

## POLISH MIGRATORY GROUPS AND THEIR DESCENDANTS IN THE PROVINCE OF BUENOS AIRES IN ARGENTINA

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### INTRODUCTION

The aim of this article is to characterize Polish immigration in the province of Buenos Aires, specially in the localities of La Plata, Berisso and Ensenada, by analyzing bibliographic and documental information about the group, and the applicability of a socio-cultural enquiry, which results are loaded into a data base created as a part of the project called "socio-cultural mapping of immigrants and their descendants settled in the province of Buenos Aires (with the exception of Spaniards and Italians)" which is being developed at the La Plata National University.<sup>1</sup>

The majority of the large countries of the world has accepted and still accepts a high percentage of immigrants and foreign residents: heterogeneity is an integrand and interactive part of each society. The "personal identity" has ceased being simple. Everyone can compose it combining heterogeneous elements of different areas of the culture. Since their cultural contact, migratory movements have promoted in our country a new form to generate and to express the identity.

In Argentina, research about immigration has traditionally been made fundamentally upon two majorities: Spanish and Italian. There were few specific anthropological studies concerning small and medium groups of immigrants (Capeverdeans, Poles, Greeks, Lithuanians, Ukrainians, etc.).

As a result of our experience in the field of anthropology, working with some of these groups and their descendants, we became aware of the need of a tool which allows, in a flexible way, to recognize the profile which characterizes the studied communities and those which will be studied in the future. Without such a tool, it would be difficult to characterize the modifications, which were produced and still take place being a consequence of the cultural change and the intercultural contact.

<sup>1</sup> The project was financed by the National Agency for the Promotion of Science and Technology.

## METHODS AND TECHNIQUES

Polling was selected as the most convenient technique to collect the data to be entered into the database.<sup>2</sup> It is used for individuals, immigrants or their descendants of any generation, of both genders and above 6 years old, residing in the province of Buenos Aires.

A list of potential individuals for the enquiry was elaborated. Data came from lists of local society memberships of voluntary participation. These associations represent different sectors (popular, intermediate, accommodated), socio-economic and cultural classes, and religious groups. They hold permanent and periodical meetings and keep records of their members, whom they allowed us to contact. Another important condition for their acceptance was their institutional interest of our research, without implying any institutional intervention.

The enquiry, of duration of approximately half an hour, was not only applied to members of these organizations, but also to all those relatives, friends and descendants that we could record "ad hoc" during the consultation. The questionnaire was set forth by advanced students of anthropology, who participated at the same time in the adaptation and improvement of the items included in it.

The enquiry comprises basic questions about occupation, social participation, educational level, etc.; as well as open questions, referred to attitudes or affiliation to organizations. Other questions are confined to one option, e.g. marital status.

The questions are generally accepted and understood. Comprehension varied as a consequence of the instruction level. For example, questions related to the native and second language or the origin and residence, had to be clearly explained in advance.

With the aim of describing precisely the meaning we wanted to give to each of the variables within the database, we will shortly mention some of them.

Firstly, the pollster asks for the personal data of the questioned individual, which include surname, name, address, sex, birth date and age. This information is separately stored in the database and the access is restricted through a password to protect the identity of the participants of the enquiry.

The individual variables sex and age allow us a wide combination with the rest of the variables.

Regarding the family situation, we consider primarily the marital status of the interviewed person, which is usually treated as a synonym of the "marital situation" in demographic literature. This is a condition that allows us to talk about relationship in anthropology. This variable can take the following defined values: single, married, united, separated, divorced, widowed.

Regarding children, we asked for the number and sex of them.

<sup>2</sup> For further details about the Data Base see: Maffia, M.; Mehlreter, K.; Basaldúa, M., 2000: Construction of an ethnographical database of groups of immigrants and their descendants in the province of Buenos Aires, Argentina -excluding Spanish and Italian. *Two Homelands. Migration Studies*, 11-12, pp. 287-298.

The intention of the questions with reference to the family is to allow a family's subsequent typological characterization, based upon the following factors:

- 1 - The type of partnership
- 2 - The origin of the marital partner
- 3 - The actual family size
- 4 - The stage of development in his family life cycle

As regards migration, we investigated into the origin of the polled person, his parents, his grandfathers and marital partner. The origin is understood as: "if he/she has any ancestor who immigrated in any lineage (maternal or paternal) and in any generation".

Finally, we set the place of birth and the present residence, and in the case of immigrants, the date of departure from his/her country of origin and the date of arrival in Argentina.

Regarding the language, we distinguished between the variable of the mother tongue, defined as "the language which is first acquired by the person and which is transformed in his/her natural instrument of thinking and communication" (UNESCO), and the variable second language: "is the one acquired after the mother tongue was established. It generally coincides with the official language" (UNESCO).

Regarding the mother tongue, we asked if he/she understands, speaks, reads and writes it.

Finally, there were two questions, which could be considered as related to the attitudes towards learning the mother tongue and reading news related with his/her place of origin.

The variable religion is understood, in a wide sense, as the practice of any type of religious belief. We asked about the actual religion, if there was a second one and, finally the religion of his/her father and mother.

Regarding the job, we homogenized statistical and anthropological criteria, understanding this term as: the collection of specific tasks, which are practiced during his/her work, of any branch of economic activities or any professional category he/she has. If the person is an immigrant, it should be specified what was he/her job in his/her place of origin, and which was the first job in Argentina.

The variables related to recreation referred to the activities that were carried out during free time. The alternatives considered were sports, dancing, cinema and television. These were complemented with the indication of affiliation to or participation in institutions, where he/she is member or regular visitor.

With the term of habits, we referred to the common way of realization of cultural practices, which are linked to the place of origin, like meals, the playing of musical instruments and dances (explaining type and frequency).

With regard to schooling, we had to make comparisons between the schooling system of Argentina and those of other involved countries during the first part of our studies. Even if we found variations in respect of the contents and length of the cycles, the boundaries between the large categories (primary, secondary, tertiary/ college) are

maintained. We considered it appropriate to distinguish within these three categories, whether these were completed or not.

Although we recognize that these variables are not sufficient as analytical indicators of social-stratification and mobility, the profession and school level allow us to measure in some way the position which an individual occupies within a social scale, and also the experimented social mobility (horizontally and vertically). The latter means the social change, suffered with respect to the place of origin in relation to the present residence and the changes in profession and school level (the one of his/her own and the one of his/her parents and children).

Finally, we referred to the investigated group with the term "study".

## THE CONTEXT

The cities of La Plata - capital of the Province of Buenos Aires - Berisso and Ensenada are part of an urban, industrial and commercial triangle of great importance, located 60 km south from Buenos Aires, capital of Argentina. The region underwent in the last 20 years several transformations, such as a drop in the activity level, a process of de-industrialization, and a heavy fall in the average income. Notwithstanding, it was considered one of the most important poles of attraction of the country in the first half of the last century.

La Plata, founded in 1882, attracted from its beginning a great number of foreigners that worked in the construction of its harbor, houses and public buildings. Later on, several associations were founded to gather the different communities: the Spanish Society of Mutual Aid (*Asociación Española de Socorros Mutuos*); the French Social and Cultural Circle (*Círculo Francés Social y Cultural*); the German Argentine Club (*Club Germano Argentino*); the Saint Patrick Irish Community (*Colectividad Irlandesa San Patricio*); the Japanese Association of La Plata (*Asociación Japonesa Platense*); the Syrian Orthodox Association (*Asociación Siriana-Ortodoxa*); the Lebanese Association of La Plata (*Sociedad Libanesa de La Plata*); the Swiss Society of Mutual Aid (*Helvecia Sociedad de Socorros Mutuos*); the House of Portugal (*Casa de Portugal*); the Greek Argentine Cultural Institute (*Instituto Cultural Argentino Heleno*); the Armenian Society (*Sociedad Armenia*); the Israelite Argentine Society of Mutual Aid (*Asociación Mutual Israelita Argentina*); the Scandinavian Centre of La Plata (*Centro Escandinavo de La Plata*); and more recently the Uruguayan, the Chilean, the Peruvian, the Bolivian, the Paraguayan and the Brazilian Associations.

The city of Ensenada was founded in 1801 but its growth began about 1893 when the naval station was created and its harbor was conveyed to national jurisdiction. It became much more attractive when the Rio Santiago shipyard was set up in 1923, and when the oil distillery - *Yacimientos Petrolíferos Fiscales* - was established in 1925. At present, the existing immigrants' organizations are the Cape Verdean Society of Ensenada (*Sociedad Caboverdeana de Ensenada*), the Abruzzi Association of Ensenada

and the Italian Workers' Society of Mutual Aid (Asociación Abruzzese de Ensenada; Sociedad Obrera Italiana de Socorros Mutuos) and the Peru Tusuy Cultural Centre (Centro Cultural Perú Tusuy).

The city of Berisso was born in 1871, and in the early century became an important place for harbor activities with a great development of both naval and meat industries, and the latter particularly, brought thousands of immigrants to the city. The important presence of immigrants' organizations can be appreciated through the many clubs or associations that were founded in the city: the Albanian Association (Sociedad Albanesa) was created in 1907; the Greeks founded their Fraternity in 1911; the Polish Union was set up in 1913; the Portuguese Association (Sociedad Portuguesa) and the Irish Association (Sociedad Irlandesa) were created in 1915. Between 1917 and 1935, the Islamic Society (Sociedad Islámica), the Italian, the Ukrainian, the Armenian, the Belarusian, the Bulgarian, the German, the Yugoslav and the Czech associations were established. All this foreign presence gave birth afterwards to the Federation of Foreign Associations, which organizes the Immigrant Festival since the '70s. Berisso was declared the Provincial Capital of the Immigrant in 1978.

## THE POLISH MIGRATORY PROCESS IN THE PROVINCE OF BUENOS AIRES

According to the investigations conducted by Estanislao Pyzik (1966) at the National History Archives, the first Polish immigrants in Argentina were members of the military forces that fought for the Liberation Army: Miguel Zatocki known in 1812 as Head of the Polish Regiment and Tenant Antonio Mierz, in 1817. In 1819, the official newspaper "La Gaceta de Buenos Aires" mentions other two soldiers under the command of the Argentinean Army: Colonel Antonio Belima-Skupieski and Sergeant Juan Valerio Bulewski.

Nonetheless, we can only talk about a formal "Polish immigration" by June 1897, when the first Polish settlers landed at the harbor of Buenos Aires; fourteen families who settled in Apostoles and San Pedro, at the, by the time, National District of Misiones. The vast majority of the bibliography dealing with Polish migration in Argentina is based upon studies conducted in the province of Misiones: Gallardo (1903), Vogt (1922), Pyzik (op. cit.), Grosso (1974), Bartolomé (1977), Fontana (1984).

As a background for the province of Buenos Aires, we can only resort to the investigations of Pyzik (op. cit.), Fontana (op. cit.), Lahitte and Maffia (1986) and Ceva (1991).

With the support of these authors, we can establish three migratory periods for this province:

- From 1897 to the First World War
- Between the First and Second World Wars
- Post-war (the end of the Second World War)

Those migrants born in Poland surveyed up to date in the province of Buenos Aires belong to what we call mid-war and post-war migration. Most of them come from the Eastern and Central regions of Poland, including villages and cities that disappeared after the Second World War or territories that were made part of the Soviet Union. Some of these places are Bialystok, Lublin, Posen, Vilno and Galitzia.

The causes that led to their migration, for those who came after the First World War, were mainly the rumors of an imminent war and the desire to find a better place to live for them and their families. According to those who migrated during the post-war period, there were three alternatives if they were staying in another country by the end of the war: to remain in the foreign territory (Italy or England in most of the cases), return to Poland, or migrate. Returning to Poland meant "returning to a Poland that is not ours any longer" or "going back to a place that is no longer our countries" for many of them. These testimonies point out the dependence on the Soviet Union that Poland had after the war.

The majority of the Polish people who faced this situation decided to migrate to different countries, one of them being the Argentine Republic. They travelled with the hope of finding better perspectives for the future, influenced by the encouraging propaganda about Argentina that reached their site of residence through the embassies, or relatives and friends who lived there. The two migrations carried out by Polish immigrants in the province of Buenos Aires were collective movements, for their motivations (war) had a broad spectrum of incidence, since they affected large groups of Polish people and families. In several interviews, migrants agreed that their relatives or friends, who sent information about Argentina to them, assisted them upon their arrival into the country, providing them with food, housing and jobs. In other cases and particularly during the mid-war migration, those who lived in Argentina and were properly established "invited" their parents and friends through "welcoming letters", facilitating the journey and collaborating in their settlement. Migrants who had been in the country for many years, participated as adaptation agents by mediating between the newly arrived immigrants and the host country.

It could be stated that, according to the information obtained to date, that friendship and parenthood links intervened from the beginning in the migratory process. The presence of friends or relatives can be regarded as a factor of incidence in the decision on migration and, once in the host country, veteran migrants accompany the newcomers by means of mutual help and solidarity mechanisms, thus facilitating the integration process.

This type of assistance not only occurred among Polish residents in Argentina, but also through the existence of organizations that concentrate native Polish and their descendants from the time of the first migration. Institutions, clubs and associations such as the Polish Society of the Argentine Republic, created in 1890 by 24 Polish settlers in Buenos Aires who arrived in different individual migrations. Argentina also hosted Polish immigrants, lodging them at the Federal District Immigrants' Hotel, were they were allowed to stay during the first days after their arrival. Almost all



interviewed Polish natives stayed there for a couple of days, while they looked for a job and a place to stay.

As regards the activities that migrants carried out in Poland, there is a huge variety: they were peasants, students, soldiers, business persons, among others. These occupations mainly characterize post-war migration. As for mid-war migration, there are basically two recognized profiles: peasants and merchants, most of which were Polish Jews. Jews born in Poland did not have a relevant participation in the Polish community in our country. They were mainly identified with their religion mates and they joined Jewish institutions rather than Polish ones.

Polish clubs and associations were created with the aim of grouping native Polish and their families and recreating the cultural roots of their ethnic group, such as dances, language and food.

A short historical review from the Berisso Polish Union (Buenos Aires) will serve as an example: In 1912 Antonio Moszynski, a Polish immigrant would settle in Berisso with his family after meeting a compatriot who owned a printing house in this city upon his arrival in the Port of Buenos Aires. With the idea of organizing and pulling all Polish immigrants in Berisso together, he creates an association on April 20 1913 with the help of other fellow compatriots. The objectives were to perform different cultural activities and patriotic celebrations, to open a school to teach the Polish language, to have a building for the social see, and to carry out mutual help activities. Antonio Moszynski was the first president of the entity, as well as the first Polish language teacher. During the First World War, the association collaborated with the Patriotic Committee for the Liberation of Poland, established in Buenos Aires, branch of the Central Committee, in Paris. After the conflict and being Poland an independent republic, the Polish Union in Berisso received regular visits of members of the Polish Embassy, Consuls and delegates from different associations. In 1936, legal recognition is obtained. The goals established are: To foster every form of Argentine-Polish confraternity, maintain the unity of the Polish people in Berisso, cooperate for the maintenance of the links between Polish and Argentine organizations, carry out all possible cultural manifestations, celebrations, conferences, national commemorations, the creation of a library, promote artistic and social gatherings, and magazine or newspaper subscriptions. By 1960, The Poznan Polish Folkloric Ballet was inaugurated; in 1986, an independent ballet called Przyjacieli was created and in 1994, after conversations between the Society's board of directors and representatives of the independent group, the Ensamble Poznan-Przyjacieli was founded. At present, the Association is a member of the Berisso Association of Foreign Entities, which nucleates different communities in Berisso and organizes the Provincial immigrants' festivals.

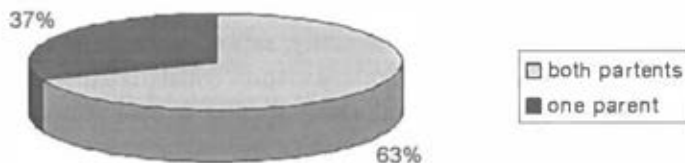
## FIRST CHARACTERIZATION OF POLISH RESIDENTS IN THE LOCALITIES OF LA PLATA, BERISSO AND ENSENADA (BUENOS AIRES PROVINCE)

The following is a characterization based upon the data obtained from the survey performed for the construction of the database. This information will show the trends of some of the variables considered.

### *A - Origin:*

From the 76 individuals surveyed to date, both immigrants and Polish descendants, 16 are native Polish. Most of them migrated from Poland while being infants, between the years 1924-1939. In the particular case of two of the interviewed who arrived as adults, after the Second World War, their emigration period was at the beginning of the conflict; after a short participation in the War, and after being in Italy, France and England, they decided to settle down in Argentina as their final destination.

We can also determine whether the Polish origin of the individual derives from both or only one of his parents. In the following graphic, we show the percentages for the totality of the interviewed people.



### *B - Gender and age group:*

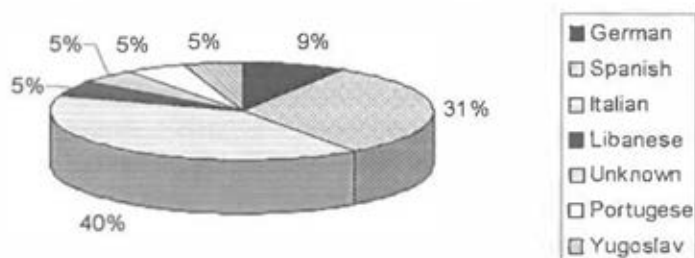
The percentages of men and women among the interviewed are very similar, noticing a slight predominance of women, while native Polish men outnumber native women. Ages oscillate between 16 and 92, with four generations residing in the area (it is important to notice that children are interviewed only after they are 6 years old, starting their first grade at school).

### *C - Civil status and marriage patterns:*

As for the civil status of the inquired, 46,7% is married, 16,8% is widow, 32,4% single and 3,9% is separated. With reference to the origin of the partner, we obtained the following results: 74% have partners of different origin and only 26% has or has had a partner of the same origin.

The graphic shows the origin of the partners in mixed marriages; there is an evident preference for Italian and Spanish descendants in that order:



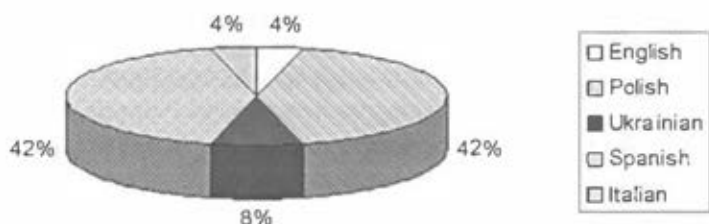


Even though only 26% of the cases are both Polish partners, when discriminating between immigrants and descendants, we can observe a higher percentage of marriages between individuals of the same origin among the former: 70% of immigrants married a partner of Polish origin. In all the registered cases, those who arrived in the country already married, brought their families with them; both parents brought those who came in their childhood. We have not yet found any situations, though very common among other groups of immigrants, where the man migrates first, and then sends for his spouse and children after he is established in the country. With regard to this item, we can conclude that among immigrants there was an intense preference for Polish partners, while among their descendants this preference is not noticeable.

#### *D - Language:*

One of the identity elements that are usually considered in these studies is language and its conservation degree among descendants. Analyzing this issue and resorting to the results of the enquiry, we obtained the following results:

First spoken language: we observe that 71% of the interviewed speak Spanish as their first language; these are obviously immigrants' descendants. The rest of them., 29%, are native Polish or descendants whose parents are both Polish emigrants and have homes where Polish is spoken. Second spoken language among the enquired:



The graphic shows that 42% speak Spanish as a second language. Immigrants and descendants whose parents are both Polish are represented here.

It is interesting to notice that the same proportion (42%) speak Polish as a second language: all cases correspond to children, and grand-children in a smaller proportion, of immigrants who learned the language at home and/or at courses delivered by Polish

associations; in all cases, when the language has been learnt at home both parents were Polish. As for Ukrainian language, it was always learnt at the place of origin, by immigrants who lived in areas near the Ukrainian border.

Concerning the interest in learning Polish - among those descendants who do not speak it - 50% is interested, while the remaining 50% has no interest at all.

*E - Religion:*

All of the immigrants interviewed are practicing Catholics, as well as their parents. As for descendants, they also practice Catholicism, with few exceptions of people who were being educated under the Catholic faith but do not practice it at present.

*F - Food, music and dances:*

These variables do not seem to play an important role, thus, it leads us to conclude that to the moment they do not act as ethnic identity indicators. Nonetheless, these are the main elements upon which the functioning of the associations is based, and one of the reasons for their existence.

## AS REGARDS TO THE POLISH MIGRANTS' IDENTITY

The migrant, influenced by different cultural filiations, constitutes his identity in a dynamic way, adjusting his behavior to the norms and models proposed by both his origin group and the host society.

The migrant individual facing conflicting situations must articulate his capabilities and possibilities of adaptation. This adaptation to changes, according to Yampy (1982), goes through different stages both at individual and group levels:

- A. The first one, the initial contact, characterized by some kind of euphoria and the exaltation of cultural values of the country of origin: therefore, several institutions that nucleate compatriots appear, where the mechanisms of mutual help among veteran migrants and newcomers are put into practice with the former acting as adaptation agents, satisfying the basic needs such as food, work, housing, etc. An informant reports: "The social environment was like Poland's, we spoke Polish, cooked our typical food, helped each other to get a job ... it was like a small Poland".
- B. The second stage happens when the migrant establishes a superficial adaptation that responds to the fantasy of feeling like a newcomer, almost like a transient who will soon return to his country. ("We had been married for seven years with two children and he wanted to travel, we traveled all together. We came to make money and then we would go back".)
- C. The following stage starts when the idea of returning is no longer feasible immediately, it is postponed though not excluded, which hinders them from an active adaptation.
- D. The fourth stage comes for those who resign the idea of coming back and face their

re-installation. A modification and a change of already internalized values and the acquisition of new ones is necessary, while a definite or absolute abandonment of the desire to return never happens in depth: "When we arrived here I brought some money to move around; but ... returning? What?! My husband worked one month every three. When the kids grew up, I started to work at a slaughter-house and only then, we started to improve. We bought a house and settled down". / "We always wanted to return but then the children were born, the house, then the grandchildren ... and we stayed".

The need to adapt to the new residence affects not only the individual identity but also group identity, reflecting itself in aspects such as language, spouse, elements that turned out to be relevant at the ethnographic enquiry.

The migrant continues to take his country of origin as a reference, from which he organizes his perception of the new place of reference. Even more, he possibly reinforces this attitude by his relationship with other compatriots and individuals who maintain identical patterns of behavior and interpretation of reality. Therefore, a moving individual facing life in a new environment and unable to get rid of that frame of reference, structures his daily life around two poles: One, that of his family life and compatriots, in a similar context to that of his country of origin, where he speaks the mother tongue, listens to and dances his music of origin, and eats his typical food. Two, the one of his public life, his job, in an unfamiliar culture, where communication is carried out in the language of the host country.

In consequence, migrants practice a sort of bilingualism – mother tongue-receptive country tongue, where one predominates over the other depending on the environment. Informants report the importance of written language as an identity feature, to the point of centering their authentic possibilities of communication with a relative. Some cases:

- "My cousin is the only contact that makes it possible for me to write in Polish. There are around 4 million Polish in the U.S.A., and they are much closer. They keep their traditions alive, their parents' language among them".
- "My youngest sister is the only one still alive, in Poland; she always writes to me and I write her back. We send each other letters since I came here".
- "We always write each other, always share the news about the family that remained there".

This relationship enabled informants to express their emotions, feelings, recover their traditions stressing the fact that, further to the nationality, an identity exists manifested by language. From the above reported mailing contacts, the need of the migrant to keep the bond with the country of origin alive through the practice of language is reflected.

Simultaneously to the practice of the Polish language, migrants had to learn the new language, which allowed the establishment of personal and labor contacts among them, with the aim at participating in the social mobility process of the recipient

community. The working place constituted an environment for the learning of the language in the receptive country. Men went out for working purposes more frequently than women, as well as children, as they joined school. They were the first ones to incorporate the new language. Those women, who did not work outside their homes, delayed the learning of the second language. Polish children or Polish descents were carriers of the new language to the home at the initiation of school activities and "forced" their progenitors, in some cases, to either re-enforce or start the learning of the new language. Children represented, for the newcomer, a major bridge to access, at least through language, the knowledge of the new cultural filiations and a cushion for the negative impact of the dynamic constitution of this identity.

The election of the spouse is another important element: the need to re-enforce ethnic identity promotes the constitution of alliances between individuals of the same origin in the migrant. The corpus that we worked with is made up by Polish Catholic couples - not only of a common origin, but also of common religion - and couples constituted by Polish and their descents married to individuals of a different origin, who formalized their alliances in compliance with civil and religious instances. As we have already analyzed, most of the Polish who migrated, married a Polish partner. Among the Polish couples a significant number married in Argentina, a huge percentage met there as a result of frequent intra-ethnic contacts in their district, in society, visiting compatriots, etc.

The children from these intra-ethnic marriages manifest a larger adscription and sense of belonging to their parents' ethnic group than those who were born from alliances between individuals of different ethnic origin. This is mainly expressed by an interest in "the Polish", by means of the learning of the language and the cooking of typical food and the participation in social activities such as trips to Poland to meet their parents' homeland (at present).

The "transgressions" to the norms of marital election of the Polish migrants begin to appear in their descents. Among the latter a trend is noticed towards marrying individuals of Polish origin from the first generation of descents. The desire to marry someone who shares a common origin arises from the need, on the one hand, to perpetuate the group individuality and, on the other, to re-enforce their ethnic identity by preventing from diluting it in mixed alliances. The totality of Polish descents interviewed, who were engaged in mixed marriages shared the same religion: Roman Catholic. It could be said that at the moment of choice, country of origin is not as important as religion; the following quote is a common factor among the interviewed informants: "I married a son of Spain, of Catholic religion. You couldn't even think of marrying somebody of a different religion". This aspect was already evident in the alliances of their parents where the weight of religion was a selective issue as well as that of the origin. It has not been detected in the Corpus of Polish migrants and their descents any marriage between individuals of different religion, regardless their country of origin.

The outcome from the foregoing is the significance of religion in this group; the "Polish being" is inevitably linked to Roman Catholicism, identifying the Polish born

individual or the Polish descendant professing the Catholic religion. Therefore, it excludes Jews born in Poland. ("We, the Polish, are Catholic, there is not one sole Polish who is not ... well!!, there are Jews, but they are not ... not one of us ... not Polish". An interesting fact is that, to a major extent, ethnic associations of Polish migrants prior to the conformation of the Polish State or even after, were pushed and conducted by the Catholic Church.

Based on the foregoing research we are able to affirm that the "Polish being" in Argentina in the immigrant generation, was mainly based upon the use of language and nationality/religion/origin as a common feature shared by the migrant and the partner/spouse. In the following generations, those individuals who were brought up in Argentina, the Polish language and marriages between individuals of the same origin lose strength (though not religion); the Polish being depends almost exclusively on the existence of an ancestor born in Poland.

These matters will be deepened in a further stage of our research, as well as the role of the associations in the conformation of an ethnic belonging.

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**POVZETEK**

**POLJSKE IZSELJENSKE SKUPNOSTI IN NJIHOVI POTOMCI V PROVINCI BUENOS AIRES V ARGENTINI**

*Bernarda Zubrzycki, Marta Maffia*

*Namen razprave je natančno opisati poljsko priseljenstvo v provinci Buenos Aires, posebej v krajih La Plata, Berisso in Ensenada z analiziranjem bibliografskih in dokumentarnih podatkov o skupnosti ter ugotoviti uporabnost socio-kulturne raziskave, katere rezultati se nahajajo v bazi podatkov, ki je del projekta »Socio-kulturno umeščanje priseljencev in njihovih potomcev, živečih v provinci Buenos Aires (z izjemo Špancev in Italijanov)« ki poteka na La Plata National University.*

*Večina več jih držav je sprejemala in še vedno sprejema visoke odstotke priseljencev: heterogenost je integralni in interaktivni del vsake skupnosti. »Osebna identiteta« ni več preprosta. Posameznik jo lahko ustvari s kombiniranjem heterogenih elementov različnih okolij in kultur. Z migracijskimi tokovi se je v naši deželi uvedla nova oblika generiranja in izražanja identitete.*

*Raziskave o priseljevanju se v Argentini tradicionalno izvajajo na dveh večjih skupinah, španski in italijanski. Malo je antropoloških raziskav, ki zadevajo majhne in srednje priseljske skupnosti (kapverdske, poljske, grške, litvanske, ukrajinske itd.). Posledica naših izkušenj iz področja antropologije, dela z nekaterimi teh skupnosti in z njihovimi potomci, je zavedanje o potrebi metode, ki bi na fleksibilen način omogočala prepoznavo profila, ki karakterizira obravnavane skupnosti in tiste, ki bodo predmet študij v bodočnosti. Brez take vrste orodja bo težko ovrednotiti obstoječe modifikacije in tiste, ki še nastajajo kot posledica spremembe okolja in medkulturnih stikov.*

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