

# Australian Polonia: A Diaspora on the Wane?

Stefan Markowski\*, Katarzyna Kwapisz Williams\*\*

*As a country of immigration, Australia is an interesting laboratory of the dynamics of migrant settlement, diaspora development and sustainment. In this paper we discuss the Polish immigrant community in Australia: Australian Polonia, which is an example of a community of permanent settlers who blended into the Australian host community but retained enough elements of their distinct identity to be considered a part of the Polish emigrant diaspora. This is a traditional diaspora in that it largely excludes temporary migrants. We explore the nature of its attachment to Poland and Polish culture, and discuss the multiple identities of these migrants. The research question that we ask is: in what sense do members of Australian Polonia, ‘belong’ to the Polish diaspora, i.e. how are they attached to ‘things Polish’? Our sources of information include official statistics, mainly the Census of Population (2011), and a survey of Australian Polonia conducted in 2006.*

*Keywords: Australia, citizenship, diaspora, ethnic community, nationality, Polonia*

## Introduction

Australia has long been regarded as the quintessential immigrant country: over the past two hundred years it has attracted successive waves of migrants, initially from the British Isles and later from continental Europe and, since the 1970s, from Asia, the Middle East and Africa (Hugo 2002). If all those Australian nationals who were overseas-born are defined as first generation Australians and those Australia-born with at least one parent born overseas as the second-generation – nearly half of all Australians are either first or second generation immigrants (Markowski 2009). Moreover, migration to Australia has long been characterised as a uni-directional movement of immigrants rather than migrants. This is largely due to Australia’s geographic isolation from Europe, which was the principal source of migrants well into the late 1970s, the reluctance to attract guest-workers who may destabilise various vested interests in industries protected by tariffs and more recently by political patronage, little reverse/return migration, and, until the advent of modern aviation, the high cost of intercontinental travel. This remoteness has been conducive to the formation of ethnic diasporas, as it impeded migrant relations with their home countries, forcing the newcomers to form communities resembling those left behind. On the other hand, Australia’s remoteness may have also accelerated the process of migrant absorption into the host community, thus, made newcomers lose their former national identity faster and often irreversibly. Thus, Australia is an interesting ‘laboratory’ for those interested in migration

---

\* Joseph Tischner European University in Krakow, Centre of Migration Research, University of Warsaw. Address for correspondence: s.markowski@adfa.edu.au.

\*\* Faculty of International Studies and Politics, University of Łódź, Centre for European Studies, Australian National University.

studies and dynamics of migrant settlement and adaptation over time, including the formation of traditional immigrant diasporas such as *Australian Polonia*.

*Australian Polonia* comprises permanent residents of Australia of Polish ancestry who remain attached to Polish culture and traditions strongly enough to describe themselves as members of *Polonia* and, thus, Polish diaspora. These Polish immigrants mostly arrived in Australia after Second World War (WWII) in two major waves. It was essentially push factors that induced most of them to leave Europe for the antipodes and for many of them Australia was not their preferred final destination. Nevertheless, once they arrived in Australia they have merged into the broader host society while also retaining some of their distinct Polish characteristics. In many respects, *Australian Polonia* is an exemplar traditional immigrant diaspora and it is the ‘diasporic aspect’ of this community, its distinctiveness and attachment to ‘things Polish’ that we consider in this paper, as opposed to the many ways in which it has blended into the Australian host society. By considering various distinct aspects of *Australian Polonia* we also reflect more broadly on the formation and sustenance of immigrant diasporas.

The term *Polonia* is often used by Poles to describe the worldwide community of people of Polish ancestry – the global ‘Polish diaspora’. However, it should not be interpreted too broadly to mean all those people of Polish ancestry who live outside Poland, but only those who are somehow associated with Polish culture or traditions, that is, who are engaged with ‘matters Polish’ or display some rudimentary grasp of the Polish language.<sup>1</sup> These include all those second and third generation immigrant descendants, who cultivate – through the influence of their parents and grandparents – some elements of Polish identity, and those who are not ethnically Polish but who are nevertheless strongly attached to Polish culture and traditions (e.g. many Polish Jews).

Thus, the necessary and sufficient conditions for *Polonia* membership are rather ambiguous. It is clearly necessary to be either born in Poland or to be a descendant of Poland-born people. But, given the turbulent history of Poland, it is neither a well defined geographic nor national entity. Geographically, it covers a broad area bounded by the Baltic Sea to the north, the western and south-western border of post-WWII Poland and the eastern and south-eastern borders of the pre-WWII Poland. Within that broad area, over the past 200 years, there have existed various national entities that could be described as ‘Poland’ of which only two, the 1919-1939 Republic of Poland and the post-1989 (post-communist) Republic of Poland, could be described as sovereign Polish states (albeit existing within different borders). This area has also been inhabited by different ethnic groups and its ethnic balance has changed over time, particularly as a result of WWII. Not surprisingly, being ‘Polish’ or ‘Poland-born’ is often ambiguous. Also, while some form of attachment to ‘things Polish’ is necessary to be a member of *Polonia*, this does not have to involve maintaining formal links with Polish community organisations.

*Australian Polonia* accounts for only a proportion of all Polish migrants to Australia and constitute a very small proportion of the global *Polonia* most of which has settled in Western Europe, the United States, Canada and Brazil.<sup>2</sup> Nevertheless, *Australian Polonia* is broadly representative of those emigrants who either voluntary left or were involuntary displaced from those parts of Central and Eastern Europe that, at one stage or another, could have been described as Poland. Given the turbulent history of the region, these migrants have been driven out by poverty, wartime displacement, forced resettlement resulting from border shifts, political repression, ethnic cleansing or attracted by prospects of a better life at their intended destination. They all came to Australia to settle for good, and created a community which, unlike the more contemporary diasporas (see below), largely excludes temporary migrants.<sup>3</sup> Thus, *Australian Polonia* is a traditional diaspora of emigrants who have cultivated some elements of their homeland identity to make them distinct from other migrant groups and identify with the Polish people at home and abroad.

The experience of Polish emigrants to Australia provides a perspective on the formation of immigrant communities in Australia albeit refracted through the optic of a particular immigrant group. Over the past 60 years, Australia has morphed from a largely Anglo-Celtic community of the late 1940s into a pluralist society of the 2000s. This transition has brought with it calls for greater freedom for immigrants to maintain a blended, complex identity rather than fit into a common social frame imposed by the country's dominant ethnic group (Sussex, Zubrzycki 1985; Zubrzycki 1988, 1995; Smolicz 1999). Plurality and multiculturalism have encouraged ethnic communities, including *Australian Polonia*, to become more visible and distinct.

In this paper we explore the nature of immigrant attachment to Poland and Polish culture and discuss multiple identities of *Polonia* members. Our research question is: in what sense do members of *Australian Polonia* 'belong' to the Polish diaspora, that is, how are they attached to 'things Polish'?

Our sources of information are twofold. For general information about people of Polish ancestry in Australia we rely on official statistics, mainly the Census of Population. The latest census data are those for 2011, although, at the time of writing, they are only partially accessible (ABS 2013). In addition, we draw on a study conducted in 2006, which was a small survey of *Australian Polonia*, mostly in capital cities of the states of Victoria, New South Wales (NSW), South Australia, Queensland and Australian Capital Territory (ACT) where 67 per cent of all Australians of Polish ancestry (at the time, about 110 000 people) were reported to live. The 335 (valid) survey respondents accounted for 0.003 per cent of all those in the targeted areas who stated their ancestry as Polish in 2006 (for details of the sample see Markowski 2009, Statistical Annex).<sup>4</sup> The purpose of the survey (referred to below as the Polish Survey) was to probe the nature of *Australian Polonia*'s links with and attachments to Poland, the likely impact of Poland's accession to the European Union on *Polonia*'s attitudes to Polish citizenship, and the prospect of reverse/return migration. To date, relatively little factual evidence has been collected on the incidence of dual/multiple nationality of Australian citizens of Polish ancestry. In this respect, the survey offered some interesting new insights.

The paper is divided into six sections. The Introduction is followed by a discussion concerning the broader context of diaspora formation and the associated issues of 'belonging', nationality and citizenship, including the meaning of these terms in the specific Australian context. The next section provides a brief history of *Australian Polonia*. Then, we consider the picture of *Polonia* that emerges from the Census of Population data. This is followed by the Polish Survey perspective on *Australian Polonia*. We conclude by reflecting on the imminent decline of *Polonia* as no new immigrants arrive from Poland, while the first generation migrants begin to fade away and the second generation is approaching middle age.

## **Diasporas, nationality and citizenship**

### *Diasporas and belonging*

The term 'diaspora' has traditionally referred to dispersed people once belonging to a population sharing common ethnic, religious and/or cultural identity.<sup>5</sup> The term implies a permanent (or at least enduring) scattering of population either as a result of its involuntary displacement or voluntary migration. Diasporas arise as a result of disintegration and fragmentation of home communities and, thus, raise questions of identity, nationality and citizenship, as well as factors responsible for the scattering of previously consolidated communities. This traditional use of the term conjures images of a dispersed people who have settled in areas distant from their homeland but who nevertheless maintain some form of common identity that differentiates them from host communities in their new areas of settlement and makes them 'belong', albeit in some attenuated way, to their former homeland even if the latter is only a fading memory of a lost legacy. This enduring common bond could be their ancestral language, culture, traditions and/or religious practices.

More recently, however, the term ‘diaspora’ has acquired a broader meaning to include *expatriates* who maintain links with their home country and, regardless of their legal status in the host community, are ‘external nationals’ of their country of origin. In the new usage of the term, this sense of displacement has been replaced by the awareness of multiple identity and attachment to more than one country and polity. Not surprisingly, the emergent diaspora studies have increasingly adopted this new, more inclusive concept of ‘diaspora’.

Both in its traditional and broader meanings, diasporas can be described as ‘communities of belonging’; migrants must decide whether they wish to associate with their former homeland and, if so, in what way. The concept of ‘belonging’ provides an avenue for the conceptualisation of diaspora membership. It implies a form of inclusion in or attachment to a particular bounded entity, and may take many forms, i.e. it may rely on common or shared genealogical origins, language, culture and traditions, history (and/or historical myths) and religion. The ‘longing’ aspect of belonging may also be important as it evokes emotions and sentiments such as a desire to return to one’s ancestral homeland or retain (and be defined by) a strong attachment to a common socio-cultural consciousness rather than a unique geographic point of reference (see Parkin 1998: ix).

Even if migrants desire to blend rapidly into their new host communities, they may nevertheless be forced to form diaspora attachments when the host community refuses to accept them as ‘those who belong’. The concept of ‘belonging’ may therefore be used in an exclusionary sense – to exclude those who do not belong. Thus, belonging is not only a matter of individual choice but it also involves processes of selection and acceptance by the host or home community.

This exclusionary concept of ‘belonging’ is associated with the ‘organicist’ notion of the relevant social entity (Hartnell 2006), where to belong means to be attached exclusively to that entity: the *unitary notion* of belonging. In the context of international migration, it presupposes a high degree of ethno-cultural homogeneity with either host or home communities. It implies a firm mooring to a group such as society, nation or state and common social characteristics that exclude non-members. Unitary host societies, for example, try to impede the formation and sustainment of immigrant diasporas as they do not tolerate multiple identities and prevent their members from forming or retaining any form of ‘member-like’ attachment to another community. Similarly, unitary home societies insist on emigrants retaining their close allegiance to the homeland state. Perversely though they may also assist the sustainment of diasporas as they force those migrants who are either determined to retain their separate identity or who fail to assimilate, to become ‘resident aliens’ and, thus, seek other forms of community attachment. An example of the unitary host society was the Anglo-Celtic Australia of the 1940s and 1950s which became notorious for its White Australia policy, i.e. immigration law restrictions favouring Europeans and impeding immigration from Asia<sup>6</sup> (see, for example, London 1970; Jupp 2002; Carey, McLisky 2009).

At the other end of the spectrum, the ‘constructivist’ notion of belonging is inclusive in that it allows an individual to belong elsewhere, to be attached simultaneously to different ‘reference entities’ or ‘frames’ (e.g. multi-cultural inclusion allowing for differences in customs, family structures, choice of employment, religion, locality between individuals).<sup>7</sup> This is the *pluralist notion* of belonging. Pluralist host societies allow, and sometimes encourage, their members to forge or retain multiple memberships of different communities. This approach implies a degree of choice in belonging so that a person’s set of attachments becomes an amalgam of self-selected ‘reference entities’ (Hartnell 2006). An example of such a society is Australia of the late 1980s and early 1990s when the second wave of Polish immigrants arrived. This pluralist, multicultural society that actively encourages cultural diversity, multiple identities and accepts dual citizenship is also the present day Australia.

Over the past 40 years, many immigrant societies such as Australia have changed their attitudes to migrant belonging. In particular, they have morphed from largely unitary communities that demanded rapid migrant assimilation and integration into the host community (to belong on strict terms imposed by the host community), into largely pluralist, multicultural societies, where the notion of belonging is often fluid and ambiguous. There is an ongoing debate, however, as to the meaning and scope of 'belonging' in this pluralist environment (see Nolan, Rubenstein 2009).

Similarly, home societies have also changed their attitudes to international migration of their nationals. Faced with the growing mobility of workforce and competition for skilled labour in the globalised economy, pressures of economic growth and national development, and the aging of population in western countries, they have been forced to change the rules regarding the retention and transmission of social membership and have been increasingly tolerant of the plurality of migrant identities.

### *Nationality and citizenship*

The formation and sustainment of national diasporas is not only a function of cross-border mobility and attachment to particular ethnic, national or cultural entity but also a reflection of national attitudes to and policies applied by home and host countries to determine such concepts as 'nationality' and 'citizenship'. These policies define the terms of membership of national communities and, thus, the scope for international migrants and their descendants to retain their attachment to their home country and the terms on which they integrate into host communities. As the cross-border mobility increases, the traditional concept of nation-state that bounds together nationality, citizenship and state sovereignty over particular territorial entity becomes rather ambivalent. International migration separates ethnicity, nationality, citizenship and residence, which are increasingly mixed and matched to form different nationality-citizenship-ethnicity hybrids.

International law recognises each state's sovereignty in regard to nationality so that the acquisition and disposal of nationality is settled by national legislation. (International agreements also proclaim everyone's right to nationality and therefore regard statelessness as an unsatisfactory legal form – for an elaboration see Barry 2006, ft. 37: 23) That is, each sovereign state determines who it considers to be a national, how its nationality is to be transmitted between generations, how it can be gained (usually by naturalisation or marriage), lost and re-instated. This often extends to the home country nationality of diaspora members. The nationality law also determines which national polity its nationals belong to, which rights they can claim, what obligations are imposed on them (e.g. military service) and what protections they are entitled to (*ibidem*). These national prerogatives are attenuated in that other states may not recognise a nationality that is involuntary or which is not based on some accepted notion of 'genuine' link between an individual and a state (Hartnell 2006, ft. 62: 13). The national sovereignty in regard to nationality is particularly blurred when an individual has genuine links with more than one state.

Citizenship, on the other hand, implies membership of a political community, which can be narrower or broader than that of the nation-state (e.g. the European Union citizenship). Nationality is a necessary but not a sufficient condition for citizenship, which is often interpreted more broadly to include some notion of effective commitment to a relevant political community and being involved in the governance of one's state and those supra-national entities to which that state acceded.

As states become more pluralist in their approaches to citizenship and nationality, they are increasingly tolerant of naturalised migrants and migrant descendants retaining the source country nationality.<sup>8</sup> Although dual nationality raises the issue of reciprocity in the treatment of parallel legal attachments, i.e. both the host and home states are willing to accept potential conflicts of loyalty that might result from the overlapping attachments, nearly half of all countries in the early 2000s accepted dual nationality (Barry 2006: 42). In

practice, each sovereign state insists on full sovereignty in dealing with its nationals regardless of their status as nationals of another state. Also, countries limit the overseas protection provided to their nationals who are also other nationals of other countries. Effectively, the rights of nationals may be abrogated rather than enhanced when they hold multiple nationalities. States may also extend 'external citizenship' rights to their diasporas: rights to participate in a country's governance, vote and seek office in political institutions. Nevertheless, states are increasingly determined to involve their diasporas in domestic politics and create opportunities for diaspora members to be formally involved in national politics (e.g. 12 seats in the French Senate are reserved for representatives of the two million-strong French diaspora – *ibidem*: 51).

The concept of Australian citizenship, as it applies to members of *Australian Polonia*, is a relatively recent one. Prior to the inception of the *Australian Citizenship Act 1948*, Australians were British subjects/nationals (see Nolan, Rubenstein 2009), and until 1987, when the *Australian Citizenship Amendment Act 1984* came into force, 'Australia resisted the move to create a distinct Australian citizenship outside of British subject status' (Rubenstein 2008: 40). The 1948 Citizenship Act also allowed, *de facto*, an overseas-born person to retain their former citizenship when granted Australian citizenship, while it also mandated its loss for an Australian citizen who acquired a citizenship of another country. Consequently, dual nationality was accepted as matter of legal reality for those who had another nationality prior to becoming Australian citizens. As many countries make it difficult for nationals to renounce their citizenship, pledging allegiance to Australia upon becoming Australian citizens was not sufficient to shed immigrants of their former citizenship. This inequity was finally removed in 2002 when amendments to Australian citizenship legislation made it possible for Australian nationals to acquire citizenship of another country. In 2007, a new *Australian Citizenship Act* repealed the contentious provisions of previous acts and broadened citizenship to include dual nationality.<sup>9</sup>

While Australian citizens are now free to be nationals and acquire/retain citizenship of another country (-ies), not much is known about the incidence of dual or multiple nationality and citizenship in Australian migrant community and the extent to which dual nationals and citizens engage in activities that imply a degree of parallel allegiance to another state (e.g. vote in national elections). In this respect, our Polish Survey provides some interesting insights into dual nationality/citizenship of Polish migrants in Australia.

### **Polish post-war immigrants**

The census of 1921 provides the first official data concerning the number of people of Polish origin living in Australia. Out of recorded 1780 persons, more than half arrived before the establishment of the Commonwealth of Australia in 1901 (Harris, Smolicz 1984: 48). It is estimated that over 80 per cent of those arriving from Poland in the 1920s were ethnically Jewish (Price 1964: 361). Subsequently, immigrants from Poland came to Australia in two 'waves', starting with the first large group of Polish immigrants who came to Australia as (WWII) Displaced Persons (DPs) in the early 1950s, preceded by a smaller group of Polish ex-servicemen demobilised in Great Britain in the mid-1940s.

#### *The first wave: 1946-1966*

Between 1947 and 1954, the Poland-born population of Australia increased from 6 573 to 56 594 people.<sup>10</sup> DPs came to Australia under the post-war mass migration scheme, following the 1947 agreement between Australia and the International Refugee Organisation. They were mainly recruited from refugee camps in Germany and Austria, but also from East Africa. The arriving Polish DPs were dominated by men 25-39 years old, who were described as 'uneducated labourers mostly from agrarian regions', and of whom 60 per

cent had no qualifications at all (Harris, Smolicz 1984: 60). The composition of this post-war cohort reflected both the depletion of the pool of educated, middle class Poles during the WWII and the preference of those educated, middle class Poles who survived the war and became DPs to emigrate to the United Kingdom, the U.S., and Canada. Also, information collected by the International Refugee Organisation was incomplete and unreliable (*ibidem*: 55-56).<sup>11</sup> For example, some potential immigrants acted 'strategically' by providing information that they believed was advantageous in securing free passage to Australia, i.e. the travel expenses paid by the Australian government for migrants who contractually agreed to work for at least two years as 'labourers' (in building industry, forestry, and farming), 'factory workers', or as 'domestics' (in hospitals and hotels). Accordingly, they were assigned these descriptors no matter what their actual qualifications were.

The newcomers lived, at least initially, in isolated migrant camps; they spoke little English, learning it mostly on the job and through gradual exposure to the Australian community. However, they were also expected to blend into the host community given the assimilationist policies of the then organicist Australian community. Nevertheless, by the end of the 1950s, this isolated group of New Australians evolved into a coherent migrant community of complex and strong structure, with its own associations, clubs, schools, press, folklore groups and churches (Włodarczyk 2005: 15; Lencznarowicz 1994: 401). The Federal Council of Polish Associations in Australia was established in 1950 and by 1991 it had 30 member organisations, grouping 200 smaller associations fulfilling numerous social, cultural and educational functions.<sup>12</sup> Although it is estimated that no more than 5 to 10 per cent of Poles in Australia participated actively in Polish organisations (Lencznarowicz 1994: 402), numerous associations, foundations and societies offered diverse forms of social and cultural engagement, organising festivals of Polish culture, establishing theatres and cabarets, folk dance groups and sport clubs, and publishing a weekly Polish language press (e.g. *Tygodnik Polski* first published in 1949 as *Catholic Weekly*, or *Wiadomości Polskie*, 1954-1996; Lencznarowicz 2001), complementing a large number of local chronicles, newsletters and bulletins. The Roman Catholic Church, in addition to its religious functions, was also engaged in various social and cultural activities.

Between 1956 and 1966, a further group of almost 15 000 Poland-born immigrants arrived, many of whom came under family reunion schemes and gradually bonded with the existing diaspora (Włodarczyk 2005: 16). This was the tail end of the first wave of Polish immigrants.

Arriving during the period of the organicist phase of Australia's immigration policy, the first wave of Polish post-war migrants was expected to assimilate *entirely* with the broader Australian society. Instead, while they adapted to life in Australia, they also developed a complex network of social and cultural links with their homeland. They were self-reliant and determined to preserve Polish language – defined by Smolicz (1981) as the Polish 'core value' – and their Catholic religion and traditions. They also established strong ethnic networks and intra-community support mechanisms. The genesis of this group of immigrants was the major force shaping its character defined by national culture, anti-communist ideological stance, and political activism supporting the struggle for independent and democratic Poland (including links with the London-based Polish government in exile). It was this attitude to the homeland and interest in its independence, rather than its generational experiences, that together with language, traditions and culture became an essential element integrating and bonding a significant part of Australia's *Polonia* well into the 1980s (Lencznarowicz 2001: 405-406). However, the 'protracted decline and general demise in organisation in groups with static migration, e.g. East Europeans' became apparent even at the end of the 1970s (Unikoski 1978).

*The second wave: 1980-1991*

The second wave, referred to as the ‘Solidarity migrants’, came to Australia in the wake of economic and political unrest in Poland in the 1980s. At the initiative of the established Polish community various associations and support groups were formed and numerous campaigns and demonstrations organised to inform the broader Australian society about the nature and aims of *Solidarity* and solicit support for its struggles against the Polish communist government. A large number of Australians of non-Polish background expressed their political sympathy and provided financial assistance for *Solidarity*. Australia also offered programs aimed at the resettlement of refugees (e.g. the 1981 Special Humanitarian Program). Thus, during the period 1980-1991 more than 25 000 Poland-born people arrived and settled in Australia. The number of Polish-speaking Australian residents peaked in the mid-1990s (Markowski 2009; see Table 1).

These *Solidarity migrants* differed significantly from the previous cohorts: they were mostly young urban singles or families, mostly tertiary-educated and highly skilled, often with good working knowledge of English and, thus, higher expectations concerning the terms of their settlement in Australia (Drozd 2001). They joined the established immigrants who had gradually transformed into ‘a broad ethnic community, including not only subsequent waves of migrants, but also their children and grandchildren, (but) whose attachment to the group varied’ (Lencznarowicz 2001: 406).<sup>13</sup>

Australia as a host country was also changing. The abolition of the White Australia Policy in the 1960s was followed by the new concept of integration that ‘saw the maintenance by migrants of links to their past cultures and nationalities as less threatening and not incompatible with the aims of integration’ (*Multicultural Australia Fact Sheet*). The introduction of multicultural and multilingual policies in the 1970s had begun the constructivist stance in Australia’s immigration policy: the protection and promotion of cultures and languages other than English, sponsorship of ethnic schools, introduction languages other than English into school curricula, and subsidies for ethnic cultural initiatives. Australian multiculturalism and its multilingual policies greatly benefited those immigrant groups which settled in Australia over 1980s and 1990s (Smolicz, Secombe 2003: 12).

However, while in the 1990s the post-war migrants were still active and dominated Polish organisations and community life in Australia, the generational culture gap gradually became visible with the loss of Polish language and fading attachment to the Polish culture, religious traditions and cuisine, especially among the second and subsequent generations.

*Immigration from post-communist Poland*

The number of immigrants from the post-communist (post-1989) Poland, the so-called ‘post-communist wave’ (Lipińska 2002) has declined to a trickle over the years: it decreased from nearly four thousand in the early 1990s, to about two thousand in the early 2000s, and to 338 in 2005-2006.<sup>14</sup>

In particular, since Poland’s accession to the European Union, the number of Poles migrating to Australia dropped considerably despite well-established ethnic networks and other intra-community support mechanisms attracting migrants (Carrington, McIntosh, Walmsley 2007), as well as the pull of a strong Australian labour market in the early and mid-2000s. But, given the opportunity of labour migration to Western Europe, Polish migrants have not been attracted to Australia or job prospects in the antipodes. Those who continue to arrive are internationally-mobile contract workers, students commencing or continuing their studies in Australia, and spouses of Australian nationals. On the other hand, the reverse/return migration of Polish settlers and/or their descendants has also been negligible.

With a large drop in new arrivals and the natural rate of attrition, the number of Poland-born persons decreased to 52 256 at the 2006 Census (ABS 2006) and to 48 677 at the most recent 2011 Census (ABS 2013). In 1947, 90 per cent of all Polish immigrants settled in Victoria and NSW, and 92 per cent of them lived in big cities. This pattern of spatial distribution of Australian Polonia has endured. In the 2011 census, 53 191 people declared Polish ancestry in Victoria and 48 155 in NSW followed by 24 183 in Queensland, 18 642 in Western Australia, 17 972 in South Australia, 4 034 in ACT, 3 388 in Tasmania and 772 in Northern Territory. Melbourne is the preferred city for Poland-born people, followed by Sydney, Adelaide and Perth (*ibidem*).

With the declining number of new arrivals and the natural rate of attrition, immigrant diasporas tend to 'fossilise' and eventually fade away (Jupp 2005: 13). Polish community centres and clubs do continue to operate in all of the largest Australian cities, integrating culturally and socially *Australian Polonia*. Increasingly though they focus on providing support for aging members of Polish community with the help of federal and state grants (Gromann 2012). To escape 'fossilisation', *Australian Polonia* must remain open to its Polish environment by maintaining links with Poland and engaging in Polish matters. To remain vibrant while the numbers of newcomers decline, it must also intensify its engagement with Poland and enhance its 'quality'. As a step in this direction, the Australian Institute of Polish Affairs (AIPA) was established in 1991 by professors Andrzej Ehrenkreutz and Jerzy Zubrzycki outside of the structures of the Federal Council of Polish Associations, to promote Poland and Polish matters by organising meetings with Polish politicians, intellectuals and artists.

### **Australian Polonia: The Census of Population perspective**

#### *The meaning of Poland-born*

The label of 'country of birth' differentiates those born overseas from those born in country. While the concept of 'foreign-born' population is relatively straightforward to apply that of 'country of birth' is often ambiguous given the turbulent history of regions that migrants to Australia come from: boundary changes and the resultant population displacement make concepts such as 'country of birth' and 'nationality at birth' highly contentious.<sup>15</sup>

The Australian Bureau of Statistics' approach to these issues is to code people in the Census of Population to the country they name as their country of birth, i.e. all persons who state their birth place as Poland are coded to Poland and *birthplace responses which relate to particular cities or regions which are now in one country, but which may have been in another country at the time of birth, should be coded to the country, the city or region is in at the time of collection of the data. For example, the response 'Danzig' should be coded to Poland not to Germany* (ABS 1999). Thus, a person born in the pre-1939 Polish city of Lvov who lists Poland as his/her *country of birth* is coded as Poland-born while those who are ethnically Polish but give Lvov as their *city of birth* are coded Ukraine-born. Similarly, not all those Poland-born are ethnically Polish.<sup>16</sup>

Concepts such as *ancestry* and *ethnicity* are also used to identify migrant groups within the broader Australian population. In the Australian Census of Population ancestry is self-determined. A person's perception of ancestry may not only depend on where he/she was born but also on their nationality, country(-ies) of birth of their parents, language spoken at home, religion and numerous cultural factors. That makes it even more ambiguous than that of the country of birth. Also, a person may also have more than one ancestry and the stated ancestry often depends on how it is probed in terms of past generations. For example, one of the Polish Survey respondents described his/her identity as 'by birth: Canadian; by citizenship: Australian; by

parentage: Anglo-Polish; by culture: Polish; and by upbringing: European'. The 'revealed ancestry' also depends on how the population at large feels about various national groups and, thus, a person's willingness to reveal their ancestry or declare the ancestry of choice. Consequently, a person's 'stated ancestry' may sometimes change over time.

### *Poland-born Australian residents*

In the 2006 Census, nearly 164 thousand people stated their ancestry as Polish while over 52 thousand gave Poland as their country of birth (see Table 1). About a third of people of Polish ancestry also stated another ancestry, which suggests the relative openness of the Polish settler community.<sup>17</sup> The Polish ancestry group is relatively small (ranked 13<sup>th</sup>) with those of English ancestry topping the list with 6.4 million people. In the most recent 2011 Census, over 170 thousand people stated their ancestry as Polish and over 48 thousand gave Poland as their country of birth. While the number of Australians of Polish ancestry has increased over time, the number of Poland-born residents has declined.

Table 1 also includes estimates of different generations of Polish immigrants. We are particularly interested in the 2006 data, which provides a frame for the Polish Survey sample. In the table, the first generation is defined as Poland-born immigrants. The second generation is defined as Australia-born persons with one or both Poland-born parents and the third and subsequent generations are those people whose both parents are Australia-born but who declare their ancestry as Polish. The Polish identity of the second and subsequent generations of Polish immigrants depends on the extent to which their members are prepared to state their ancestry as Polish (no data are available for years before 1986). By the early 2000s, the second generation of Polish immigrants outnumbered the first. With the growing third, and soon fourth, generation of Australians of Polish ancestry, and no new arrivals from Poland to replace the loss of Poland-born settlers, the share of Poland-born in all those who claim Polish ancestry will continue to decline in the years to come.

Poland-born Australians speak English relatively well, which is a measure of successful assimilation. At the time of the 2001 Census, 40 per cent of those stating Polish ancestry spoke Polish at home but only 20 per cent of those of born in Australia continued to speak it at home.<sup>18</sup> In the 2006 Census, 18 per cent and in 2011 Census, 23 per cent of Poland-born persons revealed that they spoke English only at home, 64 per cent spoke another language (mostly Polish) and very good or good English (both in 2006 and 2011 Census), and only 11 per cent in 2006 and 10 per cent in 2011 stated that while they spoke another language at home their English was poor.<sup>19</sup> Intermarriages provide another measure of the ability and willingness to melt into the broader host society. In 2001, 41 per cent of men and 38 per cent of women of the first generation of Polish migrants had a spouse of different (non-Polish) ancestry. For the second generation, the corresponding figures were 83 per cent for men and 81 per cent for women, and for the third generation, 95 per cent for men and 94 per cent for women. By comparison, only 68 per cent of third generation Greek men and 26 per cent of women marry someone of different ancestry.

In 1981, 85 per cent of Poland-born Australian permanent residents were Australian nationals. The proportion was about the same in 1986, although the number of Poland-born increased (see Table 1). In comparison with other overseas-born groups, these numbers are above average but with the recent slowdown in arrivals from Poland, relatively few Poland-born residents have acquired Australian citizenship over the past decade. In 2011, about 88 per cent of Poland-born immigrants were Australian citizens. Also, in 1981, 14 per cent of those who were Poland-born had other (than Australian) nationality and a similar proportion had no Australian citizenship in 1986. In 2001, only 7 per cent of Poland-born people had 'other' citizenship, and this number increased to 9 per cent in 2011. However, it is very likely that many Poland-born persons who acquired Australian citizenship by marriage or naturalisation have also retained their Polish nationality (see below).<sup>20</sup>

**Table 1. Australian residents of Polish ancestry: census of population data**

Census date	Poland-born persons (no.)	1 <sup>st</sup> generation: +/- change since previous census date ( $\Delta a$ )	Polish ancestry: Australia-born persons with at least one Poland-born parent (no.)	Polish ancestry: Australia-born persons with Australia-born parents <sup>c</sup> (no.)	Polish ancestry total (no.)	Percentage of Poland-born in all persons of Polish ancestry (a/e) (%)	Persons speaking Polish language at home <sup>d</sup> (no.)	Australian citizenship: number and as percentage of all Poland-born citizens no. (%)
	<i>1<sup>st</sup> generation</i> a	b	<i>2<sup>nd</sup> generation</i> c	<i>3<sup>rd</sup> generation</i> d	e	f	g	h
1921	1 780	-	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	-	-
1933	3 239	1 459	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	-	-
1947	6 573	3 334	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	-	-
1954	56 594	50 021	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	-	-
1961	60 049	3 455	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	-	-
1966	61 641	1 592	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	-	-
1971	59 700	-1 941	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	-	-
1976	56 051	-3 649	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	-	-
1981	59 442	3 391	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	-	49 615 (83%)
1986	67 691	8 249	49 636	-	142 173	47.6	48 594	56 643 (84%)
1991	68 496	805	53 161	n/a	n/a <sup>a</sup>	n/a <sup>a</sup>	67 000	-
1996	65 113	-3 383	n/a <sup>a</sup>	n/a <sup>a</sup>	n/a <sup>a</sup>	n/a <sup>a</sup>	62 771	-
2001	58 110	-7 003	57 946	18 582	150 900	38.5	59 056	53 939 (93%) <sup>e</sup>
2006	52 256	-5 854	79 005 <sup>b</sup>	27 119	163 802	31.9	53 389	-

<sup>a</sup> The 'ancestry' question was first asked in the 1986 Census but no ancestry data were collected in the 1991 and 1996 Censuses.

<sup>b</sup> For 2006, the second generation estimate was obtained by subtracting Poland-born persons from all persons of Polish ancestry who had at least one parent born in Poland (i.e. 133 972 less 52 256 less 2 711 (country of birth of either/both parents not stated). This is likely to be an overestimate of the second generation total.

<sup>c</sup> This category represents 3<sup>rd</sup> and subsequent generations of persons of stated Polish ancestry. Also, Polish ancestry means that at least one parent had Polish ancestry.

<sup>d</sup> These figures may be overstated as some Poland-born people who speak another language at home are not Polish speakers. However, changes over time, i.e. the first increasing and then declining numbers of Polish speaker reflect the declining proportion of first generation immigrants in all those claiming Polish ancestry.

<sup>e</sup> This figure has been calculated by subtracting those of Polish ancestry who stated their citizenship as 'Other' at the 2001 Census (4 171 persons) from those who described

themselves as Poland-born (column a).

Sources: Markowski (2009), Table 1: 90. Reproduced with permission of Editors of *Humanities Research* and the ANU E Press.

### Polish ancestry

The number of those who declare their ancestry as Polish provides the theoretical upper bound of Polonia, although not all those of Polish ancestry continue to be engaged with 'things Polish'. There is no unambi-

guous way of determining the lower bound. Arguably, the lower-end estimate is the proportion of people who speak Polish at home (40 per cent of those of Polish ancestry in the early 2000s). Thus, a conservative assessment of the size of *Australian Polonia* – that is, those people of Polish ancestry who have some visible connection with Poland or attachment to Polish language and culture – is about 55 thousand people or roughly a third of all those of Polish ancestry. But, as Polish migrants appear to blend easily into the Australian main stream, attachments to ‘things Polish’ weaken in second and subsequent generations. The census figures also highlight the relative openness of the Polish diaspora in Australia, in particular its willingness to intermarry with other ethnic groups and speak a language other than Polish at home. As a result, and unless new migrants arrive from Poland, *Australian Polonia* will soon start to fade away.

### **Australian Polonia: The Polish Survey perspective**

#### *Belonging and identification with Poland*

Polish Survey respondents were asked to state their national identity and 11 per cent of them described themselves as Australian, 33 per cent as Australian-Polish, 7 per cent as Polish, 44 per cent as Polish-Australian, and 4 per cent as Other.<sup>21</sup> Interestingly, half of those who describe themselves as Australian and 70 per cent of those Australian-Polish were Poland-born; but 96 per cent of those who consider themselves Polish were Poland-born and only 4 per cent were born in Australia. Of those who described themselves Polish-Australian, 93 per cent were born in Poland and only 3 per cent in Australia. Surprisingly, of those aged 29 or less, only a fifth described themselves Australian, nearly a third Australian-Polish, 11 per cent Polish and 26 per cent Polish-Australian.<sup>22</sup> Those over 30 are more evenly spread across all identity groups.

Polish Survey respondents were also asked to reveal the extent of their identification with ‘people in Poland’ – a measure of belonging to the broader Polish community. Table 2 shows the strength of this identification where survey respondents are differentiated by country of birth, age, and their involvement with the Polish community in Australia.

Of those Poland-born, 62 per cent identify strongly or very strongly with people in Poland and 37 per cent either do not identify at all or are lukewarm about it. The corresponding figures for Australia-born are 42 and 58 per cent respectively. As the first generation of Polish migrants fades away, we expect a smaller percentage of those of Polish ancestry to identify with Poland and Polish people. This is also confirmed by age-related responses: of those aged 29 or less, 42 per cent identify strongly or very strongly with Polish people and 58 per cent not at all or ‘somewhat’; for those aged 30-54, the corresponding figures are 56 per cent and 43 per cent respectively; aged 55-64, 51 per cent and 49 per cent; and aged 65 or more, 67 per cent and 29 per cent. And, predictably, 79 per cent of those very involved with *Australian Polonia* identify strongly and very strongly with Polish people in comparison with 38 per cent of those who are not involved with *Polonia*.

The identification of respondents with Poland is inversely related to the length of their residence in Australia (see Table 3). All of those who have lived in Australia nine years or less identify strongly or very strongly with Polish people as opposed to 56 per cent of those who have resided in Australia for at least 20 years.

**Table 2. Survey response: identifying with people in Poland by country of birth, age and involvement with Polish community in Australia<sup>a</sup>**

Identify with Poland	Born in (%)				Respondents	
	Poland (%)	Australia (%)	other (%)	not stated (%)	count (no.)	percent of all (%)
Not at all	4	2	4	0	12	4
Little	9	24	11	25	39	12
Somewhat	24	32	30	0	85	25
Strongly	44	20	33	50	134	40
Very strongly	18	22	15	25	60	18
Other	1	0	7	0	5	1
Column total	100	100	100	100	335	100
Row total (%)	79	12	8	1	335	100

  

Identify with Poland	Age groups (aged years)				Respondents	
	≤29 (%)	30-54 (%)	55-64 (%)	65 ≤ (%)	count (no.)	percent of all (%)
Not at all	0	3	4	5	12	4
Little	26	13	12	8	39	12
Somewhat	32	27	33	16	85	25
Strongly	37	44	35	39	134	40
Very strongly	5	12	16	28	60	18
Other	0	1	0	4	5	1
Column total	100	100	100	100	335	100
Row total (%)	6	34	28	29	335	100

  

Identify with Poland	Actively involved with the Polish community (%)				Respondents	
	not at all (%)	not much (%)	involved (%)	very involved (%)	count (no.)	percent of all (%)
Not at all	8	4	1	2	12	4
Little	30	11	6	2	39	12
Somewhat	24	33	23	18	85	25
Strongly	31	39	48	41	134	40
Very strongly	7	11	21	38	60	18
Other	0	2	1	0	5	1
Column total	100	100	100	100	335	100
Row total (%)	20	38	21	20	332	99

<sup>a</sup> This count also includes all those who did not state their age or country of birth (row and column percentages may not add to 100 per cent).

Source: Polish Survey.

**Table 3. Survey response: identifying with people in Poland by the length of residence in Australia and proficiency in spoken Polish<sup>a</sup>**

Identify with Poland	Length of residence (years)				Respondents	
	<4 (%)	5-9 (%)	10-19 (%)	20< (%)	count (no.)	percent of all (%)
Not at all	0	0	2	4	12	4
Little	0	0	13	12	39	12
Somewhat	0	0	30	25	85	25
Strongly	100	75	45	37	134	40
Very strongly	0	25	10	19	60	18
Other	0	0	0	2	5	1
Column total	100	100	100	100	335	100
Row total (%)	0	4	18	75	335	100

  

Identify with Poland	Polish proficiency				Respondents	
	none or poor (%)	proficient (%)	very proficient (%)	native speaker (%)	count (no.)	percent of all (%)
Not at all	14	5	5	2	12	4
Other	28	19	6	10	39	12
Total	31	28	27	24	85	25
Strongly	17	39	37	44	134	40
Very strongly	10	7	23	19	60	18
Other	0	2	2	1	5	1
Column total	100	100	100	100	335	100
Row total (%)	9	13	19	59	335	100

<sup>a</sup> This count also includes all those who did not state their length of residence or Polish proficiency (row and column percentages may not add to 100 per cent).

Source: Polish Survey.

### *Proficiency in Polish*

The 2006 Census did not probe the proficiency of those who claim to speak Polish at home. In the Polish Survey, 59 per cent of respondents described themselves as 'native Polish speakers', 19 per cent stated they were 'very proficient' and 13 per cent 'proficient' in Polish. Only 8 per cent described their command of Polish language as poor and 1 per cent as none at all. Of those who stated their national identity as Polish, nearly three quarters considered themselves to be native Polish speakers, 22 per cent – very proficient Polish speakers and 4 per cent – proficient. Of those who stated their national identity as Australian, 27 per cent considered themselves native Polish speakers, 16 per cent were very proficient in Polish, 22 per cent – proficient, 30 per cent are not proficient, and only 5 per cent had no Polish at all. About 89 per cent of native Polish speakers had parents speaking Polish at home, 95 per cent were born in Poland, and 90 per cent speak

either Polish only or both Polish and English at home. Also, 53 per cent of those who have lived in Australia for at least 20 years still considered themselves to be ‘native Polish speakers’ and another 21 per cent described themselves as ‘very proficient’ in Polish. These survey-based figures suggest that regardless of their *actual*, as opposed to *stated*, command of the Polish language, Polish migrants appear to be rather *confident* about their Polish language proficiency.

The strength of identification with Polish people also increases with Polish language proficiency: strong or very strong for 63 per cent of native Polish speakers but only 17 per cent for those who do not speak Polish at all or speak it poorly (Table 3 refers). Similarly, 78 per cent of those who speak Polish only at home identify with Polish people as opposed to 41 per cent of those who speak English only (see Table 4). Not surprisingly, people who identify strongly or very strongly with other Polish people had parents who either spoke Polish only at home or spoke both Polish and English (Table 4).

**Table 4. Survey response: identifying with people in Poland by language spoken at home and language spoken at home by parents<sup>a</sup>**

Identify with Poland	Language spoken at home (%)				Respondents	
	English only (%)	Polish only (%)	both (%)	other (%)	count (no.)	percent of all (%)
Not at all	9	0	3	0	12	4
Little	19	4	12	0	39	12
Somewhat	31	15	27	20	85	25
Strongly	31	59	36	40	134	40
Very strongly	10	19	20	40	60	18
Other	0	3	2	0	5	1
Column total	100	100	100	100	335	100
Row total (%)	21	22	56	1	335	100

  

Identify with Poland	Language spoken by parents at home (%)				Respondents	
	English only (%)	Polish only (%)	both (%)	other (%)	count (no.)	percent of all (%)
Not at all	0	4	2	8	12	4
Little	50	9	23	4	39	12
Somewhat	0	24	26	21	85	25
Strongly	25	41	31	46	134	40
Very strongly	25	18	16	21	60	18
Other	0	2	2	0	5	1
Column total	100	100	100	100	335	100
Row total (%)	1	76	15	7	335	100

<sup>a</sup> This count also includes all those who did not state language spoken at home by self or parents (row and column percentages may not add to 100 per cent).

Source: Polish Survey.

**Table 5. Survey response: identifying with people in Poland by frequency of contacts with relatives and friends in Poland, and reading of Polish papers and periodicals<sup>a</sup>**

Identify with Poland	Frequency of contacts with relatives (%)				Respondents	
	irregularly (%)	yearly (%)	monthly (%)	at least weekly (%)	count (no.)	percent of all (%)
Not at all	3	8	1	2	12	4
Little	10	21	8	8	39	12
Somewhat	27	33	21	30	85	25
Strongly	43	21	43	43	134	40
Very strongly	17	17	26	15	60	18
Other	0	0	2	2	5	1
Column total	100	100	100	100	335	100
Row total (%)	29	7	30	18	281	84

  

Identify with Poland	Frequency of contacts with friends (%)				Respondents	
	irregularly (%)	yearly (%)	monthly (%)	at least weekly (%)	count (no.)	percent of all (%)
Not at all	4	3	1	0	12	4
Little	10	11	6	10	39	12
Somewhat	28	14	17	24	85	25
Strongly	44	47	40	52	134	40
Very strongly	13	22	34	14	60	18
Other	1	3	1	0	5	1
Column total	100	100	99	100	335	100
Row total (%)	35	11	25	6	256	77

  

Identify with Poland	Frequency of reading Polish papers (%)				Respondents	
	not at all (%)	irregularly (%)	regularly (%)	other (%)	count (no.)	percent of all (%)
Not at all	10	4	0	7	12	4
Little	32	10	5	27	39	12
Somewhat	29	28	20	33	85	25
Strongly	27	45	42	13	134	40
Very strongly	2	13	32	13	60	18
Other	0	1	2	7	5	1
Column total	100	100	101	100	335	100
Row total (%)	12	50	34	4	335	100

<sup>a</sup> This count also includes all those who did not state language spoken at home by self or parents (row and column percentages may not add to 100 per cent).

Source: Polish Survey.

*Contacts with Poland*

Other results are less consistent: 74 per cent of those reading Polish papers identify strongly or very strongly but 25 per cent identify little or somewhat; and of those who do *not* read Polish papers, 29 per cent identify strongly or very strongly (Table 5). Of those who maintain at least weekly contact with their relatives in Poland, 58 per cent identify strongly or very strongly; for ‘at least monthly contact’ the corresponding figure is 69 per cent, ‘yearly’ 38 per cent but for ‘irregular contacts’ it increases to 60 per cent. Similarly, of those who maintain at least weekly contact with their friends in Poland, 66 per cent identify strongly or very strongly with Poland; for monthly contact the corresponding figure is 74 per cent, yearly 69 per cent; and for irregular contacts it is 57 per cent (Table 5).

**Table 6. Survey response: identifying with people in Poland by the stated national identity and frequency of travel to Poland<sup>a</sup>**

Identify with Poland	Stated national identity (%)				Respondents	
	Australian (%)	Australian-Polish (%)	Polish-Australian (%)	Polish (%)	count (no.)	percent of all (%)
Not at all	13	4	2	0	12	4
Little	46	11	5	0	39	12
Somewhat	14	32	25	9	85	25
Strongly	22	37	47	52	134	40
Very strongly	5	14	20	35	60	18
Other	0	2	1	4	5	1
Column total	100	100	100	100	335	100
Row total (%)	11	33	44	7	316	95

  

Identify with Poland	Travelled to Poland in the past 5 years (%)				Respondents	
	0 (%)	1-2 (%)	3-4 (%)	5< (%)	count (no.)	percent of all (%)
Not at all	6	2	3	0	12	4
Little	14	8	17	0	39	12
Somewhat	27	27	25	8	85	25
Strongly	35	42	44	67	134	40
Very strongly	15	21	11	25	60	18
Other	3	0	0	0	5	1
Column total	100	100	100	100	335	100
Row total (%)	39	45	11	4	335	100

<sup>a</sup> This count also includes all those who did not state language spoken at home by self or parents (row and column percentages may not add to 100 per cent).

Source: Polish Survey.

*National identity*

Of those respondents who described themselves as Polish, 87 per cent identify strongly or very strongly with Polish people and only 9 per cent do not identify or are lukewarm about it (see Table 6). For those who consider themselves Australian, the corresponding figures are, predictably, 27 per cent and 73 per cent respectively; Australian-Polish, 51 per cent and 47 per cent; and Polish-Australian, 67 per cent and 32 per cent. And, 50 per cent of those who have *not* travelled to Poland in the preceding five years identify strongly or very strongly with Polish people but 92 per cent of those who travelled at least five times (Table 6).

However, the results for Polish nationals are rather surprising: 44 per cent of Polish nationals identify strongly or very strongly with Polish people as opposed to 65 per cent of those who are not Polish nationals (see Table 7). Of those who vote in Polish elections, 74 per cent identify strongly or very strongly with Polish people but 23 per cent identify only ‘somewhat’. And, of those who do not vote, 53 per cent identify strongly or very strongly (Table 7).

**Table 7. Survey response: identifying with people in Poland by Polish nationality and the propensity to vote in Polish elections<sup>a</sup>**

Identify with Poland	Polish national (%)		Percent of all respondents (%)	Polish voter (%)		Percent of all respondents (%)
	Yes (%)	No (%)		No (%)	Yes (%)	
Not at all	6	2	4	4	0	4
Little	19	8	12	13	2	12
Somewhat	28	24	25	28	23	25
Strongly	30	46	40	37	51	40
Very strongly	14	19	18	16	23	18
Other	3	1	1	2	0	1
Column total	100	100	100	100	99	100
Row total (%)	33	66	99	76	14	90

<sup>a</sup> This count also includes all those who did not state language spoken at home by self or parents (row and column percentages may not add to 100 per cent).

Source: Polish Survey.

Predictably, the Polishness of *Polonia* members tends to increase with their active involvement with ‘things Polish’ such as the language spoken at home, contacts with people in Poland, exposure to Polish media, frequency of travel to Poland, and so on. The strength of these influences depends on people’s age, place of birth and length of residence in Australia. However, the inclusion of Polish nationality sends rather confusing signals. This may be an indication of the lack of transitivity in some responses or a reflection of people’s ambivalent attitudes to their national identity, in particular, the resolve of some Polish nationals to emphasise their new Australian identity even if their English is poor and they are primarily Polish speakers.

### *Nationality and citizenship*

In the Polish Survey, 96 per cent of respondents described themselves as Australian citizens and 3 per cent as not. The proportion of Australian citizens in this sample is somewhat larger than that recorded in the Census of Population while the proportion of non-citizens is smaller. Of those respondents who are Australian citizens, 82 per cent acquired it through naturalisation, 12 per cent – at birth, and 2 per cent – by marriage. These figures are broadly consistent with the official citizenship data that show high rates of Australian citizenship-by-naturalisation in the Polish migrant community.

The Polish Survey complements official statistics in that it provides data on dual nationality, in particular the dual Australian-Polish nationality of respondents. A large proportion of respondents (66 per cent) have retained their Polish nationality and of these 94 per cent were Poland-born (Markowski 2009). Since 96 per cent of all respondents have Australian nationality, most of those who are Polish nationals are also dual Australian-Polish nationals. Only 3 per cent of Australia-born respondents are Polish nationals (*ibidem*). And of those who are not Polish nationals (a third of all respondents), 8 per cent have a third-country nationality (e.g. British).

Of those who are Polish nationals, 68 per cent are also Polish passport holders and 29 per cent are not; 93 per cent of Polish passport holders are Poland-born and only 4 per cent Australia-born. Polish passport holders tend to include many of those dual nationals who are likely to travel to Poland (*ibidem*: Table 5.3: 92).<sup>23</sup> In the five year period immediately preceding the survey, 80 per cent of Polish passport holders travelled to Poland at least once. Of those, 59 per cent of Polish passport holders visited Poland once or twice, 16 per cent – three or four times, and 5 per cent – at least five times (Polish Survey, data not tabulated here).

Following Poland's accession to the European Union, we expected a larger proportion of Polish nationals to acquire Polish passports as the possession of a valid Polish passport would make it easier to travel to, reside and work in all EU member states.<sup>24</sup> Polish and Australian passport holders can be described as *de iure* dual citizens as opposed to those who are dual nationals. The acquisition of a Polish passport indicates a formal engagement with the Polish state as an external citizen and entitles the passport holder to a form of protection and representation by the Polish state. However, only 21 per cent of Polish nationals vote in Polish elections (*ibidem*; Table 5.3: 92).<sup>25</sup> Thus, only about a fifth of those who are Polish external nationals are actively involved in the governance of Poland, which could potentially lead to some conflicts of loyalty.

### **Conclusion**

Overall, Polish immigrants have blended well into the broader Australian community and represent the type of immigrant stream that Australian policy makers have long tried to attract. This is because in comparison with many other immigrant groups, Polish immigrants have been ready to embrace the national identity of the Australian host community and have not found it difficult to combine their old and new identities. The high percentage of Polish immigrants who acquired the Australian citizenship by naturalisation reflects both the community's willingness to blend and become Australian as well as its past unease about relying on Polish passports as travel documents during the Communist era. The emergence of pluralist, multi-cultural Australian society over the past three decades has encouraged all immigrant groups to cultivate multiple identities and Poles have been no exception. *Australian Polonia* may not be as high a profile immigrant community as its Greek, Italian or Chinese counterparts but it is a visible part of the rich tapestry of Australia's ethnic inheritance.

*Australian Polonia* represents the traditional form of immigrant diaspora. This is because most of its members either arrived in Australia as settlers, or children of settlers, or because they are Australia-born. The

high cost of travel to Poland (in money and travel time) prevented members of the community from frequent travel back home and encouraged the development of its 'ethnic infrastructure' such as Polish community centres, schools, shops or churches. All this has helped the community to maintain its distinct identity. But, the relative openness of *Australian Polonia* has also meant that it mixes well with other ethnic groups and, thus, its distinct identity is increasingly difficult to sustain. In the absence of further arrivals from Poland, and there have been only a handful in the most recent past, *Australian Polonia* will continue to shrink and will soon morph from the community sharing Polish traditions, social rituals (e.g. celebrating Polish national events) and language into the 'Australians of Polish ancestry'. Paradoxically though, this group of Australians of Polish ancestry may retain their Polish citizenship if the convenience of having a Polish passport makes travel easier and opens job and residential opportunities in the European Union as a whole.

What makes *Australian Polonia* traditional and distinct from its counterparts elsewhere in the world is the absence of temporary migrants, especially circular and footloose labour migrants. Clearly, the tyranny of distance is a form of natural barrier that deters circular or pendulum-like migration of workers who can only remit their earnings once they absorb the full cost of international mobility. At present, only a handful of professional or business people, mostly permanent residents of Australia, can engage in circular mobility between Poland and Australia. With the growing prosperity of Poland and its declining population there is little prospect at present of another wave of Polish migrants to come to Australia. In this respect, *Australian Polonia* has few opportunities to 'recharge its ethnic batteries' and, despite all recent efforts to increase the intensity and quality of its links with Poland, it will inevitably fade away.

Arguably, the only way to slow down this process is to reduce the rate of attrition by encouraging 'people of Polish ancestry' to remain more engaged with Poland, e.g. through an active policy of attracting them to visit Poland and forge stronger personal links with their ancestral country. Most such policies involve a degree of reciprocity to foster bilateral flows. But, Australia is distant and, thus, costly to visit for young working Poles. The policy challenge though is to attract young Australians of Polish ancestry to spend their 'gap years' and work in Poland as a window into Europe – a role similar to that played by the United Kingdom for Australians of the Anglo-Celtic background.

Like all close systems, diasporas which are not periodically or continuously replenished with new arrivals from home country are bound to becoming entropic. This is likely to happen to *Australian Polonia* as new Polish migrants are no longer traditional immigrants seeking host countries for permanent settlement. In the increasingly globalised world of mobile factors of production, they tend to be labour migrants who see themselves, and are often expected by their host societies to retain that status, as temporary migrants with strong attachment to their homeland. Time will show how this temporariness changes and whether temporary migrants settle somewhere or stay footloose. Increasingly, though, Polish diasporas in countries more open to these temporary migrants change into the blend of old immigrants and their descendants and these newcomers. Australia has been largely quarantined from this phenomenon and, thus, *Australian Polonia* may soon be a thing of the past. Unlike the global Jewish community it does not cultivate the idea or myth of their ancestral spiritual home: the never-never ultimate destination of people well settled elsewhere. Thus, 'Tomorrow in Warsaw' is unlikely to become the mantra and the bonding myth of Australians of Polish descent.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> If the use of Polish as a language spoken at home is an indication of active engagement with 'things Polish', only 40 per cent of those who revealed their ancestry as Polish in 2001 spoke Polish at home. And only 20 per cent of those of Polish ancestry who were born in Australia continued to speak Polish at home (Markowski 2009). But, the active use of Polish language is only one aspect Polish identity. Other

aspects are also important as people cultivate Polish traditions or consider themselves Polish even if they do not speak their ancestral language.

<sup>2</sup> In 2006, there were over 160 thousand Australian residents (in the then country of nearly 21 million) who stated their ancestry as Polish (i.e. those who were either ‘Poland-born’ or declared themselves to be descendants of ‘Poland-born’ migrants) (Markowski 2009). The distinction between ‘Poland-born’ and ‘Polish migrants’ is important as the ethnic mix of migrants from Central and Eastern Europe has changed over time. Although those Poland-born are predominantly ethnic Poles, there are also Poland-born ethnic Jews, Germans and Ukrainians (the term has a very specific meaning in Australian population statistics – see below). And some of those who were not Poland-born are ethnically Polish. To complicate matters further, there are also those who are Poland-born but not ethnically Polish but who continue to use Polish as the main language spoken at home and consider themselves to be members of Australian Polonia. However, there are those who speak Polish at home but resent all other associations with Poland and ‘things Polish’. Not surprisingly, paradoxes abound in migrant communities.

<sup>3</sup> This inherently fluid and footloose expatriate community comprises Polish citizens working and living abroad, whose cross-border mobility is circular or pendulum-like. In contrast to the former Polish emigrants, these temporary migrants regard Poland as their primary country of residence as well as citizenship (Iglińska 2008; Rosińska-Kordasiewicz, Urbańska 2011). While a large proportion of them may eventually settle abroad, they are also likely to remain Polish citizens and maintain some presence in Poland (e.g. investment property, holiday homes).

<sup>4</sup> To access members of the Polish migrant community, the survey team solicited the help of the Polish Community Council of Australia and New Zealand Inc and its member State Councils. The survey was somewhat biased in that it primarily focused on those members of the Polish community who were either connected to or contactable through Polish Community Councils. There was an element of self-selection and the snowballing of survey responses as those who elected to participate and took time to complete a detailed questionnaire were those who felt ‘Polish enough’ to respond. Others had a simple option of ignoring our requests for participation. In particular, survey responses under-represented younger people who have much less attachment to Polish language and culture and who could only be accessed through their parents. Nevertheless, the survey yielded a wealth of information about the Polish community in Australia in the mid-2000s.

<sup>5</sup> In Ancient Greece, diaspora meant ‘the scattered’ and was referred to citizens (of, say, a city-state) who migrated to conquer and colonise new lands. The term ‘Diaspora’ has long been used to describe the permanent scattering of Jews following Babylonian and Roman conquest of Palestine. To date, when capitalised, Diaspora the generally refers to the Jewish diaspora, which has been notable for its permanence and ability to preserve its distinct identity while embedded in very diverse and often hostile host communities. Other diasporas have been less resilient with the passage of time. Their common identity has faded away over time as scattered communities assimilated into host societies or morphed to become new, separate entities. Also, ‘diaspora’ is not used to describe nomadic peoples as long as they remain in their traditional homelands.

<sup>6</sup> No restrictions of this kind applied to a white British immigrant from Singapore or India but could have impeded entry a non-white British subject from, say, Hong Kong.

<sup>7</sup> However, for an individual, this may result in a rather ambivalent attitude to his/her group identity. For example, dual membership may reflect an individual’s dual group identification but it may also be a reflection of his/her ambivalent attitude to membership *per se*.

<sup>8</sup> However, even in when unitary attitudes prevail, dual nationality may be created by default when an individual acquires the host country’s nationality by naturalisation but is prevented from renouncing his/her

former nationality as the home country concerned has no provisions for the termination of nationality when people emigrate.

<sup>9</sup> However, as the concept of ‘Australian citizenship’ is not included in the Australian Constitution, the power of the Commonwealth to enact laws about Australian citizenship derives primarily from the ‘aliens power’. It is thus possible for those who are defined as ‘aliens’ (i.e. those who owe an obligation to a sovereign power other than Australia) to be both citizens and aliens at the same time. This applies to all dual citizens (Rubenstein.2008).

<sup>10</sup> Research conducted by J. Zubrzycki, C.A. Price and E. F. Kunz at the Australian National University estimated the number of Polish DPs as 59 820, while the Immigration Office statistics refer to 63 394 Polish DPs (Harris, Smolicz 1984).

<sup>11</sup> For example, some of the DP lists designated all men as ‘labourers’ and all women as ‘domestics’ (Harris, Smolicz 1984: 55). Thus, it is possible that many refugees decided to provide information, which they thought was advantageous to secure entry to Australia and assisted passage (ibidem: 55-56, 64).

<sup>12</sup> Various sources report that in 1977 there were listed 109 Polish organisations, by 1986 their number increased to 210, to drop to 180 by 1992.

<sup>13</sup> If not stated otherwise, all translation from Polish is by the authors.

<sup>14</sup> The main reason for migrating from the democratic Poland to Australia was deemed to be economic. But, as Włodarczyk (2005: 18) observed, drawing on the research conducted in 1992 by the Polish Centre for Public Opinion Research (CBOS), other reasons included the need for security and stability, as well as a host of cultural, professional or educational factors. The CBOS research concludes the migration of the 1990s had the *broadest range of reasons* [for migrating] *out of all migration waves* (CBOS 1992). In addition, the post-1989 emigration was no longer irreversible, it was often perceived as exploratory and, if something went wrong, one could always go back home (Warchoń-Schlottmann 2002: 371).

<sup>15</sup> For example, Poland lost a large part of its territory to its eastern neighbours but expanded westward by taking over some former German lands. An ethnic Pole born in the pre-WWII Polish city of Lvov, which is now a part of Ukraine, is likely to describe himself/herself as a Polish person born in Poland. However, an ethnic Ukrainian born in the pre-1939 Lvov is likely to describe himself/herself as a Ukrainian person born in Ukraine. The chosen self-description may also depend on the prevailing sentiment and social climate in the destination country. For example, some ethnically German displaced persons who arrived in Australia in the late 1940s were reluctant to declare Germany as their country of birth as they did not wish to be identified with the country’s Nazi past, i.e. a Danzig- or Breslau-born ethnically German person could describe his/her country of birth as Poland.

<sup>16</sup> In 1986, 85 per cent of Poland-born residents of Australia stated their ancestry as Polish, 7 per cent described themselves as Jewish, 2 per cent – German, 2 per cent – Ukrainian, and 4 per cent – ‘Other’ (Markowski 2009).

<sup>17</sup> In 2006, the corresponding figures for Greek and Croatian communities were 21 per cent, Chinese – 15 per cent, Macedonian – 10 per cent, and Vietnamese – 6 per cent (Markowski 2009).

<sup>18</sup> This is much smaller proportion than that for Greek- or Italian-speaking groups. For example, in 2001, 51 per cent of people speaking Greek at home were born in Australia, 43 per cent of those speaking Italian were Australia-born, 40 per cent Serbian and 39 per cent Macedonian (Markowski 2009).

<sup>19</sup> The findings of the 2006 Census are supported by the results of the Polish Survey: 17 per cent of survey respondents described themselves as ‘native English speakers’. Of these, 60 per cent were aged 20-29, 24 per cent aged 30-54 and, somewhat surprisingly, and 18 per cent aged over 55. Australia-born native English speakers accounted for 66 per cent of the group, Poland-born for 18 per cent and elsewhere-born for 16 per cent. Further, 47 per cent of respondents described themselves as very proficient in English, 28 per

cent as proficient, 5 per cent as not very proficient and 1 per cent as not at all proficient. Of those not proficient in English, 94 per cent were aged over 55 and all those with no English at all were over 65. These numbers are similar to those drawn from official statistics and confirm the relatively high level of English proficiency in the Polish migrant community (Markowski 2009).

<sup>20</sup> Also, as some of those Poland-born persons are not Polish, they may hold dual citizenship of country other than Poland.

<sup>21</sup> The 'other' category included self-descriptions such as: 'I am Australian of Polish descent', 'I am primarily Australian but proud of my Polish heritage', 'Of Polish descent, born in England, now living in Europe', 'Australian-Polish-Latvian', 'Australian with Polish parents', and 'Australian with dual nationality and Polish background'.

<sup>22</sup> This also reflects the underrepresentation of the younger generation in the survey.

<sup>23</sup> Travelling to Poland on Polish passport simplifies entry requirements while the use of Australian passport is advantageous on re-entry to Australia.

<sup>24</sup> Again, this may be a reflection of the age bias in the survey as it is the younger people who are likely to take advantage of living and working in countries of the EC other than Poland.

<sup>25</sup> During parliamentary elections in Poland, polling stations are open at Polish consular offices overseas.

## References

- ABS (1999). *Standards for Statistics on Cultural and Language Diversity, 1999*. 1289.0 – 22/11/1999. Canberra: Australian Bureau of Statistics.
- ABS (2006). *2006 Census of Population and Housing, Census Tables* (Table 'Country of Birth of Person by Age by Sex'). Canberra: Australian Bureau of Statistics.
- ABS (2013), *2011 Census, QuickStats Country of Birth* (Tables 'People – demographics & education', and 'People – cultural & language diversity'). Canberra: Australian Bureau of Statistics.
- Barry K. (2006). *Home and Away: The Construction of Citizenship in an Emigration Context*. Paper 23. New York University Public Law and Legal Theory Working Papers. New York: New York University School of Law.
- Carey J., McLisky C. (2009). *Creating White Australia*. Sydney: Sydney University Press.
- Carrington K., McIntosh A., Walmsley J. (eds) (2007). *The Social Costs and Benefits of Migration into Australia*. Armidale: Centre for Applied Research in Social Sciences, University of New England.
- CBOS (1992). *Świat wokół nas* [The world around us]. Research by Polish Centre for Public Opinion Research (CBOS), No BS/346/54/92: 447. Warsaw: Centre for Public Opinion Research.
- Drozd E. (2001). *They have come a long way: The settlement of the 1980s wave of Polish immigrants in Melbourne*. Melbourne: Australian Polish Community Service.
- Gromann D. (2012). Polonia w Australii. *Biuletyn Migracyjny – Dodatek Specjalny* 33: 1-3.
- Harris R. Mcl., Smolicz J. J. (1984). *Australijczycy polskiego pochodzenia. Studium adaptacji i asymilacji młodego pokolenia*. Wrocław: Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich, Wydawnictwo Polskiej Akademii Nauk.
- Hartnell H. E. (2006). Belonging: Citizenship and Migration in the European Union and in Germany, Article 12 in *Richard Buxbaum and German Reintegration*. Issues in Legal Scholarship. Berkeley: The Berkley Electronic Press.
- Hugo G. J. (2002). Centenary Article – A century of population change in Australia, in: *Year Book Australia 2002*. 1301.0 – 2002. Canberra: Australian Bureau of Statistics.
- Iglicka K. (2008). *Kontrasty migracyjne Polski. Wymiar transatlantycki*. Wydawnictwo Naukowe Scholar.

- Jupp J. (2002). *From White Australia to Woomera – The Story of Australia Immigration*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Jupp J. (2005). The Polish Impact on Australian Society, in: E. Drozd, D. Cahill (eds), *Polonia in Australia: Challenges and Possibilities in the New Millennium*, pp. 9-18. Altona: Common Ground Publishing Pty Ltd.
- Lencznarowicz J. (1994). *Prasa i społeczność polska w Australii: 1928-1980*. Kraków: Księgarnia Akademicka.
- Lencznarowicz J. (2001). Diaspora Polska w Australii, in: A. Walaszek (ed.), *Polska Diaspora*, pp. 395-409. Kraków: Wydawnictwo Literackie.
- Lipińska E. (2002). Polscy imigranci początku lat dziewięćdziesiątych w Australii, in: B. Klimaszewski (ed.), *Emigracja z Polski po 1989 roku*. Kraków: Grell.
- London H. I. (1970). *Non-White Immigration and the 'White Australia' Policy*. Sydney: Sydney University Press.
- Markowski S. (2009). Citizenship and integration: A snapshot of the Polish migrant community in Australia. *Humanities Research* 15(1): 75-99.
- Multicultural Australia Fact Sheet*. The Australian Collaboration: A Collaboration of National Community Organisations. <http://www.australiancollaboration.com.au/pdf/FactSheets/Multicultural-Australia-FactSheet.pdf> (accessed: 1 May 2013).
- Nolan M., Rubenstein K. (2009). Citizenship and identity in diverse societies. *Humanities Research* 15(1): 29-44.
- Parkin D. (1998). Foreword, in: Lovell N. (ed.), *Locality and Belonging*, p. ix. London: Routledge.
- Price C. A. (1964). Jewish Settlers in Australia, 1788-1961. *Australian Jewish Historical Society Journal and Proceedings* 5(8): 57-412, 447-452.
- Rosinska-Kordasiewicz A., Urbanska S. (2011). Literature on Job Mobility in Poland, in *Job Mobilities and Family Lives in Europe Modern Mobile Living and its Relation to Quality of Life*. Warsaw: Polish National Contact Point for the European Migration Network.
- Rubenstein K. (2008). From Supranational to Dual Alien Citizen: Australia's Ambivalent Journey, in: S. Bronitt, K. Rubenstein (eds), *Citizenship in a Post-national World: Australia and Europe Compared*. Law and Policy Paper 29. Centre for International and Public Policy, The Australian National University. Canberra: The Federation Press.
- Smolicz J. J. (1981). Core values and cultural identity. *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 4(1): 75-90.
- Smolicz J. J. (1999). *Współkultura Australii*. Warszawa: Oficyna Naukowa.
- Smolicz J. J., Secombe M. J. (2003). Assimilation or Pluralism? Changing Policies for Minority Languages Education in Australia' *Language Policy* 2(1): 3-25.
- Sussex R., Zubrzycki J. (eds) (1985). *Polish People and Culture in Australia*. Canberra: ANU Demography Department.
- Unikoski R. (1978). *Communal Endeavours*. Canberra: ANU Press.
- Warchoń-Schlottmann M. (2002). Emigracja z Polski do Niemiec po roku 1989 – próba portretu zbiorowego, in: B. Klimaszewski (ed.), *Emigracja z Polski po 1989 roku*. Kraków: Wydawnictwo Grell.
- Włodarczyk K. (2005). *Proces adaptacji współczesnych emigrantów polskich do życia w Australii*. CMR Working Papers 3/61. Warsaw: Centre of Migration Research, University of Warsaw.
- Zubrzycki J. (1995). The Evolution of the Policy of Multiculturalism in Australia 1968-1995, Global Cultural Diversity Conference Proceedings. Sydney. <http://www.immi.gov.au/media/publications/multicultural/confer/06/speech29a.htm> (accessed: 25 April 2013).
- Zubrzycki J. (1988). Multiculturalism and the Search for Roots, Papers in Multicultural Studies, Centre for Multicultural Studies. Adelaide: Flinders University.