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# AREAS OF CONCENTRATION AND AN ANALYSIS OF FACTORS AFFECTING THE DISTRIBUTION OF POLISH IMMIGRANTS IN GREAT BRITAIN SINCE POLAND'S ACCESSION TO THE EUROPEAN UNION

*Jadwiga Gałka*

*Abstract*: When Poland entered the European Union in 2004, the ethnic composition of Great Britain experienced a rather sudden change. The large number of immigrants from Poland made Polish immigrants a key ethnic group in Great Britain within a few years after enlargement Poland to the European Union.The purpose of the paper is to describe the principal areas of concentration of Polish immigrants in Great Britain as well as to describe the key factors determining the distribution of Polish immigrants. The paper is based on data obtained from British population registries and survey data collected in London in 2010. Research has shown that most Polish immigrants have settled in major cities, with London being the main concentration area. The main reason for this distribution is the presence of migration networks in major cities and more job opportunities as well.

*Keywords*: migration, migration from Poland, emigration, Poles in London, London

## International migrations of Poles in the research literature

The Polish research literature neglected to analyze international migrations for a very long time. The main reason for this was the low official number of emigrants leaving Poland during its socialist era (1945–1989) due to government restrictions (Kaczmarczyk 2005). This situation changed in 1989 when Poland started its slow transition to democracy. The issue of international migration became a subject of study in Poland's academic circles. The issue of Polish international migration after 1989 was the subject of a paper by Morawska (2001) who provided a detailed analysis of migration mechanisms in place during the 1990s. Other papers include Iglicka *et al.* (1996); Jaźwińska, Okólski (2001); and Sakson (2002). Korczyńska (2003) studied Polish emigration to European countries prior to Poland's entry into the European Union.

The Polish research literature has also devoted a lot of attention to Polish migration following Poland's entry into the European Union. One of the first papers on this issue was written by Iglicka and Weinar (2005), who analyzed the first stream of emigrants leaving Poland after May 1, 2004. Other papers on this issue covered the scale of emigration and regional differences in emigration along with social and demographic characteristics (Długosz 2007; Fihel, Kaczmarczyk 2008; Grabowska-Lusińska, Okólski 2009; Kaczmarczyk 2008a, 2008b; Kłos 2006; Lipińska 2007; Okólski, Kaczmarczyk 2006; Śleszyński 2006; Tyrowicz 2008; Wiśniewski, Duszczyk 2006; Zborowski, Gałka 2008).

Polish emigration to Great Britain following May 1, 2004 is not covered in detail in the Polish research literature. Most papers on this issue only discuss the scale of migration and describe the social and demographic characteristics of the migrants (Kępińska 2007; Milewski, Ruszczak-Żbikowska 2008). The same is true of British research publications, which focus on the social and economic aspects of Polish immigration versus that of other ethnic groups from Central and Eastern Europe (Chappell *et al.* 2008; McKay, Winkelmann-Gleed 2005; Pillai 2006; Salt 2007; Spencer *et al.* 2007; Sriskandarajah 2004; Sriskandarajah *et al.* 2005; Sriskandarajah *et al.* 2007; Trevena 2009). Some case studies have also appeared, focusing on Polish immigrants in selected British cities (Vershinina *et al.* 2009).

Sociological research has provided some valuable insight into the integration of Polish immigrants in Great Britain. This issue was first analyzed in the 1950s by Zubrzycki (1956, 1988), who described the integration of Polish refugees with British society after World War II. This paper is still considered to be a milestone work in this area of research. The research by K. Sword (1996) described social conflicts between different generations of Polish immigrants in Great Britain. This subject is further explored in papers by Garapich (2006a, 2006b, 2008a, 2008b), who analyzed social identity and ethnicity in the Polish community in Great Britain. The issue of demographic and social diversity in the Polish immigrant community was also explored in papers by Boski 1992; Drinkwater et al. 2006a, 2006b; Düvell 2004; Galasińska, Kozłowska 2009; Ryan *et al.* 2008, 2009; Sword *et al.* 1989). Finally, Coyle (2007) analyzed the fate of Polish women living in Great Britain prior to Poland's entry into the European Union.

Most research papers on the international migrations of Poles cover the issue without adequate depth, especially in the area of social relations. There is a general lack of advanced studies on the spatial distribution of Polish immigrants in Great Britain. Hence, this issue needs to be investigated further.

## Theoretical aspects of international migrations

Many researchers have been trying to explain human migration for over 100 years. A considerable number of models, schemes, generalizations, theories and individual perspectives have emerged (Arango 2000). Many different classifications of international migrations (Massey *et al.* 1993) point to two distinct ways of thinking about migrations: 1) theories explaining the causes of migrations, 2) theories explaining causal processes that support migrations over long periods of time. The former one

includes geographical theories such as Ravenstein's Law, demographic theories such as the Migration Transition Model, economic theories such as Classical Economic Theory, Neoclassical Macroeconomic Theory, Neoclassical Microeconomic Theory, New Economics of Labor Migration Theory, Dual Labor Market Theory, and World Systems Theory. The latter includes Migration Network Theory, Institutional Theory, and Theory of Cumulative Causation.

The migrations laws formulated by Ravenstein state that the basic reason for international migration is the desire to improve one's economic status (Ravenstein 1885; Lee 1966). Ravenstein's laws also address issues such as gender and distance migrated. The Migration Transition Model analyzes international migrations in a broader context of social development and modernization and explains changes in spatial mobility for longer periods (Zelinsky 1971). Economic theories treat migration in terms of global capital flows and means of production flows, asserting that wage differences are the primary drivers of migration. The economic migrant makes a conscious decision to migrate in order to maximize economic gains. Neoclassical Macroeconomic Theory views migrationasa product of geographical differences in labour supply and demand (Lewis 1954). Differences in real pay are viewed as the driver of migration flows from countries with excess labor and low pay to countries with labor shortages and high pay (Bauer, Zimmerman 1995; Borjas 1989; Jennissen 2003; Massey *et al.* 1993; Ranis, Fei 1961).

Neoclassical Microeconomic Theory focuses on individual behavior. A potential migrant makes the decision to migrate based on the perceived difference between benefits and losses resulting from migration. Migration is perceived as an investment in one's own development (Sjaastad 1962). This theory was modified by O. Stark in 1984 with the New Economics of Labor Migration Theory (NELM). According to NELM, the decision to migrate is made by the entire household, which wishes to mitigate financial risk posed by unemployment or general loss of income via the diversification of sources of income (Stark, Bloom 1985). In contrast to the principles of Neoclassical Economic Theory, income maximization is not the primary cause of migration. Instead, the economic status of a given household relative to that of other households in the same geographical area is the key driver of migration. This is also known as relative deprivation. The worse off a given household is relative to other households in the same geographical area, the more likely that household is to migrate elsewhere (Stark, Taylor 1989). Hence, NELM does not emphasize the actual amount of income but rather its distribution in a given society.

The Dual Labor Market Theory focuses on macroeconomic variables that affect migration from the perspective of the destination country (Piore 1979). Highly developed economies possess a segmented labour market, which attracts immigrants. One segment of the economy offers high wages, good working conditions, opportunities for personal development, and stable employment. Employees are hired for their level of education and advanced skills. On the other hand, the second segment offers low wages, poor working conditions, limited opportunities for advancement, and variable employment status. The second segment generally does not attract educated and skilled individuals and instead relies on manual labor and gender-based hiring. Given the low prestige and low wages of the second segment, the native population

does not want to work in this segment of the economy. In order to maintain steady economic growth, businesses hire immigrants who are willing to accept lower wages and inferior working conditions.

A second group of migration theories that attempt to explain the duration of international migrations includes Migration Network Theory. Migrant networks connect migrants living abroad with people in the home country (Taylor 1986) by providing information on the benefits of migration, the difficulties encountered upon migration and ways to overcome such difficulties. Another benefit of migrant networks is a lowering of psychological barriers to emigration based on information about the destination country, which can help prompt potential migrants to actually migrate. The main role of migrant networks in the destination country is to lower migration costs via direct financial assistance, help finding work and accommodations as well as cultural training. On the other hand, Institutional Theory holds that migration is a product of institutional links that form after the first wave of emigration (Janicki 2007).

In the light of all the previous theories, the Theory of Cumulative Causation appears to offer the most complete explanation of the complex process of human migration. Its author, D. Massey, assumes that the first reason for migration is economic in nature and can be measured via differences in income and standard of living. Then, migrant networks develop and a self-sustaining migration mechanism is born. This migration mechanism is independent of social and economic factors in the country of origin and in that of the destination. Once social networks are developed enough, the right conditions arise for a strategy of risk diversification or utility maximization. According to Massey, this process may be called cumulative causation. The cumulative aspect of this process means that every migration changes the social context of mobility and causes the migration process to fragment (Górny, Kaczmarczyk 2003).

There are several reasons for secondary migrations. The first reason is the difference in the standard of living of returning migrants and the local population, which suffers from relative deprivation and is more likely to emigrate. Another reason is linked to land ownership. According to World Systems Theory, returning migrants invest their newly acquired wealth in land, which leads to a reduction in the supply of land. Small farmers cannot compete with specialized farms and are forced to seek out non-agricultural jobs. A third reason is the desire of returning migrants to maintain their newly found higher economic status in their country of origin. The fourth reason is the previously described migration network, which develops over time and which causes unlikely individuals to emigrate. The final reason is labor market segmentation in the destination country, which begins to seek out workers abroad (Massey *et al.* 1993).

## Purpose, study period, research methods

The purpose of the paper is to describe main areas of concentration of Polish immigrants and to identify the key factors affecting the distribution of Polish immigrants in Great Britain.

The study period lasted from 2004 to 2009. Access to data was a key factor behind the duration of the study period. The paper includes information from British popula-

tion data sources and survey research performed in London in 2010. A total of 1314 surveys were completed – of which 1272 (96.8%) were accepted for further analysis.

Various statistical methods were used including correlation analysis. In order to show the influx of Polish immigrants to various parts of Great Britain, a special typology of administrative units was made. Eight types of units were identified (Table 1) based on the percentage of applications from Poland and the number of applications from Poland per 1,000 inhabitants (NIR data).

Table 1. Types of administrative units in Great Britain vs. Polish immigration

| Type | Percentage of applications from Poland | Number of applications from Poland per 1,000 inhabitants | Number of units per type | Percentage of units of a given type |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| A | small | small | 252 | 46.8 |
| B | small | significant | 29 | 5.4 |
| C | small | large | 13 | 2.4 |
| D | significant | small | 164 | 30.4 |
| E | significant | significant | 37 | 6.9 |
| F | significant | large | 9 | 1.7 |
| G | large | small | 23 | 4.3 |
| H | large | significant | 12 | 2.2 |

Source: author's own work.

## Changes in the spatial distribution of Poles in Great Britain

Research has shown (Gałka 2012) that Poles are not evenly distributed across Great Britain. Initially, Polish immigrants arrived in southern England, then in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. The next few years were a dispersal period for Polish immigrants who began to settle farther away from London – especially in Scotland (Fig. 1).

The distribution of Polish immigrants in Great Britain after Poland's entry into the European Union was determined by a variety of factors including areas of setting (urban vs. rural) and historical ties to existing Polish communities in Great Britain (Fig. 2). The first large Polish communities in Great Britain came into existence following World War II and were often found in areas with military bases and postwar adjustment camps for soldiers and their families (Niewierowicz, Borucki 2009). Such communities were scattered across Great Britain, however, most were located in England. The largest postwar Polish community was located in London, with its array of work and entertainment opportunities (Czaykowski, Sulik 1961).

Other cities and regions with large Polish communities included Edinburgh, Manchester, the Midlands regions (Birmingham, Wolverhampton, Coventry, Leicester, Nottingham), and Lancashire and Yorkshire in Northern England (Bradford, Leeds, Sheffield), too. Smaller but still significant Polish communities were found in Bristol, Gloucester, Reading, Slough, Ipswich, Hull, Lincoln, Peterborough, Swindon, Bedford, and Newcastle. Cardiff was the main Polish community in Wales. In addition to major

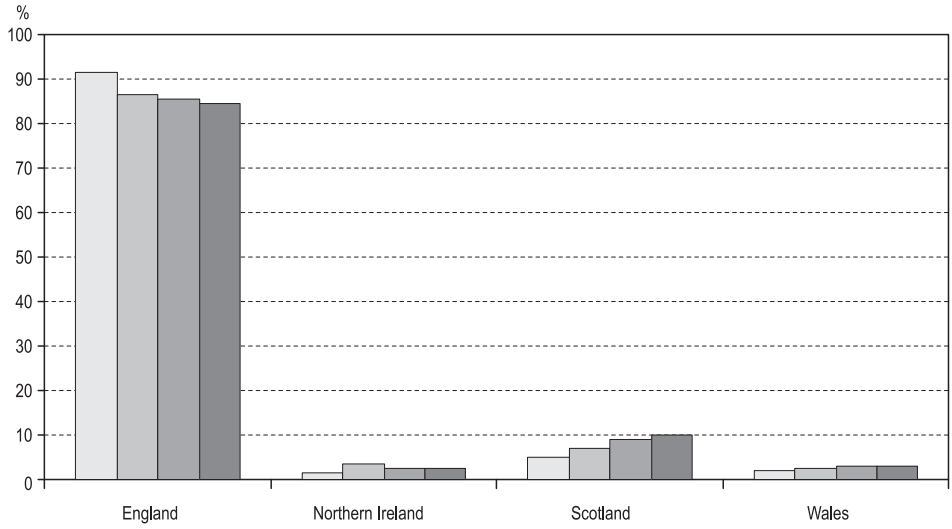



Fig. 1. Estimated number of Polish immigrants in Great Britain by region for the period 2004–2009

Source: Office for National Statistics data.

cities in Scotland, Polish immigrants also inhabited small towns in Lanark, Fife and Angus counties (Czaykowski, Sulik 1961).

When Poland entered the European Union in 2004, Polish immigrants were attracted to existing Polish communities in Great Britain and their migration patterns changed very little. Most Polish immigrants were drawn to cities and generally urban areas. This pattern held true already in 2004 and remained intact in the years thereafter. The largest communities of new Polish immigrants in the period 2004–2009 were found in London, Edinburgh, Birmingham, Glasgow and Manchester, the smaller but significantones appeeard in West Yorkshire (Leeds, Bradford), South Yorkshire (Doncaster), and in heavily urbanized regions of central and eastern England: Leeds, Peterborough, Slough, Nottingham, Coventry, Luton. Finally, some Polish immigrants were also found in Bristol, Aberdeen (Scotland) and Northern Ireland. On the other hand, rural areas were of little interest to them (Fig. 2).

It is reasonable to assume that Polish immigrants settled in British cities in order to find better jobs, more entertainment and stronger migrant networks. Numerous research studies have shown that potential Polish immigrants already had acquaintances in British cities prior to leaving Poland (Sumption 2009). Ryan *et al.* (2008) were able to show that having contacts in a foreign country serves as an incentive to migrate and often determines one's future place of residence.

The same has been shown by research made in London – where new immigrants identify migrant networks as being important upon arrival in Great Britain. The migrant networks have proven to be helpful in terms of finding work and a place to live as well as

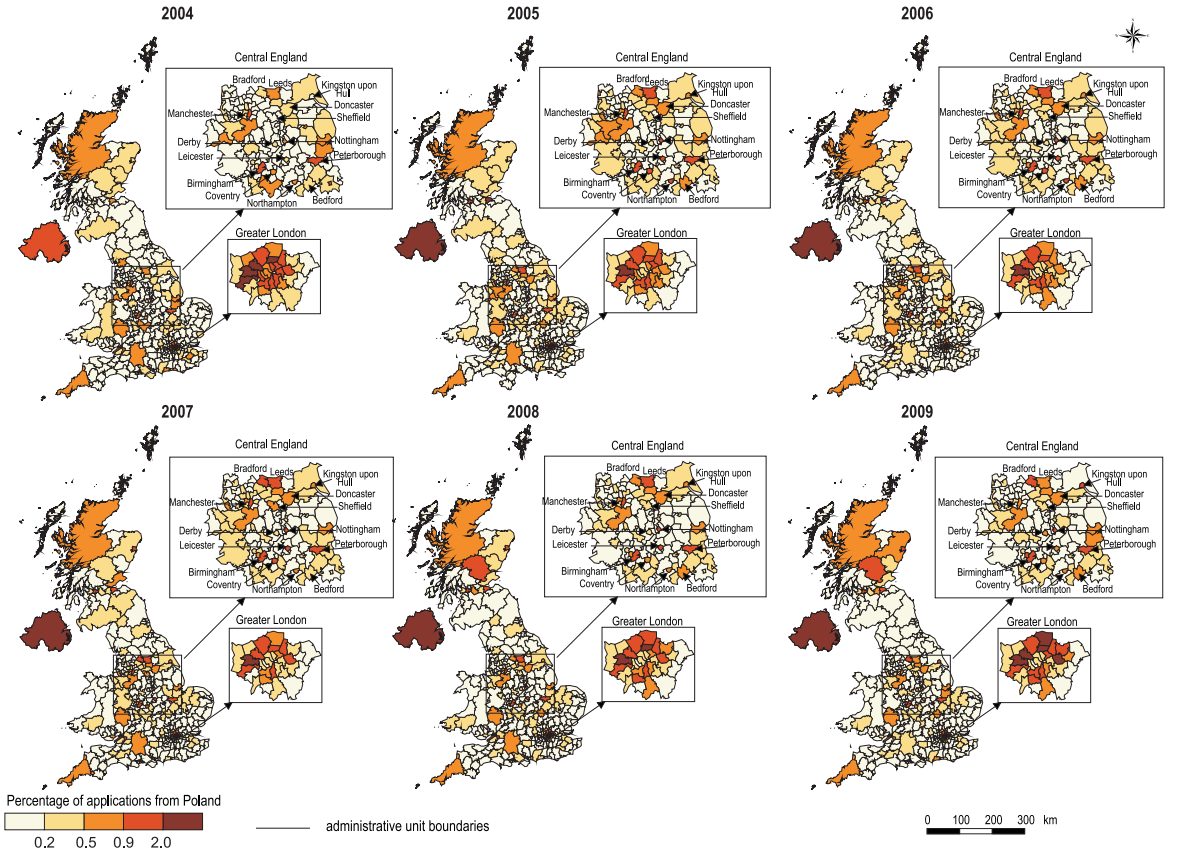



Fig. 2. Percentage of applications from Poland by British administrative regions in 2004–2009

Source: British Department for Work and Pensions data.

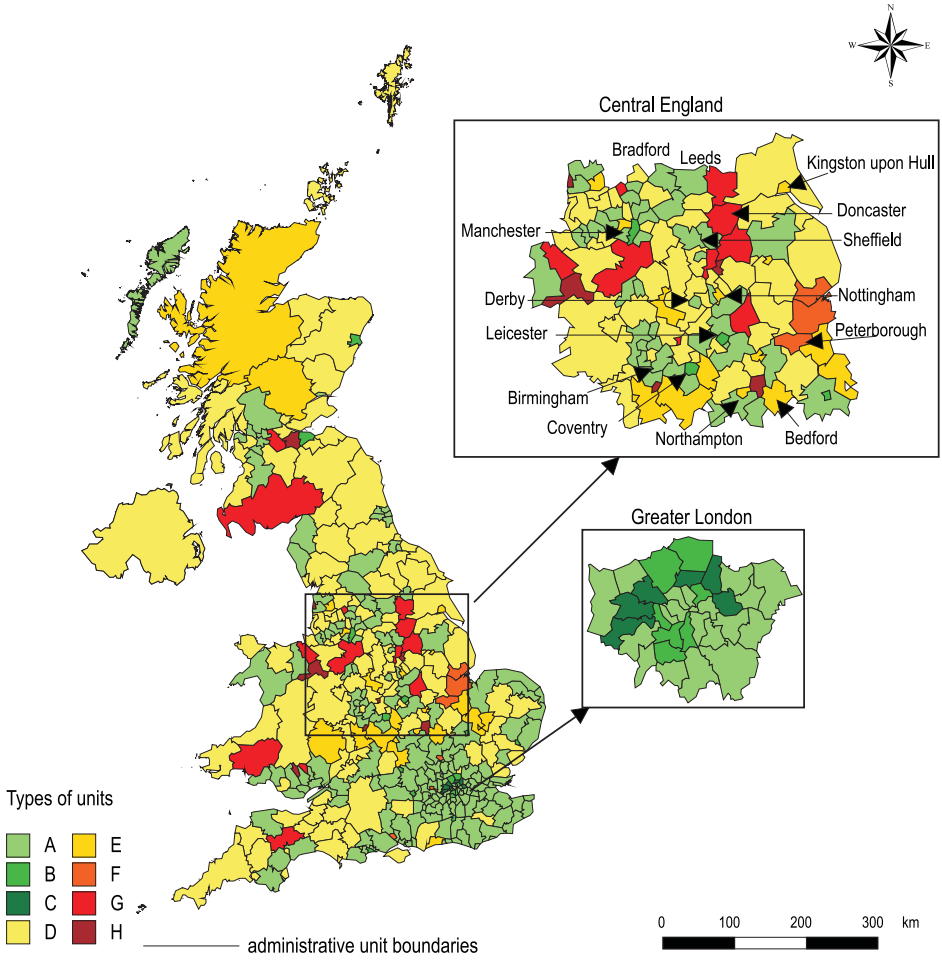



Fig. 4. Types of administrative units in Great Britain vs. Polish immigration

Source: British Department for Work and Pensions data.

in terms of providing emotional support (Gałka 2012; Fig. 3). The ability to talk to other Poles mitigates the stress associated with a shift in social context, reduces the foreign nature of the destination country and reduces the emotional toll produced by the loss of direct contact with family members and friends (Portes 1995). This explains why the first wave of immigrants clusters in ethnic enclaves (Ryan *et al.* 2008) and only the second generation attempts to follow a path of cultural assimilation. What sometimes follows is a complete break with ethnic communities.

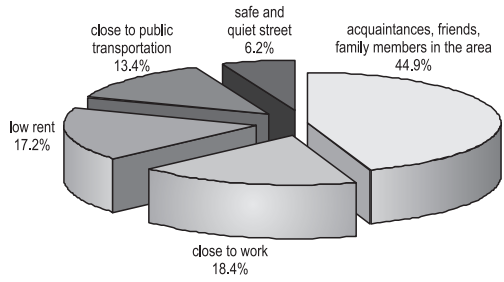



Fig. 3. Five key reasons cited by Poles for choosing a given place to live in London

Source: author's survey research.

## Types of administrative units *vs.* Polish immigration

What immigration research tries to accomplish is analyze the size of a given immigrant community, its impact on local society and its role in sustaining the immigration stream from a given country (Green *et al.* 2007). This is why analysing of individual counties is important in this type of research. In order to accomplish this goal, a typology of administrative units in Great Britain was made, those were that distinguishes between counties with high rates of Polish immigration (types A–C) and counties these rates were low (type H with low rates of Polish immigration.

**Type A** units are located in Southern England and are the best developed in terms of demographics, social issues and the overall economy (Vickers *et al.* 2003). Some are located in the suburbs of London and feature low unemployment, large numbers of white collar workers, numerous automobiles, and primarily single-family home neighborhoods. This includes South Oxfordshire, West Berkshire, Epping Forest, and East Hertfordshire (Fig. 4). Some of the Type A administrative units lie within the boundaries of Greater London out of them known as Thriving London Peripheries. Large numbers of young people holding jobs that require above average qualifications tend to live in the following areas: Sutton, Kingston upon Thames, Richmond upon Thames. Type A also includes post-industrial, overpopulated and poor parts of Inner London characterized by large numbers of black Caribbean residents (Lewisham, Southwark) as well as business areas of London such as the City of Westminster, Camden and Islingdon.

**Type B** consists of only a few spatially concentrated administrative units in the multicultural suburbs of Northern London (Barnet, Enfield) and business areas in Central and Southern.

London. Type B also includes several towns in the Thriving London Peripheries including Cambridge, Ipswich, Oxford and Reading, industrial towns such as Coventry,

post-industrial cities (i.e. Edinburgh) and regional growth centers such as Aberdeen in Scotland.

**Type C** includes administrative units where Polish immigrants constitute just a small fraction of total immigrant influx, however, the number of Polish immigrants per 1,000 residents is large. Both types B and C tend to be located in densely populated areas of London including its multicultural suburbs featuring also large numbers of black and Indian residents (Waltham Forest). Some are also located in multicultural Inner London and feature high unemployment and a significant percentage of adults who have never held a job (Brent, Newham).

**Types D**, **E** and **F** include administrative units characterized by significant but not large percentages of Polish immigrants. Type D consists of 30% rural areas characterized by typical agricultural landscapes with large numbers of farmers (Northumberland, Shropshire) as well as suburban rural areas such as South Norfolk and East Riding of Yorkshire. Type D includes coastal areas in Cornwall and West Dorset with aging populations and large numbers of individuals living alone.

**Type E** is characterized by average values of both variables and remains spatially concentrated in Scotland and the area between prosperous Southern England and England's industrial areas.

**Type F** is characterized by administrative units where Polish immigrants constitute a large fraction of immigrant influx and their number per 1,000 residents is also large. This includes cities such as Southampton, Luton and Slough in well developed Southern England and large areas in Eastern England including prosperous small towns such as Boston, South Holland and Peterborough.

**Type G** consists of administrative units with the largest percentage of new Polish immigrants, even though the actual number of them can be small. In a sense, Type G is dominated by Polish immigrants arriving in 2004 or later. Only 4.3% of administrative units in Great Britain can be classified to this type G and all are scattered unevenly across the country. The only cluster of Type G units is situated in Central England, including the fast-growing town of Selby and some industrial towns, such as Doncaster and Bassetlaw.

Finally, **Type H** includes industrial cities such as Mansfield in Central England, regional growth centers such as Redditch, and small fast-growing towns such as Wellingborough.

## Conclusions

Migration theories explain various migration behaviors in various ways. Some apply to Polish immigrants in Great Britain. Research has shown that the principal reasons for the Polish migration to Great Britain after Poland's entry into the European Union were existing migrant networks and the opportunity to find lucrative work in large British cities such as London, Birmingham, Manchester and Glasgow. While the stream of Polish migrants moving to Great Britain has slowed down, it is reasonable to predict that major British cities will continue to attract new immigrants thanks to established migrant networks.

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*Jadwiga Gałka*
*Jagiellonian University*
*Institute of Geography and Spatial Management*
*Gronostajowa 7, 30-387 Kraków*
*e-mail: jadziagalka@gmail.com*