Introduction

White refugees are not the expected inhabitants of African colonies. From 1942 to 1950, however, nearly twenty thousand Poles[1] lived in refugee camps in the British colonies of East and Central Africa.[2] They were hosted in such diverse societies as Uganda, Kenya, Tanganyika and Northern and Southern Rhodesia, and lived in over twenty camps ranging in size from a few hundred to nearly four thousand. How did they fit into the racial hierarchies of colonial societies? Were they part of the colonizers due to their European origin? Or had they more in common with the colonized? After all, they came from Poland, a country that some West Europeans regarded as oriental as well. Or did they occupy a neutral third position in the Manichean world of colonialism? And what about their precarious refugee status? They were no permanent settlers but highly dependent on decisions in the higher echelons of power. It was not their choice to go to the colonies and live in refugee settlements. To what extent did they influence decisions about their fate? Furthermore, the group consisted mainly of women and children. What did this mean in the colonial context? The women were white, but not the wives of colonial administrators or settlers. This book endeavours to answer these diverse questions. The understanding of refugees as an integral part of the hosting society, the importance of race for the hierarchical structure of colonial societies and the importance of gendered experiences all underline this approach.

Before starting to think about their place in colonial societies, the very presence of the Poles in Africa needs some explanation. As it turned out,

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the reasons for their coming to Africa were no less complicated than their position in the colonial societies. They did not simply run away from war, but were initially deported from the eastern part of Poland by Soviet forces. The people who ended up in the African settlements were part of a much larger group who were forcibly deported to work in labour camps and special settlements in the Soviet interior from 1940 onwards. There they fought for survival under harsh conditions until the Germans attacked the Soviet Union. Suddenly in dire need of support, the Soviet government reached a British-brokered agreement with the Polish government-in-exile in London. This agreement, the Sikorski–Maisky Agreement, included the release of all Polish citizens in the Soviet Union in order to form a Polish army fighting against the German aggression. Owing to disagreements between the Polish and Soviet governments, the released Poles were evacuated to Iran where the British army accommodated the emaciated Poles in makeshift camps. The men (and some women) who were fit for military service formed the Second Polish Corps under General Anders. The rest of the group, mainly women, children and elderly men, were stuck in Iran. As the British administration considered the country to be too close to the war theatres and the refugees potentially in the way, they sought safer places for them. The British colonies in Africa and India provided the closest practicable refuge.

The colonial governments were not happy with the influx, but the moral obligation to contribute to the Commonwealth war effort made them accept the Poles. They established refugee camps in remote, but accessible, corners of their colonies and established a dual administrative structure with superior British officers supervising an internal Polish administration. The Poles were largely confined to live in the assigned settlements, but they soon gained strength and health in the peaceful environment. As it became apparent after the war that the communists would dominate Poland and the refugees' home region was incorporated into the Soviet Union, most of the refugees refused to return. They were again stuck, but the colonial governments were not willing to host them much longer. Colonial rule came under increasing pressure from the colonized, and colonial governments had no interest in the settlement of a large group of potentially poor whites. Most of the Poles had to leave eventually; only about one thousand were allowed to settle permanently in Africa. Most refugees joined the Polish soldiers who were demobilized and settled in Britain. Some were accepted for resettlement into Canada or Australia, some opted for voluntary return to Poland and others found opportunities individually in other countries.

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Exile, Immigrant or Colonial History?

There are many ways to tell this story. Most who wrote about this episode have told it as part of Polish national history, some have inserted it into the immigration history of the countries where the refugees eventually settled. Only a few have told it as part of the colonial history of the hosting African countries. The existing literature on the topic can thus be grouped according to the historiography into which this episode is put. I call them: the Exile Story, the Immigrant Story and the Colonial Story.

First, the *Exile Story* places the Poles into the larger context of Soviet occupation, deportations and flight. Tadeusz Piotrowski's edited volume of recollections is the most outstanding English-language publication in this regard.[3] While Piotrowski gathered first-hand accounts of former refugees from nearly all African camps, his main focus is on the deportations, which he described as one of the many 'monstrous measures' that befell the Poles during the Second World War.[4] He clearly regards the refugees as part of the Polish nation, upholding their Polishness in exile. Interaction with other people is only mentioned in passing in some of the recollections. The only German-language publication on the topic follows the same line of reasoning.[5] Another prominent book is the memoir of Łucjan Królikowski.[6] He was a Polish priest and himself part of the refugee group. He took care of a group of orphans and eventually went with them from Tengeru, Tanganyika to Canada. Królikowski writes from memory, based on religious and anticommunist convictions, with the clear aim to denounce the crimes of the Soviet Union during the Second World War.[7] Janusz Wróbel wrote a comprehensive Polish-language book on the whole group of evacuees from the Soviet Union. He devotes, like Piotrowski, one chapter to the sojourn in Africa and thereby puts it in a comparable frame. He describes the migrations that followed the deportations as 'probably the most unusual chapter in the history of the Polish diaspora', bringing Poles to 'remote and exotic regions'.[8] Wróbel uses a range of Polish and some British sources for an account of the whole trajectory starting with the evacuation from the Soviet Union. The research of Hubert Chudzio and colleagues at the Pedagogical University in Kraków has been conducted in a comparable national context of the deportations.[9] They concentrate mainly, however, on interviewing and thus preserving the memories of the former deportees.

A second way of telling the story stems from the destination countries, mainly Canada and Australia. This *Immigrant Story* is mainly interested in the way people with Polish backgrounds arrived in their new countries and how they were integrated there. Clearly in this line is the book by Allbrook and Cattalini about a group of Poles who eventually settled in Australia.[10] Their research was funded and published by the Australian Immigration authorities and based on interviews with former refugees. It tells the story of

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the whole odyssey starting with the deportations, but the main interest lies in the end point of the journey. Even better documented is the story of a group of Polish orphans who eventually settled in Canada. Apart from Królikowski's memoirs, Lynne Taylor wrote an excellent book on their journey and the diplomatic row the decision over their fate caused in the context of the emerging Cold War.[11] Taylor based her account on a range of interviews with the former refugee children and archival sources from Canada, Britain and international organizations. Other authors took the Polish refugees as a case study in articles about specific aspects of their migration, like Monica Janowski on foodways as a way of performing Polishness outside of Poland.[12] Ewa Stańczyk highlights the question of the children's experience of forced migration, and psychologist Amanda Chalupa is working on the way the refugee children coped with trauma.[13]

In both strands of literature, the African context serves mainly as a background to a story of suffering and survival. Interactions with the host population and administration are merely side notes, and the Poles are largely depicted as self-sufficient and rather isolated communities. They are mainly based on interviews with the former refugees and on archives in Europe and North America. Sources that capture perspectives from Africa are considered in neither of them.

The third – and smallest – strand of literature comes from an African studies background and tells the *Colonial Story*. It consists only of articles covering the sojourn, or an aspect of it, in one colonial territory. Martin Rupiah gives an overview of the refugee and internment camps in Southern Rhodesia and their use afterwards.[14] In a more recent article, Tavuyanago, Muguti and Hlongwana point to the marginal position of the Poles in Southern Rhodesia. In an attempt to keep the white community British, the Polish refugees were discriminated against and denied the right to settle permanently.[15] For Uganda, Samwiri Lwanga-Lunyiigo published in 1993 a conference paper on the history of the Polish refugees, pointing again to their rather marginal position.[16] In the conference, as elsewhere, the Polish refugees form the prelude to the long history of refugee hosting in Uganda.[17] Kiyaga-Mulindwa published a short article on the refugees in Uganda, arguing that the colonial government's opposition to white settlement led to the isolation of the Poles and hence a lack of impact or impression.[18] For Tanganyika, only a brief text from 1952 by the colonial official who was in charge of the refugees is available.[19] In the history of Tanzanian refugee hosting, the Poles are, however, left out.[20] For Northern Rhodesia, Alfred Tembo researches the history of the Polish refugees and a Master's thesis looked at the history of one of the refugee settlements.[21] Apart from this, there are scattered references to the Polish refugees in the literature on African colonial history, but they are often confined to a sentence or a footnote.

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This book is thus the first comprehensive study of the Polish refugees and their interaction with the different actors of the hosting colonial societies. The few articles that tell the *Colonial Story* all cover only one country. The books that tell the *Exile Story* treat the host societies only as a backdrop – an exotic stopover on the long odyssey of the Polish exiles. The literature telling the *Immigrant Story* traces the background of a part of the immigrant population. All three strands of literature operate within a national frame – only the nations differ. The *Exile Story* views the refugees as part of the global Polish diaspora, that is firmly committed to the national cause. In the *Immigrant Story* the Poles are incorporated into Canadian or Australian history, countries where immigration is an essential part of the national narrative.[22] Literature of the *Colonial Story* focuses on one postcolonial African nation, incorporating the refugee hosting into the historiography of that nation and its colonial predecessor.

By contrast, *On the Edges of Whiteness* tells another story. It covers not only the whole range of places and colonies in East and Central Africa that hosted the refugees, but also takes none of the actor groups for granted. While my main interest is in colonial social history, I will not ignore the pre- or post-history of this episode. To understand the Poles' social position with regard to the hosting societies it is necessary to know where they came from; and to understand what some of them later said and wrote about their time in Africa, it is necessary to know where they went afterwards. In contrast to the articles about individual colonies and their policies towards the refugees, I do not insert the story into any national narrative but deliberately take a regional perspective.

An Entangled History of Colonial Whiteness

Based on 'global history' approaches, this study does not confine itself to the historiography of one nation.[23] It focuses on the entanglements and interaction between people from different places around the world, without reducing them to mere representatives of 'their' nation. This does not mean that national or local identifications are not important or that all things and people are the same. Hierarchies and differentiation are no less important through interconnectedness. With regard to my case, global history means, first of all, that it is a history that crosses borders.[24] But more than this, my understanding of the refugee group is not as an integral, homogeneous part of the Polish nation in exile. Some of them worked hard to keep up this sense of belonging, while others were less committed to do so. They were furthermore not completely isolated from their surroundings. There was considerable interaction between the Polish refugees and members of the host population,

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although the authorities tried to minimize it. Just like in European displaced person camps of the time, the Polish refugee camps in Africa 'manifested a degree of porosity'.[25] The links of the refugees (and colonial officials) were furthermore not confined to their hosting colony. They were connected to each other, and to the central refugee administration in Nairobi, the Colonial Office, the Foreign Office, the Polish government-in-exile in London, and international refugee and diaspora organizations.[26] Although this interaction is generally acknowledged in national historiographies, it has so far not been the focus of enquiry.

Focusing on the manifold interactions, this study takes inspiration from Werner and Zimmermann's *Histoire Croisée* approach. They developed their approach as a critique of both static comparisons of national entities and unidirectional transfers between two nations. According to Werner and Zimmermann:

> *Histoire croisée* breaks with a one-dimensional perspective that simplifies and homogenizes, in favor of a multidimensional approach that acknowledges plurality and the complex configurations that result from it. Accordingly, entities and objects of research are not merely considered in relation to one another but also through one another, in terms of relationships, interactions, and circulation.[27]

Bringing the intersections between objects into central focus, they urge us to consider not only the changing nature and the criss-crossing of transfers, but also to view the objects or entities *through* each other. I am hence not only recounting what happened between these actor groups, but also how they saw each other. I will thus focus on the interaction, the encounters, the conflicts and the mutual perceptions and influences.

The inherent danger in such an approach is, obviously, the one that Gorge Luis Borges sketched in 1946 in his one paragraph short story *On Exactitude in Science*.[28] In trying to make more and more precise maps, the cartographers of a fictional kingdom made such an exact map that it finally had the same size as its territory. Realizing that this huge map was useless, later generations simply dumped it into the desert. In order to evade the same fate, this study will not only describe as precisely as possible (within the limits of the available sources), but will also generalize from the findings.

The history of colonialism is in itself an entangled history of encounter, transfers, boundary making and mutual influences.[29] It is not a simple transfer of European social models into the colonies. As Ann Laura Stoler notes: 'Colonial cultures were never direct translations of European society planted in the colonies, but unique cultural configurations'.[30] While different colonial societies functioned differently, there were certain commonalities. Colonial rule rested, as Frantz Fanon noted, on a Manichean division into colonizer

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and colonized, corresponding with the racialized division into white and black.[31] Partha Chatterjee remarks accordingly that many signs could be taken to divide colonial societies, but 'race was perhaps the most obvious mark of colonial difference'.[32] While the difference between the colonizer and the colonized was maintained through the construction of racial difference, the dividing lines were never precise. Frederick Cooper rightfully cautions that this 'racialization of difference' in nineteenth-century imperial polities was not only significant but also unstable.[33] He consequently argued that at the heart of colonialism was 'the *politics* of difference'.[34] While colonial ideology constructed a clear-cut difference between white and black, the colonially ruled world did not conform to this ideal: 'The Manichean world of high colonialism that we have etched so deeply in our historiographies was thus nothing of the sort'.[35] There is an important difference between the discursive world of colonialist ideology and the empirically and locally grounded history of colonial societies. The two are closely linked, but not the same. Poor white refugees from the rural periphery had no place in the ideal colonialist world, but they were there. So, where did they fit in?

A simple answer is not possible for such a variety of places. But all of them were part of the British Empire that rested on the assumption of European superiority. One could expect the social position and perspective of the Polish refugees to be a neutral third position in the fractured world of colonialism. They were neither colonizers nor colonized, and before arrival they had personal experiences themselves of being declared an enemy of the state by the Soviets, and part of a subhuman race (*Untermenschen*) by the German Nazis. They could have been rather sympathetic to the plight of the colonized. But as Albert Memmi pointed out in 1957: 'The colonial situation manufactures colonialists, just as it manufactures the colonized'.[36] For this case, Memmi's statement could be understood as the impossibility of a position outside the colonial dichotomy for the Polish refugees. Comparing different perspectives on the refugees' social position offers a way to take a closer look at the complex empirical realities of British late colonial societies. Just as Africans were not a homogenous group, nor were the Europeans.

Examining white people in colonial society connects to the flourishing field of critical *whiteness studies*. The simple starting point of whiteness studies as an academic field was the observation that studies of race or racism usually examined the people who were discriminated and not the people who were privileged. W.E.B. Du Bois was one of the first writers already tackling this issue in his classic essay *The Souls of White Folk* in 1910.[37] However, just with discussions in the 1990s in the United States, whiteness has come under increasing scholarly scrutiny. David Roediger and other historians have studied why white workers did not join their black colleagues in a common class struggle, as Marxist reasoning would expect, but advanced their position

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by forming white-only unions.[38] East and South European immigrants to the United States, who had previously been classified into different racial groups, became 'white' after the turn of the twentieth century.[39] Their rewards were the 'wages of whiteness', which were not only financial but also public and psychological.[40] Being white brought privileges in the workplace and in the public sphere. Sociologist Ruth Frankenberg critically engaged with fellow white feminists for ignoring race, and emphasized the importance of scrutinizing the seemingly neutral position of whiteness. Starting from the premise that any system of differentiation shapes the privileged as well as the oppressed, she states: 'Naming "Whiteness" displaces it from the unmarked, unnamed status that is itself an effect of its dominance'.[41] She thereby points to the usually ignored role of whiteness as 'unmarked marker', the position from which white people speak about others. As a relational category, whiteness can only function in differentiation towards being black. Whiteness, however, is no timeless monolithic entity, but is historically situated in specific times and places.[42]

The focus of most studies on the US context has subsequently been challenged by scholars who point to the transnational nature of whiteness. Taking up Du Bois' famous notion of the 'colour line' as the problem of the twentieth century, they traced the evolution and spread of 'whiteness as a transnational form of racial identification'.[43] Frankenberg also clarified that the position of whiteness as 'invisible norm' only applies to very specific contexts, namely when 'white supremacy is hegemonic'.[44] Most of the time and, even more importantly, to most people, it is quite clearly visible.[45] This is obviously the case for colonial societies where whites formed a tiny but powerful minority. Satya Mohanty even claims that 'colonial rule generated a dominant image of the white man as spectacle'.[46] Whites were highly visible in the colonies, and attached a high importance to the impression they made on the colonized.[47] Brett Shadle showed that Kenyan settlers were preoccupied with white prestige as a kind of barrier to protect them against rebellious Africans.[48] Settlers believed that as long as Africans thought whites were superior, they would not dare to rise against them.[49] It was therefore of utmost importance to maintain white prestige by appropriate behaviour. Although British settlers distinguished and looked down on other whites, they were convinced that Africans could not distinguish. The individual failure by *some* whites to maintain white prestige led to a threat to *all* white people in the colony.[50]

This leads us directly to the margins of white colonial societies. The liminal whiteness of the Polish refugees offers a case to interrogate the drawing of racial boundaries within colonial societies. The Poles thereby resemble two categories of people that Stoler pointed out as threatening and defining 'the boundaries of European (white male) prestige and control': poor whites and white women.[51] The Polish refugees were mainly women and 'largely peasant

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folk'[52] who were completely dispossessed through the deportations. Their lice-ridden, emaciated appearance upon arrival was a far cry from the quasi-aristocratic lifestyle of settlers. They had more in common with other people whom Harald Fischer-Tiné termed 'subaltern whites'. In his study on white vagrants, criminals, prostitutes and lunatics in India, he showed that they were privileged as well as marginalized.[53] The problem of poor whites in colonial societies was, following Stoler, generally tackled with three measures: isolation, material support and removal.[54] To have them out of sight of the colonized, specific institutions to isolate European criminals and lunatics were set up. Secondly, poor whites got financial and technical support as well as access to better education to lift them above Africans.[55] And thirdly, colonial governments kept out the unwanted less affluent whites through immigration restrictions. Impoverished Europeans were, furthermore, sent back home.

The studies about white subalterns or poor whites are, however, mainly based on examples from the period of high colonialism. When the Poles arrived in Africa it was a different time. To be sure, discourses and convictions did not change at once; even in the late colonial period there were concerns over poor whites and racial transgression.[56] Furthermore, the increased regimentation during the Second World War led to growing tensions in the colonies. More Africans were demanding improved conditions and eventually self-government, while Indian independence loomed large as a precedence. The shift towards a rhetoric of 'racial partnership' led to an avoidance of overtly racist tones in the official administrative correspondence.[57] The superiority of whites, however, still formed the basis for policies of postwar 'developmental colonialism'.[58] Although the explicit goal of these efforts was 'to raise the standard of living of colonized people',[59] the idea was that superior Europeans were guiding inferior Africans on the way to eventual self-government. But the question of when this was to be achieved was contested between the colonial rulers and the leaders of the independence movements.[60] Some settlers insisted that Africans would never be capable of ruling themselves.[61] The rising tensions were a threat to the continuity of colonial domination and to the creation of friendly African-led successor states as well. An image of white superiority and prestige was thus not only important in the overtly racist discourse of high colonialism, but also in the late colonial discourse of development and African welfare. Africans would only follow Europeans as long as the latter were regarded as superior. As David Killingray and Richard Rathbone note poignantly on the impact of the Second World War on Africa: 'If colonial power in Africa had always rested on a mixture of bluff and force, the bluff proved to be a busted flush and the force more questionable than it had appeared before 1939'.[62] Cracks in the image of white superiority were but one of the factors that eventually led to the end of colonial rule, but maybe not the least important.

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This study is not only about colonial whiteness, but about forced migration as well. In the scholarly writing about migration, 'identity' and the possibilities of renegotiating and remaking 'identities' is a central topic. The entry into a new social setting necessitates a renegotiation of the migrant's social position, but I caution here against the use of the term 'identity'. Brubaker and Cooper provide an influential critique of the widespread use of 'identity' as an analytical category.[63] They reject the 'hard' essentialist understanding of 'identity' (as a thing that individuals primordially have) as well as its 'soft' constructivist understanding (as 'constructed, fluid, and multiple').[64] What is subsumed under the term identity, however, is not a given, eternal thing, and nor can everyone choose identity categories at will. While 'identity' is an important 'category of practice', it is not a useful analytical category, as it is imprecise and it blurs 'constructivist language and essentialist argumentation'.[65]

As an alternative to the term, Brubaker and Cooper propose three more precise clusters of analytical terms that help to better describe what is usually subsumed under 'identity'. First, categorization and identification are processes of placing other people (or oneself) into a category. This processual term underlines the importance of agents that do the identification.[66] Secondly, self-understanding and social location describe the sense of who one is. In contrast to self-identification, this does not need to be discursively articulated.[67] A third cluster is commonality, connectedness and groupness. These terms describe the emotionally laden feeling of belonging to a distinctive group of people. It is what gives 'identity talk' its power to hold people together as well as to exclude others. To be sure, the three clusters are closely interrelated. If people are categorized by a state or discourse into a certain identity group, this may well lead to their feeling of groupness or belonging together, but this is not necessarily so. For the overarching question of this study it cautions us to analyse who places whom into which category, and how these categorizations differ relationally.

Scattered Sources

In order to trace different perspectives on the Polish refugees in colonial societies it is not enough to go to just one place. As the refugees travelled the globe, the documents that can recount their history are scattered far and wide. Accordingly, this study relies on a varied source base that can be grouped according to four perspectives from which the sources were produced. I will give a short overview of them here.

The perspective of different layers of the British colonial administration is captured through archival material from the national archives in London,

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Dar es Salaam and Nairobi.[68] In London the sources consist mainly of correspondence of the Colonial Office (signature CO) with the respective colonial governments, but also of files from the Foreign Office (FO), the Ministry of Education (ED) and the National Assistance Board (AST)[69] responsible for the welfare and integration of Poles in Britain. In Nairobi, as in Dar es Salaam, the files are correspondence and reports from the respective provincial and district commissioners as well as from the secretariat of the central government. Unfortunately, there are no complete files from the camp commandants or the government officials in charge of the refugees in the archives;[70] as a consequence, these records are fragmentary and sketchy. In the basement of Nairobi's McMillan Memorial Library, I went through some issues of the *East African Standard*, the leading (settler-dominated) newspaper in the region. Additional information was obtained from the Commonwealth and African Collections at the Bodleian Libraries in Oxford where some of the British officials, who had worked with the refugees, deposited their private papers.

Perspectives of the Polish refugees were captured through two Polish newspapers – *Nasz Przyjaciel* and *Głos Polski* – published by and for the refugees in Nairobi.[71] Additional sources from the Polish perspective are found in the archives of the former Polish government-in-exile – the Polish Institute and Sikorski Museum (PISM) in London.[72] Although I did no interviews with former refugees themselves, I consulted a range of recollections and memoirs of former Polish refugees. While the nature of these sources makes them not unproblematic, they offer the possibility to approximate the perspective of the 'average' refugee and not only the elites. As outlined above, most of the existing secondary literature on this episode is based on interviews with former refugees, so there was already a large literature I could build on.

To trace African perspectives I conducted interviews with former workers and neighbours of the Polish camps in the vicinity of the three biggest refugee settlements (Tengeru, Koja and Masindi/Nyabyeya) as well as in Dar es Salaam. As I was not able to trace written primary sources by Africans regarding the Polish refugees, this was the only possibility to capture these perspectives. While there might be contemporary African newspaper articles on the Poles, the search for such material would be like looking for a needle in a haystack. The challenges of using oral sources alongside written ones will be discussed in Chapter 5.

A fourth set of sources is found in the records of the International Refugee Organization (IRO), stored in the Archives Nationales in Paris. This corpus provides yet another perspective on the whole issue, and was revealing because it introduced a fourth set of actors: the staff of international organizations. From 1947 to 1950 the Polish refugees were under not only the dual Polish and colonial administration but were the responsibility of the IRO as

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well. Additionally, I was provided with some copies from the archives of the International Tracing Service (ITS) in Bad Arolsen and the records of the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration (UNRRA) from the United Nations archives in New York.[73] A valuable report on the camps by an American Red Cross official as well as the papers of one IRO official were consulted in the Bodleian Libraries in Oxford.

As this brief overview suggests, there is no single or complete corpus of primary sources to answer all the questions raised in this study. The multi-perspective approach of my research and the broad geographical range of this history call instead for an assemblage of source types. Each type has its limitations, gaps and biases, which I will address in the respective chapters.

Outline

This book is divided into three parts, giving the background (Chapter 1), three issues (Chapters 2, 3, 4) and three perspectives (Chapter 5) on the Polish refugees' sojourn. In the Conclusion, the findings and arguments are summed up, evaluated and an outlook is given.

Chapter 1 provides a descriptive narrative of the Polish refugees' journey to Africa, descriptions of all refugee settlements, their administrative set-up and the refugees' further trajectories. It provides the basis for understanding why there were Poles in Africa, where and how they lived, and where they went afterwards. The chapter thereby forms the necessary basis for the more problem-centred, argumentative chapters that follow. It therefore draws on a broad range of primary and secondary sources to give accurate descriptions and impressions of the different settlements.

Chapters 2 to 4 each address one aspect of the Polish refugee group, and connect their story to another scholarly debate. All three chapters start with a literature review of this discussion, to which the Polish refugees in Africa serve as cases.

Chapter 2 understands the Polish refugees as one group among the millions of refugees and displaced persons (DPs) produced by the Second World War. While they were initially deportees, they became refugees in the African settlements. They were placed under special legislation, and in the postwar period came under the care of newly established international organizations. I argue that the officials of these new organizations differed in some regards from the colonial officials hitherto in charge of the Poles. While the colonial officials based their decisions on the basic assumption of fundamental differences between different (ethnic, racial) groups, the assumed principle guiding the IRO officials was a universalist and technocratic understanding of the subjects of their social intervention. Despite the universalist aspiration, the

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IRO was, in fact, confined to assisting European refugees only, no matter where in the world they were located.

Chapter 3 focuses on the national history of the refugees. It contributes to a discussion in the historiography of East Central Europe and its recent conceptual opening towards transnational or global history. In the conflicting field between Polish national historiography and postcolonial approaches, a debate about the understanding of Poland as a former colony of Germany and/or Soviet-Russia has evolved. In particular, the reading of Soviet dominance as colonial rule over the region has led to fierce discussions. The chapter takes the Poles' sojourn as a kind of test case for the thesis of the equation of Poland as colony, brought forward by some in this debate. Enquiring whether the Poles sided with the colonizers or the colonized, I argue that the Polish elites, at least, identified and portrayed themselves as members of Western Europe, and hence were on the colonizers' side.

Chapter 4 looks at the gender aspect of the refugee group. As most refugees were women and children, this focus contributes to the historiography of white women in colonial societies. It further draws inspiration from interpretations of the history of the Polish diaspora and migration studies that take gender as an important social category. The gendered analysis of the situation shows that the women were basically in a position of dependence on the male soldiers in the army as well as the male Polish and British administrators. These men regarded them as an asset for potentially stabilizing their communities, but also as a threat if they crossed the boundaries of the community. Officials' reactions towards transgressive refugee women show that these boundaries were most of all racially defined. But the women were also actors in their own right, deliberately making their way. Some profited from employment opportunities provided by war conditions and the racially defined colonial division of labour. The women made the most of their constrained and dependent situation.

Chapter 5 contrasts three perspectives on the social position of the Polish refugees in regard to the hosting colonial societies. The first section asks how the British members of the colonial societies dealt with the influx of refugees, and how they inserted them into the colonial setting. Thereby I put stronger emphasis on the specific local conditions and socio-economic models, and differentiate between the perspectives of administrators and settlers. To capture the latter's perspective, I drew on newspaper correspondence in Nairobi's *East African Standard* as well as on memoirs and secondary literature. Generally speaking, the Polish refugees were regarded and treated by the British part of the colonial societies like subaltern whites. They were isolated, materially lifted and sent away as soon as feasible. While some officials and settlers were sympathetic with the Poles' plight, there was the widespread conviction that they should not become a permanent part of society. Reasons

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for this were the threat to the image of white superiority, the possibility of the establishment of a numerous competitor for political power, and the fear of stirring up opposition from the colonized. All this was informed by a class-based understanding of the Poles as European peasants, who did not fit into colonial societies in Africa.

The second section examines Polish perspectives on the sojourn. Again, I first show that the Polish refugee group was no uniform block of exiles as national historiography portrays them. Within the group there were cleavages of class, gender, religion and political affiliation. The elite Poles, who wrote in the newspapers, underlined their position as European allies on an equal footing with the British. By contrast, the memory literature and recollections of former refugees paint a more egalitarian picture in regard to Africans. After surviving the deportations, the Polish refugees presented themselves as simple human beings and less arrogant than members of the colonial white community. They nevertheless underlined their distance from the Africans. The Catholic faith played an important role in the everyday life in the settlements. While it strengthened the bond between the Poles it also provided ground for interaction with fellow believers of other races and nationalities. In the colonial situation the Poles thereby echoed some traits with the self-perception of missionaries; the paternalistic position of helping the 'poor heathens' by bringing the allegedly superior faith.

The last section is based mainly on interviews with former African camp workers and neighbours, and on some traces of African perspectives in secondary literature. The interviewees provide, again, differing assessments of the refugees, who are seen as no homogeneous group. The bigger Polish settlements were major sites of employment, attracting thousands of workers for the initial construction. Some hundreds who built the camps arrived also involuntarily as conscript workers. The settlements were furthermore large markets for local producers, providing them with an opportunity for selling fresh products. The sites of the settlements became thus not only places of encounter between Africans and Poles, but between Africans from many places as well. To generalize a bit, the Poles were described, in retrospect, as friendly white people with superior knowledge who were, however, controlled and isolated by the distanced, arrogant British administrators. The religious encounter played an important role for African Catholics, corresponding with the Polish self-perception as missionaries. But in some instances, the Poles were also portrayed as a threatening group, causing fear among their neighbours. Taken together, the material improvement of the Poles' situation, together with their humbler attitude, seem to have made an impression.

Contrasting the different perspectives and experiences of the Poles' nearly eight-year stay in East and Central Africa shows the value of the chosen approach. The refugees were not in a neutral third position outside the

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colonial dichotomy, but somewhere on the lower rungs of white society. In the Conclusion, these thoughts are taken up, and the relevance for a better understanding of the complex social dynamics of colonial societies are touched upon. While some individual Poles managed to become accepted respectable members of white society, the majority were placed somewhere on 'the edges of whiteness'.

Notes

1. Please note that I use 'Poles' as a shorthand for 'Polish citizens', as not all of them were considered to be ethnically Polish – an issue I will return to later.
2. By 'Central Africa' I am referring throughout this book to the historical region of 'British Central Africa', consisting of the British colonies of Northern Rhodesia, Southern Rhodesia and Nyasaland.
3. Piotrowski, *Polish Deportees*. Most of the recollections in the Africa chapter of Piotrowski's volume are taken from Sulkiewicz, Bartkowiak-Drobek and Fundacja Archiwum Fotograficzne Tułaczy, *Tułacze dzieci. Exiled children*.
4. Piotrowski, *Polish Deportees*, 2.
5. Julia Devlin's small book is largely based on secondary literature and only draws on a few primary sources. See Devlin, *Deportation und Exil*.
6. Krolikowski, *Stolen Childhood*. The original Polish version was published in London in 1960 (Królikowski, *Skradzione dzieciństwo*) and translated into English in 1983. Please note, when I refer to him as 'Krolikowski' (and not 'Królikowski') I refer to his translated book.
7. Krolikowski, *Stolen Childhood*, xv.
8. Wróbel, *Uchodźcy polscy*, 7. Unless otherwise stated, all translations from Polish, German, Kiswahili and French are by myself.
9. See the volume published after a 2010 conference of the same title: Chudzio, *Z mrozów Syberii pod słońce Afryki*. On Tengeru camp, see the book by another member of the research group: Hejczik, *Sybiracy pod Kilimandżaro.*
10. Allbrook and Cattalini, *The General Langfitt Story*.
11. Taylor, *Polish Orphans*. See also Kévonian, 'Histoires d'enfants' and the MA thesis of Payseur, 'I Don't Want to Go Back'. On the same topic there are some short articles by a member of the group. See Tomaszewski, 'Snows of Siberia'; Tomaszewski, 'Shade'.
12. Janowski, 'Food in Traumatic Times'. Her article is based on interviews with former Polish refugees in Britain.
13. Stańczyk, 'Exilic Childhood'. Chalupa is working with interviews in an ongoing PhD project in psychology. See http://storytelling.concordia.ca/content/chalupa-amanda (last accessed 6 December 2019).
14. Rupiah, 'History of the Establishment of Internment Camps'.
15. Tavuyanago, Muguti and Hlongwana, 'Victims'. Mlambo makes a comparable point, but draws comparisons to other white groups as well. See Mlambo, 'Some Are More White'.
16. Lwanga-Lunyiigo, 'Uganda's Long Connection'.
17. For a recent example, see UNHCR and World Bank, 'Assessment of Uganda's Progressive Approach'.
18. Kiyaga-Mulindwa, 'Uganda: A Safe Haven'.
19. Pennington, 'Refugees in Tanganyika'.

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20. Chaulia, 'Politics of Refugee Hosting'.
21. Alfred Tembo, University of Zambia, did research on the Poles in the Zambian National Archives (he generously shared a draft chapter of his forthcoming book with me). Mary-Ann Sandifort wrote her Master's thesis about Abercorn camp (Sandifort, 'World War Two').
22. Gabaccia has termed and criticized this 'immigrant paradigm' in the United States from a transnational perspective. See Gabaccia, 'Is Everywhere Nowhere?'
23. On global history and related approaches generally, see Conrad and Eckert, 'Globalgeschichte'.
24. Duara, 'Transnationalism', 43.
25. See Gatrell, 'Homeland' to 'Warlands', 15.
26. For the colonial officials it makes sense to speak of networks or webs of empire (see Lester, 'Imperial Circuits'; Ballantyne, *Webs of Empire*). The Poles, in turn, were part of these networks, but at the same time part of Polish diaspora networks (see Jaroszyńska-Kirchmann, *Exile Mission*; Pacyga, 'Polish Diaspora').
27. Werner and Zimmermann, 'Beyond Comparison', 38.
28. For the English translation, see Borges, 'On Exactitude in Science'.
29. See Conrad and Randeria, 'Geteilte Geschichte'.
30. Stoler, 'Rethinking Colonial Categories', 135.
31. Fanon, *Die Verdammten dieser Erde*.
32. Chatterjee, *The Nation and Its Fragments*, 20.
33. Cooper, *Colonialism in Question*, 29.
34. Ibid., 23.
35. Cooper and Stoler, 'Between Metropole and Colony', 8.
36. Cited here from the English translation in the 2003 edition. Memmi, *The Colonizer and the Colonized*, 100.
37. Du Bois' essay 'The Souls of White Folk' was published in 1910 and in a revised version again in 1920. It is reprinted in Du Bois, *Social Theory*, 32–37. On the text see also Rabaka, 'The Souls of White Folk'.
38. Roediger, *The Wages of Whiteness*, 6. For a critical overview of historical whiteness studies, see Kolchin, 'Whiteness Studies'.
39. Barrett and Roediger, 'Inbetween Peoples'; Jacobson, *Whiteness of a Different Color*; Zecker, 'Negrov Lynčovanie'.
40. Roediger, *The Wages of Whiteness*, 12.
41. Frankenberg, *White Women, Race Matters*, 6.
42. Ibid., 21. See also Steyn, *Whiteness Just Isn't What It Used To Be*.
43. Lake and Reynolds, *Drawing the Global Colour Line*, 3. In the same direction, some are arguing for closer attention to the connections between the histories of whiteness and colonial rule. For this argumentation, although focusing mainly on settler colonialism in Australia, see Boucher, Carey and Ellinghaus, *Re-Orienting Whiteness*.
44. Frankenberg, 'Introduction', 5.
45. For the US context, see hooks, *Black Looks*. For the image of whites in African oral and written literature see Schipper, *Imagining Insiders*, 30–55.
46. Mohanty, 'Drawing the Color Line', 314.
47. The 'hypervisibility' of whites is an important issue in present-day Africa as well. For a recent overview of the field, see Zyl-Hermann and Boersema, 'Introduction'.
48. Shadle, *The Souls of White Folk*, 5.
49. Kirk-Green makes a comparable point to explain the authority of colonial administrators in Africa. See Kirk-Greene, 'The Thin White Line', 42.

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50. Shadle, *The Souls of White Folk*, 5.
51. Stoler, 'Rethinking Colonial Categories', 139.
52. Pennington, 'Refugees in Tanganyika', 54.
53. Fischer-Tiné, *Low and Licentious Europeans*.
54. Stoler, 'Rethinking Colonial Categories', 150.
55. E.g. for Southern Rhodesia see Kennedy, *Islands of White*, 169.
56. E.g. Carina Ray's study on interracial relationships in late colonial Gold Coast shows that the public legitimation of interracial marriages was, although not forbidden, still widely regarded as problematic. See Ray, *Crossing the Color Line*, 135.
57. Jackson, 'Dangers to the Colony'; Wolton, *Lord Hailey*, 3.
58. For Tanganyika, see Iliffe, *Modern History of Tanganyika*, 436. On the reconstruction and shifting policies in the French and British African empires, see Cooper, 'Reconstructing Empire'.
59. Cooper, 'Reconstructing Empire', 204.
60. Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe*, 8.
61. E.g. one Tanganyika settler estimated in 1934 that it would take at least a century until Africans could rule themselves. See Reid, *Tanganyika without Prejudice*, 34.
62. Killingray and Rathbone, *Africa and the Second World War*, 3.
63. Brubaker and Cooper, 'Beyond "Identity"'.
64. Ibid., 1.
65. Ibid., 6.
66. Ibid., 14.
67. Ibid., 18.
68. I did not visit the national archives of Uganda, Zambia or Zimbabwe, but refer to secondary literature based on these three archives.
69. These abbreviations feature in the PRO's internal system indicating the origin of the archive files.
70. The responsible officials (the Director of Refugees in Tanganyika, the Director of Aliens and Internees and War Refugees in Kenya) as well as the camp commandants are, however, prominent in the correspondence with local officials.
71. Please note that I have looked at only a fraction of the Polish newspapers covering the period from 1945 to 1947. Going through the *Polak w Afryce* newspaper, which ceased publication in 1945, could add further valuable insights into the early years of the refugees' stay in Africa. All three papers are held by the library of the *Polski Ośrodek Społeczno-Kulturalny* (POSK) in Hammersmith, London. As the Nairobi newspaper print shops were not able to print Polish diacritics, the articles were printed without them. Throughout this book I cite the original titles without correcting these mistakes. I further cite the original spelling of names in the English files, which usually did not include diacritics and sometimes anglicized first names (e.g. Joseph instead of Józef).
72. There are more Polish sources that I did not consult, e.g. in the archives of the *Ośrodek KARTA* and the *Archiwum Akt Nowych* in Warsaw, as well as in the Hoover Institution in Stanford which holds some material from the Polish government-in-exile. They already form, however, the base of other publications to which I refer in this book.
73. My sincerest thanks to Katarzyna Nowak for providing me with invaluable copies from these two archives.

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