cleaning lady and this is how my friend is perceiving me? That I'm a cleaning lady too or what? This is the thing, it's reality, we're immigrant okay? And there's no need for more Polish people here, first of all...

**Martin: Not necessarily more Polish people but maybe just a more unified...**

Ivo: No, there is no solution for that and Polish community wanted to try and be together from the beginning of history when they came. You need to remember one thing, the majority of Polish people who live here they are still Polish, they are Polish at heart and they are going to stay Polish, so even if someone is a United States citizen and they have decided that they are going to live here to the end, they are still more involved and interested in what is going on in Poland than what is happening here. So for example, why does the Polish community have... The only solution to an anti-colonialism, or a negative perception of Polish people in the United States is if they Polish people come to power. But we don't want to do it, the Polish people they live here, they are more involved in the Polish parliamentary elections than here. They don't care who Elderman is. Elderman is a local government person or the senators or the state congressmen or the state senators. They do not participate, so know for example back in 2012 there was a Polish-American candidate, he was a 2<sup>nd</sup> generation Polish-American but he didn't advertise or was trying to built his campaign on it. Why? That was a proof, if Polish-American organisations are claiming that there are 10 million Polish-Americans that are going to vote for you. If I would vote for any governments polls, I would advertise that I'm a Polish-American because I know I have a 10 million votes. Look at Bernie Sanders, he is Polish, his father was born in Poland, forget that he is Jewish, He is Polish-Jewish, Bernie Sanders said anything about being from Poland? No, is he advertising that he has Polish ancestry? No. So it just shows that those 10 million Polish-American is some kind of a joke. I have a friend who is a spokesperson for one of the political organisations and why are you saying stuff like that? That you can address 10 million Polish-Americans? It's just insanity, because 283 pages on facebook, so how the hell if you cant even reach the people on facebook so how can you reach 10 million, allegedly, Polish-Americans that are living in the United States. And

another this is, the Polish-American community in Chicago, New York or wherever, it's shrinking because there is no new blood because only a crazy person will come to the United States, when you cannot work legally, you cannot drive legally. Right now you cannot do anything legally. And then you have the whole of Europe open, and you need to remember every Polish immigrant in the United States, they came to work. And there is no work, really. Another thing is, why would you come to the United States and work for a dollar if you have the opportunity to work for a pound, the British pound which is twice the value of the dollar, sometimes. SO the Polish community shrinks because a lot of people are leaving the United States because it's not the paradise and the United States is not as good a place to live as it used to be, because of the economy, because of the safety and terrorism and another thing is the open Europe, so you can see it, seriously every Polish businesses has closed. So many grocery stores, so many clothing stores, so many businesses, so many attorneys. There is like 3 Polish immigration attorneys, because if you don't have new immigrant you don't have clients.

**Martin: So to look more at the Polish people in Chicago, the ones that are left, do you think that they can, even though they have lack of unity, that they can affect the perception that American people have of Poland? Could they affect that in one way or another?**

Ivo: You know what, the perception that Americans have regarding Poland and Polish people has been created for +200 years, so the stereotypes are stereotypes and they cannot change.

**Martin: So one like you, a Polish person living in Chicago can affect Americans people view on Poland? Do you see a....**

Ivo: That's the thing, how I am seeing it. I'm trying, since I cannot make everybody to do what I'm doing so I'm representing, I'm a proud Polish person and I representing Poland at my best capabilities so I think that when someone American sees me, see the Pole, I'm educated, I speak fluent English, I don't have any criminal record, I'm not a drunk, I'm not smelly, I'm not a homeless so I think that every person that live in Chicago, there is no organisation who can to that, nor a governments body, like the consulate to make and try to educate American people how to perceive Polish people. If I'm going to be a decent person and people will know that I'm Polish, of course I would change the opinion or assure the positive opinion about Polish people amongst Americans. But if somebody appears as a homeless person and they are smelly and they speak Polish and no English this is how people will see it: that Polish people are fucking drunks bums, alcoholics. So that's the thing.

**Martin: So you believe that in the fact that Polish people can be some kind of ambassadors in a good way and a bad way in how American people will later on perceive?**

Ivo: Yeah, first of all, as I said. The view, the picture of Polish people and Poland has been already created okay? Thanks Godness for two people, everybody knows who John Paul II was and everybody know who Lech Walesa is and regardless if you are being a Catholic or a non-Catholic or

an atheist, it's a good testament for Poland and Polish people right? And the same thing with Lech Walesa, regardless if he was a good president or not, if he was a SB (Służba Bezpieczeństwa = Security Service of the Ministry of Internal Affairs in communist Poland) informer or not, if he's educated or not educated, he's stupid or not or whatever stuff he's saying, but he is very closely associated with Poland, so if you go and ask random persons one thing about Poland or what they know about Poland, they probably are going to say some kind of food which is pierogi or kielbasa, or the they are going to say Pope John Paul or Lech Walesa, and this is a good thing because what is good there is a go good opinion of Poland. And Walesa is still good because it shows and we were strong enough and denied, fought and united against communism and get that Iron Wall down, so the standard perception are both ways.

**Martin: The last question I have is about your own connection to Poland? Which kind, if I can ask you, connection, a real and the imaginary one? The perception you have of Poland or the real connection you have with Poland? Family or visits?**

Ivo: Yeah, of course I still have a connection with Poland, I was born in Poland. I left live almost 22 years in Poland. If somebody 16 years ago, I've been in the United States now 15 years, but if 16 years ago somebody would have said and tell me that I would emigrate to the United States and I would going to the living there, I would have said: You're freaking crazy, there is no way. Because I had a really good life in Poland, I was a journalist, I was working in the national television, I was a journalist, I was a TV host, I had a wonderful, wonderful life. SO I never thought about the United States as a place to live, I never thought that the United States is a paradise or the paradise on earth, no. I never had that American dream, so I would have said: You're crazy. Because I really loved Poland and I came here 15 years ago and I visited Poland only once.

**Martin: When was that?**

Ivo: I went to Poland for 3 weeks in 2004, I still have my parents, I have two sisters.

**Martin: Who still lives in Poland?**

Ivo: Yeah, because I'm here by myself, and believe or not I was... Why did I stay here? Because of my own personal ambitions and goals that I would like to achieve in the United States, but also for me the thing is if somebody will ask what my nationality is, I'm really a cosmopolitan, I'm a citizen of the world so I never was a huge patriotic, but I'm still happy that I'm Polish. I would rather be Polish than German right? Or any other country, because I don't know, I was born in Poland, I'm proud of my culture.

**Martin: And how is your perception of Poland?**

Ivo: I have no clue, that's the problem. Because for the past 14 and a half years I was not interested in what was going on in Poland. I seriously have no idea what's going on in Poland because why would I watch Polish television if I have nothing to do with it? I barely have time to

watch what's going on around my corner, in my neighbourhood. I don't have time to watch Polish and American television, so I have no clue, I really had no idea that Lech Kaczynski was president or Tusk, I don't know any of it.

**Martin: I just mean like the way you perceive your home country?**

Ivo: Right now, if I would decide to leave the United States and go somewhere, Poland is absolutely unknown to me because so much has changed in the past 15 years in Poland. First of all because it's 15 years, 1,5 decade that I wasn't there and also because in 2004 Poland became a part of the European Union, so that's a part of all the change, so about 6 months ago I started to watch Polish news shows, started reading Polish newspapers and seriously I have no idea what they are talking about, I had no connection, so Poland is at this point in my life, as unknown as Australia which I have never been to. So if I would decide to leave for Poland right now, I could go to Australia, where I have never been and I have no idea what going on, just the same as going back to Poland, I would feel exactly the same. I have no clue what's going on, what's happening, what is what.

**Martin: How do you remember Poland today?**

Ivo: It's my home country so of course I'm trying to have a positive feeling and it doesn't matter where my life take me, Poland is going to be my home country and I'm always going to be Polish, it doesn't matter if I'm going to get rid of the Polish citizenship or not, I will be Polack to the end. But do I think that I would like to go back to Poland? That's the problem. About six months ago I was thinking maybe I'm done after 15 years in the United States, maybe I'm done, maybe I should go home, right? So it happened with the polish people choose this and not that political party and this and that political see. Is it a place for me and a time for me to go to Poland right now? No, because I don't believe that...

**Martin: What about for visiting?**

Ivo: Here's the thing, I don't have any feel, I don't feel a need to go and seriously, Polish people are very negative, okay? Very negative, frustrated and I really trying to live a drama free life, with a positive output and there's a problem for me living in Poland and dealing with Polish people because there is so much negativity, there is so much complaining and it doesn't matter what you do, it is bad. You will do this, it's wrong, you will do that, it's wrong. You're not going to win, there is no optimism in Polish people, it's doesn't matter who's the president or who's the prime minister and if they have money or not, so I don't even.. Because of that I really don't want to go to Poland even for a weekend or a vacation, because it was very hard for me going back to Poland the last time. I just landed after a 12 hour flight and I took a cab in Warsaw from Okęcie (Airport) to the hotel and the cab driver ask me: Oh, so you're coming from Poland right? And you live in Chicago? And I said: Yeah, I do. Oh, please sir, please.. And he started crying to me, please give me, can't you take me with you? Can't you send me an invitation to the United States? I cannot live in



this shithole anymore. And this guy is driving and crying to me and he just meet me two minutes before and he's crying to me, you know, take me to the United States. Then I met with me friend who is a TV producer and we went to the University of Warsaw and it turned out that one of the deans had a birthday and that person who is a freaking dean at the University of Warsaw, she started crying to me: Oh, so you're from Chicago, can't you send me an invitation because I would like to move out? I said, wherever I go, I was just that whole thing, I don't want to life in this country, I'm so oppressed, I don't like it, take me to the United States, so you know that's the problem with me going to Poland. Why would I? You know, there is no reason for me personally. And maybe because I don't have a that tight connection to my family members, I don't have to go there every year, you know?

**Martin: Well, that's it. I would just say thank you for your honesty and time, so thank you.**

**Conversation end.**

## Appendix 3



*Polish flag with coat of arm in front of the Copernicus Center together with the flag of the city of Chicago.*

## Appendix 4



*The Copernicus Center seen from Lawrence Avenue*



## Appendix 5



*Polish folkloric costumes at the Polish Museum of America*

## Appendix 6



Old uniforms of Polish WW2 generals and their biographies – Polish Museum of America

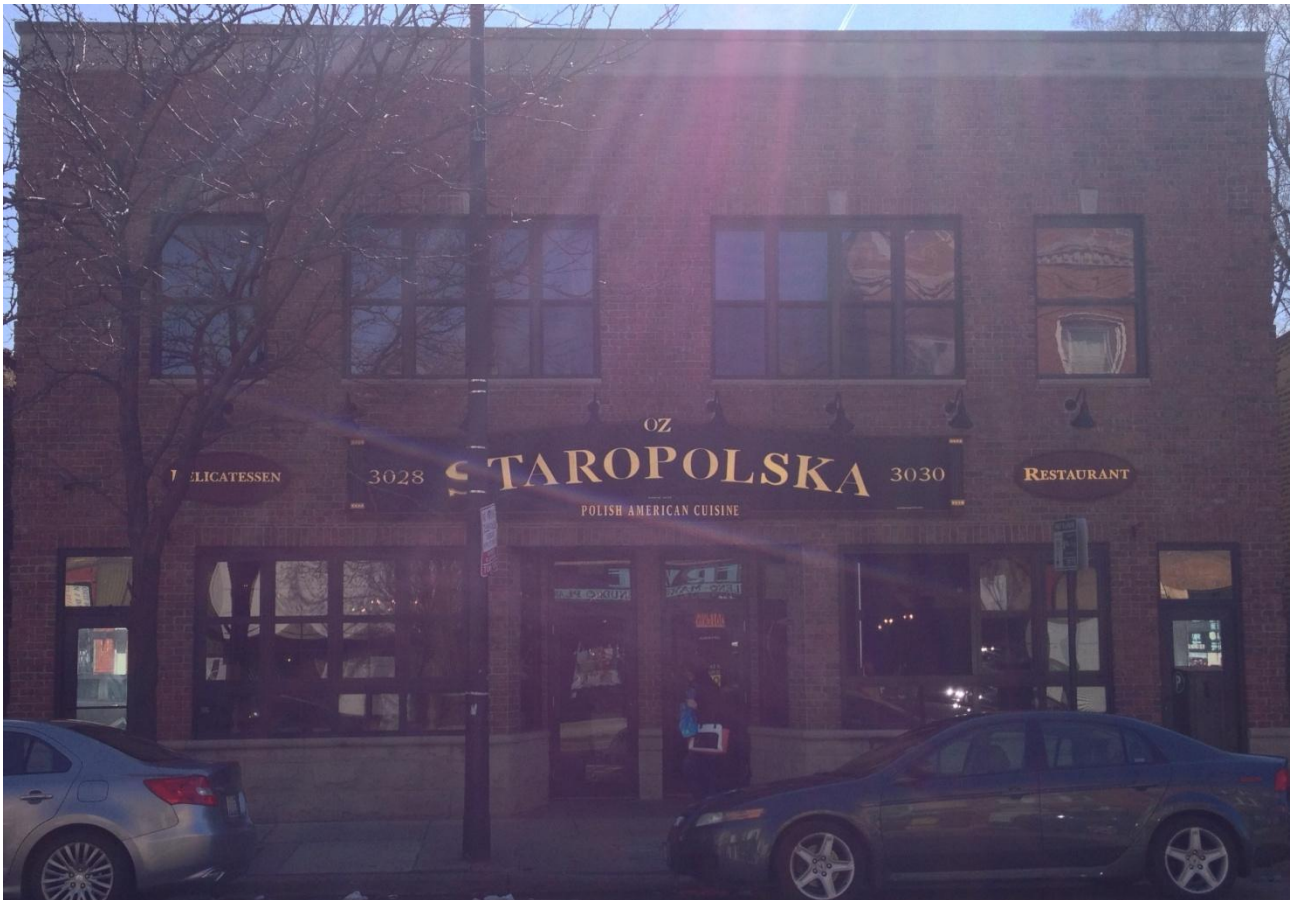


## Appendix 7



*Polish grocery shop located in the Polish Village. Polish flag with the coat of arms hanging in front of the shop, together with the flag of USA.*

## Appendix 8



Polish restaurant located in the Polish Village

Appendix 9



Polish folk dance and music at the “Celebrate Poland” event in downtown Chicago.



## Appendix 10



A stand with Polish food at the “Celebrate Poland” event in downtown Chicago