

Identity and Belonging: An Intergenerational Comparison of Polish migrants in Washington State

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ABSTRACT

The aim of the presentation is a comparative analysis of factors influencing the shaping of identity and belonging in the context of migration, using the example of inhabitants of Washington state declaring Polish ancestry. The study will be conducted from two perspectives: 1) intergenerational, addressing the extent of differences within the framework of ethnic self-identification of three generations of Polish migrants, 2) migration waves, juxtaposing factors and visions of Polishness of people arriving in the Pacific Northwest at different times and in the context of various historical events.

The research material was collected on the basis of both found and evoked data. With regard to the latter method, in-depth interviews were conducted with different generations of Polish migrants and those arriving in Washington state at different historical periods. The presentation will attempt to capture the transformations in the process of redefining ethnic identity and sense of belonging in the host society of different groups and generations of Polish migrants in the Pacific Northwest.

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Joanna Kulpinska - a graduate in international migration studies, is an assistant professor at the Institute of American Studies and Polish Diaspora at Jagiellonian University. She has conducted research on migration processes in Poland and the United States. Her research interests include migration studies (especially transatlantic migration), historical sociology and migration policy.