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SETTLING IN NORWAY? THE CASE OF POLISH MIGRANTS AND THEIR FAMILIES

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INTRODUCTION

This article presents different patterns of settlement choices and spatial experiences of Polish migrants and their families in Norway¹. Therefore, the main focus is on the choice of destination, which is Norway, or more precisely, a given locality in Norway. Consequently, *pull factors* are analysed while *push factors* are omitted. It should be stressed that people with an immigrant background from Poland constitute the largest group of immigrants in Norway)².

The analysis is based on 10 biographical interviews, 4 of which were conducted with couples, collected by Jagiellonian University in winter and spring

¹ The article is a result of Work Package 6. Settlement choices in Norway (leader: Katarzyna Gmaj, PhD).

² See also K. Iglicka, K. Gmaj, A. Wierzejski, *The Poles in Norway – we wanted workers but people arrived*, „Myśl Ekonomiczna i Polityczna”, nr 1, 2016, p. 116–138.

2014 (in Oslo and localities distant no more than an two hours and half, by car or train, from the Norwegian capital)³, and on 8 in-depth structured interviews (all in all with 10 Poles residing in different towns and villages in Vest Agder and Aust Agder counties) provided by Agder Research⁴. They were conducted in summer, 2014. Settlement patterns in both cases were not the main focus of the interviews, but one of the topics that was mentioned among others. Additionally, TRANSFAM web survey (May–June 2015) is also used in this analysis. The sample consists of 648 respondents. The issue of settlement was just one of many topics addressed by survey. It has been carried out by NOVA, Oslo and Akershus University College of Applied Sciences⁵.

1. DESCRIPTION OF QUALITATIVE AND QUANTITATIVE SAMPLES⁶

With regards to qualitative material used in this article, the interviewees have at least six years' experience of their stay in Norway, although the longest stay has taken almost 25 years. In short, the vast majority of interviewees can be labelled as a 'post-EU accession migration' to Norway. Only 6 out of 24 interviewees have arrived to Norway, at least for the first time, with the aim to work or to accompany his/her spouse before May, 2004. Of course, in the time-span the form of their residence has evolved. The change refers to some elements, e.g.: length of periods spent in Poland and Norway, type and status of undertaken jobs (registered, unregistered, temporal or permanent, full-time, part-time, etc.), staying abroad alone or accompanied by family (spouse and children, parents and siblings) and more distant relatives or friends. The interviewees are also diverse with regard to their educational level (achieved in Poland and Norway), previous migration experience

³ It is selection from 30 interviews that have been conducted within Work Package 2. Migrant families in Norway/structure of power relations and negotiating values and norms in transnational families (leader: Magdalena Ślusarczyk, PhD). However only ten interviews were made accessible for this analysis.

⁴ These interviews have been conducted within Work Package 3. Social Capital among Polish immigrant families in Norway (leader: Eugene Guribye, PhD).

⁵ The web survey has been conducted within Work Package 4. Parenthood in a migrant life course perspective (leader: Lihong Huang, Senior Researcher). All tables presenting data from TRANSFAM web survey have been computed by Ewa Krzaklewska, Jagiellonian University.

⁶ In the article the term 'interviewee' is used in case of qualitative sample, the term 'respondent' is reserved for quantitative TRASFAM sample.

(beside Norway), their professional career in both countries, including type of current (during the research) employment, and level of religiosity. Although all of them are Poles, even those living in the same city, town or region are differentiated by the region of origin and circumstances of migration. It is not an exaggeration to say that the sample responds to the idea of ‘super-diversity’ of contemporary migration⁷.

Regarding web survey sample, it should be stressed that the gender distribution of respondents does not reflect the one that is observed in population of Poles residing in Norway. Female respondents constitute 60% of the sample, while their percentage in migrants population is 34% (2015, Statistics Norway). A similar comment can be made on educational level. 47% of respondents have tertiary education, 40% secondary, while in 2014 the percentage of Polish immigrants (16 years and over) with higher education was 31% and secondary – 53% (Statistics Norway). Respondents, who take part in the TRANSFAM web survey in their vast majority arrived to Norway in 2004 or later (585 out of 607 valid answers). It is also remarkable that for one third of respondents (210 out of 648) and for 27% of their partners Norway is not the first country in which they have resided for a period longer than three months. The same experience is shared by some of interviewees (and their partners), who worked earlier in different countries.

2. GEOGRAPHICAL DISTRIBUTION OF POLES RESIDING IN NORWAY

It cannot escape one’s attention that Polish people constitute not only the largest group of immigrants in Norway, but also the largest group of immigrants in many Norwegian municipalities. E.g. at the beginning of 2011, they were the largest group in 211 out of 429 municipalities, and in 16 out of 19 counties⁸. What is characteristic about the Polish citizens’ presence in Norway is the fact that they can be found all over the country (see the Table 1 below).

⁷ S. Vertovec, *Super-diversity and its implications*, „Ethnic and Racial Studies”, No. 30 (6), 2007, pp. 1024–1025.

⁸ L. Østby, E. Høydahl and Ø. Rustad, *Innvandrerne fordeling og sammensetning på kommunenivå* [PDF FOR Digital Editions version]. Statistics Norway Reports 2013/37. Available at: http://www.ssb.no/en/befolkning/artikler-og-publikasjoner/_attachment/136681?_ts=140e2a916f8 [Accessed: 6 May 2015], p. 5.

Table 1

**Polish immigrants and Norwegian-born to Polish.
Distribution across Counties, 2015**

Counties	Number of Poles
Østfold	6 062
Akershus	14 179
Oslo	15 862
Hedmark	1 952
Oppland	2 298
Buskerud	7 351
Vestfold	4 296
Telemark	2 056
Aust-Agder	2 034
Vest-Agder	2 364
Rogaland	12 559
Hordaland	10 938
Sogn og Fjordane	2 138
Møre og Romsdal	5 606
Sør-Trøndelag	4 135
Nord-Trøndelag	1 372
Nordland	2 009
Troms Romsa	1 455
Finnmark Finnmárku	758
Total	99 424

Source: Statistics Norway.

Although the most significant group is situated in Oslo and its surroundings, Poles reach more distant areas, even small towns or villages. The table below presents geographical distribution of Poles residing in Norway with regard to their number and the position they have among all migrants living in given municipality.

Table 2

Highest number of Polish immigrants and Norwegian-born to Polish parents in 13 Norwegian municipalities, 2015

Municipality	Number of Poles	Position among immigrants in municipality
Oslo	15 862	2
Bergen	6 232	1
Bærum	3 744	1
Stavanger	3 263	1
Sandes	2 710	1
Trondheim	2 199	1
Drammen	1 926	2
Asker	1 811	1
Sarpsborg	1 316	1
Fredrikstad	1 298	2
Haugesund	1 246	1
Kristiansand	1 156	1
Ålesund	998	1

Source: Statistics Norway.

3. WHY NORWAY?

Why have interviewees decided to arrive to Norway? One shall understand that the reasons listed in this part are not separate and can overlap each other. When analysing the qualitative material, the first motivation is not a surprise. The interviewees pointed out that they, or their close relatives (spouse, parents) had an opportunity to undertake a gainful employment. Due to the labour force shortages among local population Norway runs programs of seasonal employment e.g. in agriculture. Furthermore, at the beginning of the century there was a demand for workers with technical skills in industry and services (technicians, mechanics, and other skilled workers). Employment was arranged by employment agencies (e.g. ADECCO) or by Norwegian employers. Some of migrants' activities took place in a shadow

economy (e.g. in private households – construction and cleaning). Doctors and nurses were also welcomed.

The second reason for interviewed immigrants' arrival to Norway is also related to work, and more precisely, to location-specific capital and social network⁹. Namely, Polish migrants, who had been already working in Norway (both in registered and unregistered way). They invited other Poles to join them in order to work together. Polish migrants also actively searched for jobs for their relatives and friends in order to escape their economic hardships in Poland. These labour migrants at certain point brought their relatives (family reunion), siblings, cousins, aunts, uncles, etc. This description suits the framework of the chain migration¹⁰:

„My brother has already arrived six months earlier in the middle of 1999. In 2000 he pulled me in here, it was during holiday, in June. Since that time I have been staying here (...) He told me: come, because you can earn money [in Norway]. He came here just the same way – his family had been already in Norway... Later, we brought the third brother, then the fourth brother. And only one resides in Poland with our parents (...) And I worked. Later I was self-employed. I did renovations, bathrooms and this kind of things. And then I went to (the name) factory. I worked there for 7 years. (...) She [interviewee's wife] came later, in 2005, at the end of this year, she became pregnant and gave birth to our son here. He attends school now (Male, 32 years old, 14 years in Norway)”.

Among migration histories analysed in this article, there is also rather an exceptional example of a sportsman for whom Norway offered opportunities for a professional career. Nevertheless, this case, somehow, might be classified as labour migration. All in all, we can say that with the exception mentioned above and another example of an interviewee, who wanted to escape personal problems, and to recover and to start new life in a calm country, Norway is a destination mainly due to the economic reasons:

⁹ The concept of location-specific capital focuses on the territorial limitation of the utility of resources accessible by individuals. Human and social capital is not easily transferred from one place to another destination, therefore location-specific capital is important in the evaluation of a potential place of destination. Despite the development of communication channels – as cheap calls, internet, social media – and means of transport, people are still attached to certain territories (J. DaVanzo, *Repeat migration, information costs, and location specific capital*, „Population and Environment”, No. 4(1), 1981, pp. 45–73; S. Haug, *Migration Networks and Migration Decision-Making*, „Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies”, No. 34 (4), 2008, pp. 585–605).

¹⁰ Chain migration is an old concept pointing that migration process is constituted by stages of pioneer migration, labour migration and family migration (J.S. MacDonald, L.D. MacDonald, *Chain Migration, Ethnic Neighborhood Formation, and Social Networks*, „Milbank Memorial Fund Quarterly”, No. 42(1), 1964, pp. 82–97).

„I was divorced, I got engaged in a new relationship, a new challenge. Well it looks like that. (...) In 2007 it was a trip to Norway, basically just to get some rest from some events in Poland, my divorce, property division, etc. Eventually, I closed my business. Not due to economic reasons, but rather due to personal reasons. Here [in Norway] I wanted to rest a little, see how it is. (...) I was looking for a calm country. When I was in the US that Americans, people older than me, told that they would like to spend their retirement in one of the Scandinavian countries, because they are peaceful and silent (Male, 53 years old, 7 years in Norway)”.

Economic factor is mentioned even in the case of mixed Polish-Norwegian family. They have chosen Norway since they wanted to bring up their children in one of their countries with keeping possibly close relations with the family left in a remaining one. They have decided that living and working in Norway provide resources for this. Poland cannot offer comparable opportunities. Consequently, they settled in Oslo area since the best labour opportunities for her husband were in there.

There is a refrain repeated spontaneously by the interviewees – when you work in Norway you can lead a predictable life. There are clear rules regulating everyday life. People can be sure that they will be paid for their work and that the salary is adequate for the costs of living:

„Female: Sense of security.

Male: Calm.

Female: When I work, I know I will be paid. I know what I can buy for the salary. I know that I can afford the bills, and I will be able to buy whatever I need.

Male: We can afford a normal life. (Male, 38 years old, 7 years in Norway, female, 37 years old, together with their children she joined her husband after several years)”.

It was also stressed several times that Norway is a country where one can have a family in one place. All family members may live together with no need to delegate someone to work abroad in order to provide money for those who are left in Poland. The interviewees base this statement on their own practice since they had earlier experienced separation caused by labour migration. Moreover, in Norway people have time for work and for family. While in Poland, even when they reside under the same roof, they suffer because of the constant absence at home. It is due to additional jobs undertaken by spouses in order to pay basic bills:

„In Poland I was not present in my family’s life, because I had to work at school and evening language courses. On weekends I also had lectures. So, generally, I was absent. Here, there is a lot to do at work, but still there is some time off (...), even if I had full time employment in one place, my family can function normally. I can handle financially and at 4 pm I am at home (Female, 40 years old, 6 years in Norway)”.

It might be said that the interviewees appreciate a specific lifestyle. In Norway one can find a balance between work, family, pleasures and duties, effort and rest. It is a huge difference to constant chase for money, which they had been experiencing in Poland, which anyway still had not allowed, in frequent cases, to sustain a family:

„When I was working in Poland, I was often delegated to European countries (...) well and I have been here... probably for a month in total in northern Norway. We arrived on Saturday... mmm... it was not a working day, we arrived at the shipyard and... and they were supposed to organize people to help us. And all these people, left their tools and coats (...). Well and I remember, I remember that I spoke with the head of the shipyard, and he said, ‘I cannot insist on my employees to prolong their working day if they have done their job. If someone says he wants to help, he will help, right?’ (...) I talked to them and they explained ‘listen, as we earn enough money during a week, what is the purpose of working on Saturday and Sunday? (...)’ ‘I chose Norway because I was there a couple of times, but once I was almost a month and I looked at some things (...) It is so peaceful, isn’t it?’ (Male, 32 years old, 8 years in Norway)”.

Young couples pointed that Norway offers them an opportunity to keep individual households, while in Poland they relied on their parents and parents-in-law, which was extremely difficult, especially when the older generation is not well-off.

Finishing this part of the article, one should stress that the choice of a particular locality or an area depends mainly on the employment opportunities. It is valid both at the initial stage of migration to Norway and at further stages:

„Male: After the first visit [in 2003], when we said ‘goodbye’, they invited us for picking apples. They said that we could always come and visit them. And in general they were very good people, very helpful, friendly, open-minded, elderly people. Even today we still have a good contact with them, we meet each other.

Female: we have not been working for them for a long time. We have visited them later several times, but my husband was already working on a grid of his own customers here in Oslo.

Male: My first client, was a friend of this ‘lady from apples’ [she helped to organize]. (Male, 43 years old, 11 years in Norway, including circulation between Poland and Norway; female, 41 years old, 11 years in Norway, including circulation between Poland and Norway)”.

At this point it is worth to recall findings of the TRANSFAM web survey. They provide more countable picture. As one can learn from the table below, better working conditions in Norway, meaning, higher income, stable contract, etc. are indicated as a reason for planning permanent settlement in Norway by 67% of respondents. This argument is the most frequently pointed

among all other reasons (28%)¹¹. Higher living standard in Norway is pointed by 51% of respondents (and it constitutes about 21% of all given answers). For every fourth respondent starting education by children in Norway is an argument in favour of a decision to plan a permanent settlement. Almost every fifth respondent likes the cultural/religious/social climate in Norway.

Table 3

Reasons for planning permanent settlement in Norway

Reasons	Frequency of a specific answer	Percentage of a specific answer among all indicated answers	Percentage of respondents who selected a specific answer
I like the cultural/religious/social climate in Norway	123	8	19
Relationships with family in Poland did not persist (I have nobody to go back to)	11	1	2
My children started school in Norway	158	10	24
Better working conditions in Norway: higher income, stable contract, etc.	438	28	67
No prospects in Poland	328	21	51
Higher living standard in Norway	326	21	50
Better access to welfare state's assistance in Norway (social and family benefits)	92	6	14
My family members (e.g. partner, children) want to live in Norway	73	5	11
Total	1549	100	–

Source: TRANSFAM web survey data.

¹¹ Respondents could indicate more than one reason.

TRANSFAM web survey data confirm that Polish migrants appreciate living standards in Norway and that they rely mainly on their own labour as a base for their well-being. Only 14% of respondents indicate better access to welfare state's assistance (social and family benefits). This reason constitutes merely 6% of all indicated answers.

4. STEP BY STEP – MOVING TO NORWAY

Certain trajectories might be described on the basis of the interviews. The first one consists of a typical settlement migration starting from the very beginning, when spouses decide to build their own and their children's future in Norway since they cannot accept the idea of a separation even for a short time. It is the least common:

„We have decided to come to Norway, because we could start living together here. In Poland, we did not have such a possibility... My husband [who worked in Germany] visited home 3 times a year. We have been together for 6 years, and in reality, we have never been together. Only on holidays and vacations. (Female, 34 years old, 8 years in Norway)”.

Another trajectory could be reflected in the example of the following family story: one of spouses receives contract in Norway. As a consequence the family moves to Norway since its members prefer to live together. An initial contract turns into a stable employment or a contract extension. With the time passing, children are born in Norway and/or they reach a sufficient age to start preschool or school. As a result, the family prolongs its stay which becomes permanent although it was not planned to be so initially:

„Male: When I have started looking for a job, it had already been decided that if I go, we will go together.

Female: Everyone who lives in Poland thinks that if you go abroad, you will work two, three, four years, and you will be able to build a house in Poland, which is completely unrealistic due to prices in Poland. And we came here because we had a dream to build a house (...) Our daughter started going to kindergarten here.

Male: And later to school.

Female: And later to school. We were simply caught up in this life here, not in the negative sense, because this life here... We started to like it, but that's because...

Male: We had to...

Female: We finally could live like a family. We could afford a normal life, not like in Poland (Male, 36 years old; Female 34, 8 years in Norway)”.

A bit similar is a situation of families that have got reunited because separation was too harsh experience. They have not planned settlement but

with the time passing they continued their stay in Norway and even assisted other relatives to move to Norway:

„None of us could make it any more. He came here in order to give us better life. But I felt lonely. It was getting harder and harder. I guess that [husband's name] felt the same. By that time we had two children... at first he missed [son1] then [son2], whom he almost did not know, because he could not... visit us every month just for a weekend or every three weeks for two days (female, 30 years old, together with children joined her husband)”.

This conclusion relates not only to circular migrants, who left their families in Poland, but also to those who had planned to come back to Poland after reaching a specific financial aim. It concerns also individual migrants, who at a certain point got involved and established their families in Norway, and highly-skilled professionals focused on development of their career:

„We did not buy this house straight away. Because our daughter was three years old, when we moved to [CITY], we rented a flat Then I decided that... I cannot stand living (laughing) such life (...) [in Norway] We decided that we were going back to Poland (...) well and I remember that we packed up everything, I flew by plane with our daughter and my husband took a car, packed it fully, (...) and he went back to finish a contract here, in Norway (...) Well, and once he called me and said ‘Listen... I have a proposal, that we need to talk (laughs) and it actually was such a turning point in our life here, where my husband was offered a job here, (...) he says... ‘so, all in all it is a very, very good deal’, and so... and what I was supposed to say to him? yeah, it's his, his career, just his, his life... (Female, 47 years old, 24 years in Norway)”.

The interviewees' experiences confirm findings from earlier studies. Processes of migration and adaptation of Polish migrants in Norway are better explained in terms of different stages in the migratory process rather than in terms of different categories of migrants¹².

¹² J.H. Friberg distinguished three stages in the migratory process: initial stage characterized by plans of returning home in the near future (in some aspects it reminds pioneer migration), transnational commuter' stage characterized by permanent temporariness, travelling between Norway and Poland (labour opportunities are crucial at this stage), and settlement (family migration in the chain migration scheme). The final stage is reached when the primary household is situated in Norway what in case of a family reunion is a challenging process. It means changes in housing, consumption, leisure-time activities, searching for educational opportunities for children, etc. (J.H. Friberg, *Culture at work: Polish migrants in the ethnic division of labour on Norwegian construction sites*, „Ethnic and Racial Studies”, No. 35 (11), 2012, pp. 1914–1933).

5. SPREADING OR CONCENTRATING?

As it is presented in Table 1. Poles are to be found in all counties, however, more than half of them (54%) reside in four counties (Oslo: 15 862, Akershus: 14 189, Rogeland: 12 559, Hordaland 10 938). Having a closer look at statistics on municipality level, one can notice that in some localities there are single or just a few Poles registered.

The TRANSFAM project confirmed the role of *migrants' network* in the case of Polish migration to Norway, which was pointed in previous studies¹³. Only one of the interviewees (out of 24) noticed that Poles concentrate in his close neighbourhood or more precisely, street. Based on other statements, it seems that although in some localities Poles are found in higher numbers, they do not constitute segregated communities there and they are rather spread. Nevertheless, the location specific social capital plays an important role at least at the initial stage of migration for those who are not using professional employment agencies or NAV (Norwegian Labour and Welfare Administration) are not offered contracts by Norwegian employers due to their very particular skills (e.g. sportsmen, nurses). During the research, the interviewees referred to both professional and more informal channels of getting into Norway and particular localities. Some 'were brought' by siblings, cousins, uncles/aunts, brothers/sisters in law, close friends, etc. Some mentioned that they themselves assisted Poles to find a job and place of residence (examples of temporary cohabitation at the initial period have been recalled several times):

„Interviewer: Your sister resides in Norway. Is she alone?

Male: I mean... I found a job for my brother-in-law. He had lived for a while with us. And later he lived on his own, got a job. And then my sister came with children... a little bit later. She had no job, and he lost half of his earnings in Poland, and they had a loan. It was hard. And I had a good relationship there with the head of the company, which I used to work for. (Male, 36 years old; 8 years in Norway)”.

¹³ J. Napierała, P. Trevena, *Patterns and determinants of sub-regional migration: A case study of Polish construction workers in Norway*, [in:] R. Black, G. Engbersen, M. Okólski and C. Panțiru (eds.) *A Continent Moving West? EU Enlargement and Labour Migration from Central and Eastern Europe*. Amsterdam University Press, Amsterdam 2010; J.H. Friberg, R.K. Tronstad and J.E. Dølvik, *Central and Eastern European labour migration to Norway: trends, conditions and challenges*, “Free Movement of Workers and Labour Market Adjustment: Recent Experiences from OECD Countries and the European Union” [PDF FOR Digital Editions version], OECD Publishing, 2012. Available at: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264177185-en> [date of access: 27 November 2015], pp. 147–172.

To conclude, interviewees do not point presence of other Poles as a factor considered by them when they select particular place of residence in Norway. Nevertheless, some of them joined their relatives and friends, who had been settled in Norway, and some brought other Poles to Norway. Co-ethnics living in neighbourhood do not attract new Polish settlers. As it has been shown Poles arriving to Norway are not monolithic. Differences among Polish people arriving to Norway are recognized by several interviewees. During the research we reached also those who, after bad experience with co-ethnics, decided to limit their contacts with other Poles or who suffer from a growing competition of new arrivals working in a shadow economy and as a result they distance themselves from them. Nonetheless, it should be said that migrants use their social capital – their relatives and friends living in Norway and their broader Polish network – especially in order to find a flat or a house for rent.

With the exception of pre-accession migrants and those who had a place of residence organized by the employer, our interviewees mentioned problems with finding an accommodation in Norway. It is not only a high price of rental (which in case of our two interviewees forced them even to sell their apartment in Poland in order to have money for an initial rent deposit and a rent) but also the reluctance of potential landlords who found out nationality of the interviewees:

„At the beginning it was very hard; we could not find a house. Despite the fact that I was looking intensely-I’ve been calling both the ads from newspapers, and also Internet, I did not speak Norwegian, only English, and there was always a question, where was I from. It was about 2–3 months when I could not find anything and only thanks to my neighbour-friend [Polish], we managed to find something, a flat. (Female, 40 years old, 6 years in Norway)”.

In order to overcome hardship in finding the place to reside the interviewees not only relied on the Polish network in search of accommodation but even shared flats with other Polish migrants (not relatives). Passing flats to other Poles when someone is moving away is an interesting practice recalled during the research.

„Female: First we rented a house with another Polish family, and we had only one bedroom. The bathroom, kitchen and a big living room were shared.

Interviewer: Children were together with you?

Female: Yes, and it lasted a couple of months. After about six months, we found a small apartment, 60 square meters. In this apartment we had lived for a few years and then we bought a house. (Female, 40 years old, 6 years in Norway)”.

Female: And we bought a flat last year, in May, and we moved out. They [interviewees' children] stayed in our old flat, which we used to rent. They rent it now, because it is closer to Oslo.

Male: Closer to the city.

Female: 15 minutes to the centre.

Male: T-ban is nearby.

Female: They say that it is a rural area here (Male, 43 years old, 11 years in Norway; female, 41 years old, 11 years in Norway; including circulation between Poland and Norway).

The first who came here was my brother. He had been living in this apartment for about 10 years (...) it was rented by this person who built this house. And now, the second brother had been living here for three years. (...) This flat has passed from one brother to another. Then it passed from my brother to friends, in order to keep it, simply because it is still the old price and it is not expensive. Now, for a place like this, one would have to pay 4,000 more. (Male, 32 years old, 14 years in Norway)".

Asked about the concrete localization of place of residence interviewees recalled the price, transport options (regarding schools and working place, including relying on public transport or their own cars) and the airport location (visiting Poland). One can also observe a relationship between family formation and cycle, and mobility within the borders of the city or region. Families with children demand bigger apartments. They also limit their mobility when they have children in the school age since they do not want to break their social ties, or they try to arrange it in the least harmful way for kids (especially if they have already experienced broken relationships in Poland and undergone difficult time building new ones in Norway). Children are a kind of anchor that keeps migrants not only in Norway but also in certain locations within the country. Parents show high understanding for the fact that through everyday activities, and repeated routine their children build the sense of belonging to certain areas and communities and they feel secure there. In short, child's relationship to a given location in Norway can be described as habitual bonds¹⁴.

„Female: Well, the family has grown. It was not so easy to move within Norway anymore, so from the moment we bought this house here, close to this school, we did it with the

¹⁴ See S. Ossowski, *Analiza socjologiczna pojęcia ojczyzny*, [in:] *Dziela*, t. 3, PWN, Warszawa 1967. He recognizes two types of ties that link an individual with territory. Ideological bounds refer to the belief of belonging to a certain imagined community – ethnic/national group – that is perceived as related to certain territory; habitual bonds rely on direct and individual, personal relationship with the territory, which is formed in everyday activities. It is an attachment that one feels to certain milieu due to the fact that one had spent there a significant part of life, and in particular, a period open to long-lasting emotional ties – childhood.

idea that children could go to this school, because everywhere here it is far to go by taxis or buses. All in all, we wanted very much to live close to the primary school... and probably we will still live here until the [name of the daughter] will be attending school. I have always dreamed of living on the sunny side, this side is... shady, in winter the sun comes out in February. In the summer it is great, because it is hot. (...) I say to my husband, that when children finish primary school here, they will no longer be dependent on walking there and maybe we will change something. (Female, 47 years old, 24 years in Norway)".

The pattern drawn after analysing qualitative material shows tendency to buy one's own property, using a home loan, instead of renting rooms, apartments or houses. When migrants gain higher professional stability, meaning predictable job (it does not need to be a middle or high position in the hierarchy or ownership of an enterprise) and when they accumulate some savings, they tend to move from rented flats to their own properties. There is a huge difference between Poland and Norway in this dimension. In the latter, home credits are accessible even for factory workers. They can afford buying a house or a flat. Buying a real estate binds a person to the country and can be interpreted as an indicator of a permanent settlement. On the other hand, an accessibility of one's own housing and an opportunity of establishing safe and predictable environment for the family is a pulling factor. It can be concluded that it keeps Poles in Norway.

The interviewees pointed that they themselves and other Poles they heard about, accept more distant locations since they are cheaper. However, due to good transport infrastructure (roads, railways) they can get to work, school or places for additional children activities by car or train/bus. Some buildings require renovation. For some interviewees a house or a flat is the final one, some have already sold it in order to buy one responding to growing family needs, some plan to change it when children finish school.

Let's have a look at the results of TRANSFAM web survey, keeping in mind that it is not representative and that its findings do not reflect the general Polish migrants situation in Norway. Referring to TRANSFAM web survey, 37% (241) of respondents own a flat or a house in Norway. Almost half (49%, 319) rent a flat or a house and only small proportions (0.4% and 0.02%) live in a room/flat provided by a Norwegian employer and live in a room/flat belonging to friends/family/parents in Norway. Unfortunately, statistics on real estate ownership that could put some light on a situation of the whole Polish population are not available.

It was pointed that the availability of employment, at least partially, can explain the geographical distribution of Poles residing in Norway. In case of people who got accustomed to certain localities, and who established their

families, who learned the space (town, village and their surroundings) and organized their everyday activities internal migration might be unacceptable. Below one can find a statement of a woman, who despite husband's unemployment decided not to move. He is actively searching for a job, and participating in courses organized by NAV, improving his language skills, for what he had not have time earlier:

„Female: (...) Our acquaintances suggested us to move to [City in Norway], that we could come and so and so forth (...).

Male: I like it here and I do not want to change, because we are close to everything we need. I've got everything nearby. I like the place that we live in. I cannot imagine that I would go somewhere different than this, because the smaller towns, they are not so... they are such small fjords, flats are cheaper there in the out-of-the-way places. There you need to have a car and one can have a beautiful house. You can go there to rest for a week, in my opinion, for two ...I'd probably go crazy. It would have been too much, too quiet for me (laughs).

Female: Well, here too we have an organized life. Our son has three times a week this...

Male: Taekwondo.

Female: he trains taekwondo. Well, on Saturday it is a Polish school. Every second Saturday.

Male: There's also more of these children, more of those...

Female: This is such a, well, they have much to do. There is a Norwegian school, there is homework.

Male: Our son has friends. I also have some friends. (Male, 38 years old, 7 years in Norway; Female, 37 years old, together with their child she joined her husband after several years)”.

Language, as a factor influencing adaptation, is a topic that deserves more researchers' attention in future. From TRANSFAM project one has learned that the interviewees take advantage of different options available for them in order to learn Norwegian. However, it shall be stressed that their access to free of charge courses is limited so they benefit from reimbursement offered by trade unions to which they belong or by their employer. When they are entitled (due to the fact that they had been working in registered way for sufficient time) they take advantage of language courses that are part of vocational training offered by NAV. Some interviewees mentioned collecting money in order to pay for lessons in language schools. Females, whose labour activities are limited by the fact that they take care of young children, use this time to learn Norwegian (in organized or individual – self-study – way):

„The first year was tough for me, I had no job, I had no friends, I had no family, I was alone with a small child in the house (...) [the husband's name] at work, at that time he was working long, long days and long, long lonely quite nights, but as [name of the

daughter] went to kindergarten and I went to a course, it is from that, it seems to me that it was my turning point, that I started to learn language, I was again with the people and it was cool (Female 34, 8 years in Norway)".

Of course, it is not possible to compare current opportunities with the ones accessible for an interviewee who arrived at the beginning of 1990. Today it is much more difficult to learn Norwegian. Opportunities of language training are also geographically differentiated. An interviewee who lives in Aust Arendal had waited for two years for a place in a language school. Finally, she attended classes for a year and a half (both evening and day courses), simultaneously working as a cleaner (in registered way). This example is significant, since upgrading her language skills ensured finding a job in accordance to the interviewee's profession.

The interviewees take official exams, but even those who have passed the most advanced one, after years spent in Norway, unfortunately do not achieve the level that is appreciated in all social relations and they are recognized as foreigners. Nevertheless, language skills are crucial for upward mobility at better performance at labour market.

6. APPROPRIATION OF SPACE

What is meant by appropriation of space? It is placing oneself for a shorter or longer time on certain territory and recognizing it, to some extent, in the sense of using it, as one's own and safe¹⁵. People cannot exist and function normally in a completely strange, unfamiliar space. Therefore international migrants go through the process of appropriation of space as inhabitants and users of certain areas. They place themselves for a shorter or longer time on certain territory and recognize it, to some extent, in the sense of using it, as one's own and safe. It has been also written that the interviews analysed were conducted with diverse Poles. This diversity refers to their educational level (achieved in Poland and Norway), previous migration experience (beside Norway), their professional career in both countries, including type of current (during the research) employment, and level of religiosity, region of origin in Poland, circumstances of migration, age, etc. Basing on such a rich and varied material it is possible to show some patterns of appropriation of space.

¹⁵ B. Jałowiecki, M. Szczepański, *Miasto i przestrzeń w perspektywie socjologicznej*, Wydawnictwo Naukowe Scholar, Warszawa 2006.

It seems reasonable to recall the idea of sense of place since migrants, gradually during everyday activities, produce the sense of place of their own¹⁶. An initially abstract space is becoming recognizable and familiar – the place. Migrants go through practical training to achieve skills useful in playing their roles as neighbourhood residents, as shoppers, as workers, as commuters, parents of school-aged children, etc. Their behaviours are becoming automatic and thoughtless, with no unnecessary effort – they are becoming local people¹⁷.

Poles get accustomed with Norwegian realities in everyday activities and interactions. They meet other migrants and Norwegians, who are both direct or indirect source of information for them when it comes to the area, rules and requirements, etc. They learn on their way to work, they learn when they work, doing shopping, traveling with public transport or using their own means of transport (car, bicycle) or simply walking.

„This job was an hour and a half and for me it was great because [husband’s name] was coming from work and he was taking care of [interviewees’ son name] and I was taking a tram and was just going there to work. On my way, I was visiting stores, taking a walk. (Female, 37 years old, 2 years in Norway)”.

In professional relationships the interviewees steadily enlarge the cycle of people they meet, including other Poles, non-Polish migrants and Norwegians. Although it is not a rule, the majority of their sociable activities takes place among Poles – relatives and friends. As one interviewee noticed – ‘It takes years to be invited to Norwegian home’. Some interviewees have experienced such close relations, however their Norwegian friends are presented rather as exceptional examples of Norwegian people.

„Male: Yes, I have one Norwegian friend, this is important information. One real friend, a true one, the closest from Norwegians.

Female: And the rest are rather Poles.

Male: Acquaintances and so on. This is the only one whose phone number I have. We give ourselves a hug when we see each other. He helps me a little with Norwegian. (...) Very positive guy (Male, 38, 7 years in Norway; Female, 37 years old, together with their child she joined her husband after several years).

¹⁶ See: Y.F. Tuan, *Przestrzeń i miejsce*, Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy, Warszawa 1987. Tuan describes place as humanized space.

¹⁷ F. Buhr, *Spatial Integration of Migrants: A Brief overview and Critique* [PDF FOR Digital Editions version], IGOT/CEG-UNIVERSITY OF LISBON INTEGRIM ONLINE PAPERS 1/2014, Available at: <http://www.integrim.eu/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/Buhr-Spatial-Integration-of-Migrants.pdf> [Accessed: 6 May 2015].

I belong to trade unions. I have a very good contact with the current staff, because it has changed a little recently [it is an ethnically mixed team]. I work in a public procurement. I have a good contact with colleagues from my department. Once a month we go to a restaurant and we talk, we backbite others so to speak (laughs), that is how it looks (Female, 41 years old, 11 years in Norway, including circulation between Poland and Norway)”.

Migrants organize their places of accommodation and in this way they create safe and friendly private places for themselves and for their families. Parents are getting involved in everyday routine: play-grounds, preschools, schools, sport activities, lessons of Polish language, etc. Sending children to preschool or school parents get involved in the interaction with Norwegian institutions and Norwegian parents. Even if, usually, these relationships are rather superficial, as it is shown in the interviews, they are becoming a part of routine of being a parent in Norway. The most frequently parents recall birthday parties that are organized typically with the idea that the whole school unit is invited. Afterwards parents meet for a quick coffee. Some interviewees pointed that they share responsibilities of assisting children during sports activities and other events with other parents, including Norwegian ones:

„Female: When we collect children, we come by for a cup of coffee or something like that. Interviewer: So these are acquaintances because of children. Female: Yes, and because of the activities they participate in. I do not know, we somehow run an incredibly fast lifestyle, there is no time to rest (Female, 47 years old, 24 years in Norway)”.

For these interviewees for whom religion is an important element of life, finding a church with a service in Polish seems to be one of the essential steps in the process of appropriation of space. It is not only about a concrete building in which people can reconstruct ‘a piece of Poland’ through an engagement in a familiar way of worship, which is extremely significant for creating safe and own places for migrants. Visiting church on Sunday and on holidays organises immigrants’ life in repeating sequences (weekly or monthly, depending on availability of Polish priests in a given area). In other words, it inserts some routine, that is necessary to build the sense of safeness:

„Previously there were no Polish service in the nearby church. My husband went there and it was in Norwegian. The mass in Polish was in Oslo, Olaf. Then once a month, father [priest’s name] came at least to [city in Norway], I remember this, well, It was not enough...Well only once a month. Then he [priest] had to resign because he had too many duties. There was no Polish masses. Now, for the last three years, or even more, we have a Mass every Sunday (...) for the last two or three months there is one at nine and the other at two in the afternoon. So there are already two services on Sunday. That’s

because many Poles came and (...) in the morning and in the afternoon the church is full'. (Female, 30 years old, 7 years in Norway)".

Through the churches with services in Polish, migrants also mark their presence on the local landscape. Churches play an important role also in case of those, who are less religious and visit places of worship only during holidays, since during this time they can experience atmosphere reminding the one, they know from Poland. Furthermore, it is a common sense knowledge that Poles gathering in sacral places are also sharing information about jobs and accommodation.

And finally, together with a growing number of Poles residing in particular municipalities and counties, one observes development of 'ethnic services'. Some interviewees use hairdressing, beauty and car repair services provided by Poles, paying in Norwegian crowns. Some Poles search for services offered by Polish doctors and nurses whenever it is possible. In some cases it is based on individual experience, in other cases it is general mistrust to foreign doctors, that is not based on earlier practice. Sometimes it is caused by low language competences that do not allow to deal with intimate issues, as it is in case of gynaecologist or to simply explain all concerns that bring someone to a general practitioner:

„When you come here, at the beginning you do not know any doctors. Our first doctor was a nice person. And now we are registered to Polish doctors (...) my wife's gynaecologist is also a Polish doctor. I think that there is more focus on prophylactic here to let a patient help himself. (...) A man comes to the doctor and it seems to him that he is seriously ill and he is given aspirin, acetaminophen. (...) I do not know why many people do not trust Norwegian health care. When they are in Poland they visit private doctors (Male, 53 years old, 7 years in Norway)".

Using so called ethnic services enables migrants to feel 'like at home':

„Generally everything is here. More and more Polish stuff (...) there is more and more Polishness here, because there are more and more Poles, well, we were recently in the cinema to watch a Polish film'. (female, 41 years old, 11 years in Norway, including circulation between Poland and Norway)".

7. WHERE DO POLISH IMMIGRANTS FEEL AT HOME?

Responses given in the web survey are distributed as follows: in Norway 38% (245), in Poland 27% (174); both in Poland and in Norway 33% (215), somewhere else 2% (14). Analysing qualitative material one can see that

through an involvement in one's everyday activities, some migrants, steadily, start to treat Norway as a home. Others keep related to Poland, even after years spend in Norway. As it was described by one of interviewees they 'feel like guests'. The third category of attachment deserves a special attention since it describes a type of 'dual orientation' that is characteristic for transnational migrants. Sometimes with the time passing affection to the place of residence in Norway has developed in a way that migrants feel deep attachment both to the past Polish and current place. 'Migrants adapt themselves while maintain strong ties of sentiment, if not material exchange, with their place of origin'¹⁸. The following quote reflects it perfectly:

„Male: I have to say than when we visit Poland, we never felt like at someone's place. We are still at home. And it looks like that, doesn't it?

Female: yes

Interviewer: So you say you're going home?

Female: home, still home (...) but when we return to Norway we also return home.

Male: but here we also return home.

Female: (laughs) and it is even possible to reconcile (Male, 36 years old; Female 34, 8 years in Norway)”.

On the basis of the analysed material it can be concluded that we are witnessing a process of settlement of Polish migrants in Norway. Regardless of the initial plans, that in case of the interviewees were quite diverse, currently they see their future in Norway, not in Poland. Their activities in Norway do not limit to work exclusively, they establish their families there or gather family members, who used to live in Poland, they buy flats and houses, send their children to Norwegian kindergartens and schools.

These observations are confirmed by statistics on the number of Polish immigrants residing in Norway for more than five years. Since the TRANS-FAM project focuses on 'post- EU accession migration' the figures below refer to 2010–2015. During this period the number of Poles living in Norway for more than five years has increased from about six to 35,5 thousand. It is almost six times. They constitute about one third of the total number of Polish immigrants and Norwegian-born to Polish parents in Norway (99 424, Norway Statistics 2015). It should be also stressed that the number of Polish children residing in Norway is growing each year as well.

¹⁸ S. Vertovec, *Migrant Transnationalism and Modes of Transformation*, [in:] A. Portes, J. DeWind (eds.), *Rethinking Migration. New Theoretical and Empirical Perspectives*, Berghahn Books: New York, Oxford 2008, p. 156.

Table 4

Poles residing in Norway for more than 5 years

Year	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
No of Poles	6 262	7 435	9 993	15 547	25 639	35 516

Source: Statistics Norway.

Table 5

Number of children
(Polish immigrants and Norwegian-born to Polish parents, 15 years and younger)

Year	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
No of children	7 137	8 992	10 738	12 560	14 420	16 078

Source: Statistics Norway.

Although number of naturalisations is not high, compared to the total population of Poles in Norway, it can be used as another indicator of change, from temporary to permanent stay, observed among Poles. As one can see in the table, it has been growing. On the margin of this observation it should be mentioned that Poles can reside and work in Norway on the basis of the free movement of workers so their motivation for obtaining Norwegian citizenship might be weakened. It can be one of the explanations for low numbers of naturalisations.

Table 6

Naturalisations

		2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Males	0–17 years	6	7	26	23	33
	18 years or older	6	17	32	44	90
Females	0–17 years	11	11	9	15	40
	18 years or older	27	45	71	84	161
Total		50	80	138	166	324

Source: Statistics Norway.

Recalling the results of TRANSFAM web survey – respondents were asked about their settlement plans. Distribution of their responses is shown

in the table 7. Half of respondents plan permanent settlement in Norway and 35% have not decided yet. Answers are more or less evenly distributed through genders¹⁹.

Table 7

Decision on permanent settlement in Norway (%)

Decision	Females	Males	Total
Yes	52	48	50
No	12	18	15
I do not know	36	34	35
Total	100	100	100 (648)

Source: TRANSFAM web survey.

Regarding relationship between the age of respondents and their plans. It has turned out that such a relationship exists²⁰, however, it is very weak. Therefore, one can assume that the age of respondents does not affect their settlement plans too much. Similar conclusion refer to the length of stay in Norway – the relationship is weak²¹ so it can be assumed the year of initial stay in Norway rather does not affect respondents' plans.

Table 8

Decision on permanent settlement in Norway, age sub-groups (%)

Decision	Less than 20	20–29	30–39	40 and more	Total
Yes	53	49	55	47	50
No	16	11	8	21	15
I do not know	31	40	36	32	35
Total	100	100	100	100	100 (648)

Source: TRANSFAM web survey.

¹⁹ There is no relationship between the respondent's gender and decision on settlement (The chi-square statistic is 3,9142, the p -value is 0,141267. The result of the chi-square test is not significant at $p < 0,05$).

²⁰ The chi-square statistic is 14,3202, the p -value is 0,026256. The result of the chi-square test is significant at $p < 0,05$. Pearson's C contingency coefficient is 0,15.

²¹ The chi-square statistic is 8,6072, the p -value is 0,196906. The result is not significant at $p < 0,05$. Pearson's C contingency coefficient is 0,22.

Table 9

**Decision on permanent settlement in Norway
and a year of respondent's first stay in Norway for more than 3 months (%)**

Decision	Before 2004	2004–2008	2008–2012	2012-till the research	Total
Yes	52	54	50	48	51
No	24	15	15	12	15
I do not know	24	28	35	40	34
Total	100	100	100	100	100 (622)

Source: TRANSFAM web survey.

Interestingly, relationship between being a parent or not and settlement intentions is not observed²². The same is true in case of migrants educational level²³. Concluding, neither parenthood nor education affect plans that respondents have with regards to permanent settlement in Norway.

8. CLOSING REMARKS – WHAT DOES KEEP POLES ON THE SCANDINAVIAN PENINSULA?

The answer is short: predictability that forms the sense of security for the family. As it has been shown by empirical material from both qualitative and quantitative TRANSFAM studies, economic factor is crucial. Norway offers something that is key to feel safe – the sense of security consequent from clear rule: when you work, you receive sufficient remuneration to sustaining a family.

Materials from biographical and semi structured interviews show how, regardless of their initial plans and sometimes hardships, migrants were finally, day by day, settling in Norway. Recalling findings of the web survey, vast majority of respondents (85%) find their family situation after migration at least good and app. 15% find it difficult to give definite answer (only six out of 648 respondents describe their family situation after migration as bad or very bad, which is less than 1%).

²² The chi-square statistic is 1,7005, the *p*-value is 0,427314. The result is not significant at *p* < 0,05.

²³ The chi-square statistic is 1,3367, the *p*-value is 0,855111. The result is not significant at *p* < 0,05.

Table 10

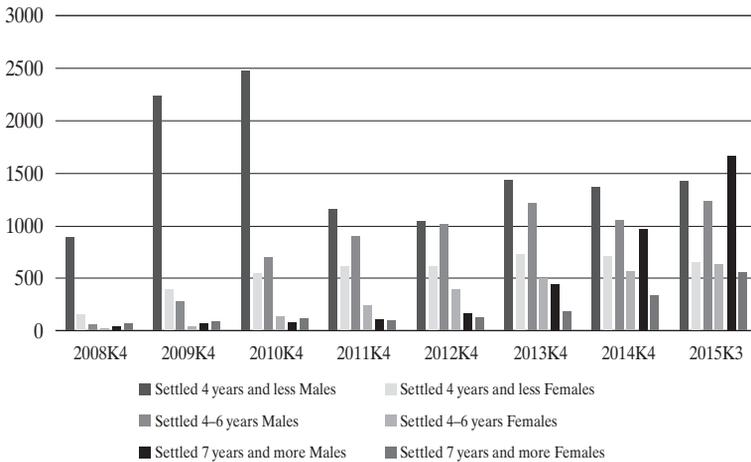
Evaluation of respondent’s family situation after migration (%)

How do you evaluate your family’s situation	
Very good	37
Good	48
Difficult to say	15
Bad	0
Very bad	0
Total	100 (648)

Source: TRANSFAM web survey.

Figure 1

Registered unemployed Polish immigrants 15–74 years, by years of residence and sex, in thousands, 4 quarter 2008–2014 and 3 quarter 2015



Source: own elaboration on the basis of Statistics Norway data.

Even though Polish immigrants, due to their engagement into labour intensive sectors, are more exposed to the risk of unemployment than the total population²⁴ one can assume that migrants experiencing temporary unemployment wait for next job offers in Norway instead of coming back

²⁴ Poles were affected more by the economic crisis than natives. The registered unemployment rate for the whole population sustained below 3 per cent while among Polish

to Poland. This statement is justified by data on registered unemployment among Polish immigrants. It is evident that in case of those 'settled for the period 4-6 years' and 'for 7 years and more', the numbers grow each year. This is true for both sexes (see Figure 1).

Summing up, the results of TRANSFAM study at least partially undermine the earlier expectation of the temporary nature of Polish migration to Norway. Analysis of materials collected in the project indicates the similarity of the patterns observed since 2004 in the UK and Ireland²⁵.

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workers was much higher reaching 10,2 in 2010. Similarly in the third quarter of 2015 the rate for the total population was 3,1 while for Poles 9,2, which is three times higher.

²⁵ K. Iglicka, *Powroty Polaków po 2004 roku. W pętli pułapki migracji*, Wydawnictwo Naukowe Scholar, Warszawa 2010; A. White, *Polish Families and Migration since EU accession*, The Policy Press, Bristol 2011; A. Romejko, *Polacy w Wielkiej Brytanii interpretacja mimetyczna*, Tuchów 2015.

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SETTLING IN NORWAY? THE CASE OF POLISH MIGRANTS AND THEIR FAMILIES

Summary

People of Polish origin constitute not only the largest group of immigrants in Norway (99,424 in 2015, Statistics Norway), but also the largest group of immigrants in many Norwegian municipalities. This article presents different patterns of settlement choices and spatial experiences of Polish migrants and their families in Norway. Based on the analysed material, it can be concluded that we are witnessing a process of settlement of Polish migrants in Norway. Regardless of their initial plans, currently they see their future in Norway, not in Poland. Their activities in Norway are not limited to work exclusively, they start families there or bring family members who used to live in Poland, they buy flats and houses, send their children to Norwegian kindergartens and schools.

CZY ZOSTANĄ W NORWEGII NA STAŁE? POLSCY MIGRANCI I ICH RODZINY

Streszczenie

Polacy stanowią nie tylko najliczniejszą grupę imigrantów mieszkających w Norwegii (według Norweskiego Urzędu Statystycznego liczba osób z polskim pochodzeniem w 2015 roku wyniosła 99 424), ale także są najliczniejszą grupą imigrantów w wielu miejscowościach. Artykuł przedstawia różne wzory osiedlania się Polaków w Norwegii. Na podstawie badania można stwierdzić, że bez względu na początkowe plany Polacy osiedlają się w Norwegii na stałe i w tym kraju, a nie w Polsce, widzą swoją przyszłość. Ich aktywność nie ogranicza się do podejmowania pracy w Norwegii, zakładają tu rodziny albo sprowadzają krewnych z Polski, kupują nieruchomości i posyłają dzieci do przedszkoli i szkół.

ОСТАНУТСЯ ЛИ В НОРВЕГИИ НА ПОСТОЯННОЕ ЖИТЕЛЬСТВО? ПОЛЬСКИЕ ИММИГРАНТЫ И ИХ СЕМЬИ

Резюме

Поляки представляют собой наиболее многочисленную группу иммигрантов, проживающих в Норвегии (согласно Норвежскому статистическому центру, численность лиц польского происхождения в 2015 году составила 99 424 человек); они являются также наиболее многочисленной группой иммигрантов, проживающих во многих населённых пунктах. В статье представлены различные примеры поселения поляков в Норвегии. Исследование позволяет утверждать, что, независимо от первоначальных планов, поляки остаются в Норвегии на постоянное жительство, и с этой страной, а не с Польшей, связывают своё будущее. Их деятельность не ограничивается трудоустройством в Норвегии, – они заводят здесь семьи либо приглашают родственников из Польши, покупают недвижимость и отправляют своих детей в детские сады и школы.