

Polish Immigrants in Argentina

by

Bernarda Zubrzycki

Argentina has always been among the nations with the largest percentage of immigrants and foreign residents, leading to a culture infused with elements from many nations. One of these is Poland, which sent more of its sons and daughters to Argentina than any other Latin American nation except Brazil. During most of the nineteenth century, immigrants from Poland were usually political exiles from the various revolutions intended to free the nation from forced occupation by its neighbors—Austria, Prussia and Russia. Among the first were veterans of Napoleon’s armies who had served the emperor in the vain hope that a French victory would result in recreation of an independent Poland. Given their military experience, some of these soon joined the forces of General José San Martín destined to liberate Argentina from its own colonial bonds. Foremost among them, according to the newspaper *La Gaceta de Buenos Aires* (The Buenos Aires Gazette) were Colonel General Antonio Belina-Skupieski, Lt. Antonio Mierz, Sergeant Major Juan Valerio Bulewski, and Corporal Miguel Zatocki, as well as many other enlisted men.¹

Individuals also migrated in the wake of the failed Polish November Uprising of 1830-31. Although relatively small in number, one source noted that the refugees stood out “more for quality than quantity.”² This group included

This article was translated from the original Spanish by Silvia G. Dapía.

¹Emil Ciawłowski, “The Poles in Argentina,” in Edward S. Urbański, ed., *Polish Contributions to Latin American Culture* (Miami: American Institute of Polish Culture, 1996), 179; Estanislao Pyzik, *Los polacos en la República Argentina y América del Sur desde el año 1812* (Buenos Aires: Comité de Homenaje al Milenio de Polonia, 1966), 70-71; Józefa Radzyńska, *Biały Orzeł nad Rio de la Plata* (Warsaw: Wydawnictwo Ministerstwa Obrony Narodowej, 1971), 16-17; *La Gaceta de Buenos Aires*, No. 140 (September 22, 1819), 357; “Polacos en Argentina,” <http://www.pom.org.ar/PolArg.htm>.

²“East European Immigration to Argentina,” <http://www.casahistoria.net/easteurope.htm>.



Henryk Stpiczyński whose son, known in Argentina as General Henryk Spika, became what one source calls “a national hero in Argentina’s war with Paraguay.”³ Another prominent military personality was Teofil Iwanowski who fought under General Justo José de Urquiza against the dictator Juan Manuel de Rosas at the decisive Battle of Caseros on February 3, 1852, which resulted in the replacement of the Rosas regime with the Constitution of 1853. Two others who fought at Caseros were Capt. Piotr Dubrocki and Lt. Roman D. Dubrocki, brothers who previously served under Garibaldi. Iwanowski went on to a lengthy career, rising to command the 3rd Infantry Regiment and eventual promotion to the rank of general in the Argentine army. When Iwanowski died, he was buried in a mausoleum in Villa Mercedes with the Argentine government marking the site with a plaque that read “To Gen. Teófilo Iwanowski—Grateful Republic.”⁴

The failed January Insurrection of 1863-64 brought more political exiles to Argentina. Teofil Marecki was appointed colonel and chaplain in the Argentine army, the engineer Zdzisław Celiński obtained a position as a cartographer with the Army Geographical Institute, and Colonel Czesław Jordan-Wysocki, a topographical engineer, also established a factory for manufacturing ammunition. Jordan-Wysocki conducted extensive exploration and cartographic expeditions to various parts of Argentina and was later a key player in the establishment of Palermo Park in Buenos Aires.⁵ No doubt the most celebrated of the mid-century military refugees was Roberto Adolfo Chodasiewicz. Born in Wilno in 1832 to parents who were soon sent to a penal colony for participating in the Polish November Uprising, he attended a Russian military school and participated in the Crimean War as a lieutenant responsible for creating maps and designing defensive fortifications. He was awarded the Order of St. Vladimir for heroism at the Battle of Alma, fought at Sebastopol and Balaklava and was wounded at Inkerman. Despite his sterling record, the Polish nationalist ideals instilled by his parents motivated him to desert to the British who awarded him the Crimean Medal for his subsequent assistance against the Russians. After a brief sojourn in England, he joined a regiment composed mostly of Poles and Cossacks serving in the Turkish Army, then, in 1862, moved to the United States where, after enlisting in the Union Army, he worked as an engineer on the fortifications of Washington (DC) and participated in General Ulysses S. Grant’s campaign against the Confederate capital of Richmond. At the end of the war, Chodasiewicz contacted Domingo Sarmiento, the Argentina minister to the United States, who assisted him in traveling to Buenos Aires. There, he enlisted as a captain of engineers in the Allied Army (Argentina, Brazil, and Uruguay) in its war against

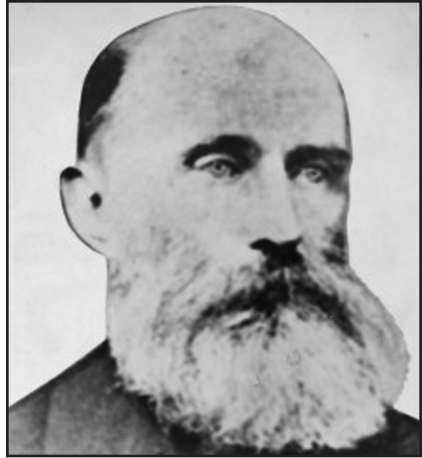
³Ciawłowski, “Poles in Argentina,” 179; Pyzik, *Los polacos*, 89-91.

⁴Ciawłowski, “Poles in Argentina,” 179, 181; Pyzik, *Los polacos*, 91-105, 107-13.

⁵Ciawłowski, “Poles in Argentina,” 180, 183; Pyzik, *Los polacos*, 159-70; Elstanislao Pyzik, “Colonel Jordan Czesław Wysocki,” *Polish Voice*, Buenos Aires, No. 20 (May 17, 1974), 7.



Colonel Czesław Jordan-Wysocki.
Courtesy of "Revisionistas."

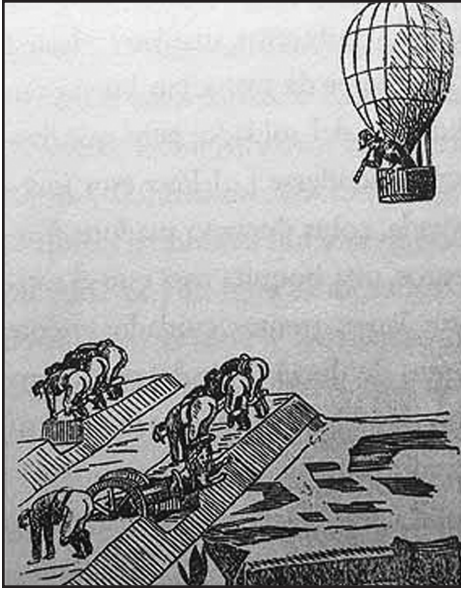


Lt. Colonel Roberto Chodasiewicz.
Courtesy of "Revisionistas."

Paraguay. In addition to his normal duties as a military engineer, Chodasiewicz participated in the first balloon ascension of the war when he went aloft with Captain Ignacio Céspedes on July 6, 1866, to survey the Paraguayan defenses. For this he is sometimes referred to as Argentina's "Primer Aviador," or "first aviator." For his services, Brazil awarded Chodasiewicz its Cruz de Bronce (Bronze Cross) and Orden Imperial de la Rosa (Imperial Order of the Rose). Following the war he held the position of Director of Railways in Asuncion, Paraguay, then moved to Argentina where he held a position in the Topographical Department of Corrientes Province. Moving to Buenos Aires in 1887, he re-entered the army as a lieutenant colonel and professor at the School of Military Engineers. While there he also participated in the formation of the Polskie Towarzystwo Demokratyczne (Polish Democratic Society), the first Polish organization in Buenos Aires, of which he was elected president in 1900.⁶

Also among these new arrivals from the various Polish revolutions was Dr. Maksymilian Rymarkiewicz who gained respect for his efforts to fight a yellow fever epidemic in Montevideo, Uruguay, before settling into a successful career in Argentina. Another was Napoleon Feliks Żaba, who became a professor at the University of Buenos Aires where he taught history and foreign languages and

⁶Pyzik, *Los polacos*, 142-58; Jacinto R. Yaben, "Roberto Chodasiewicz," *Biographies and South America: Argentina* (Buenos Aires, 1938), as reprinted in www.revisionistas.com.ar; Eloy Martín, "Roberto Adolfo Chodasiewicz 1832-1896," www.revisionistas.com.ar; Bernadine Pietraszek, "The Other Child: Poles in Latin America," *Polish American Studies*, Vol. XXIX, nos. 1-2 (Spring-Autumn 1972), 90-91; Ciałkowski, "Poles in Argentina," 180.



In this cartoon, Paraguayan soldiers are seen "mooning" Chodasiewicz as he flies overhead observing their positions.

From the Paraguayan periodical El Centinela.

also authored several scholarly and literary works. Karol Muntawski, who settled in Catamarga, organized the first Institute of Weight and Measures and the Department of Topography and Statistics, while also developing a prototype of a winnowing machine adapted to local produce. Dr. Juliusz Jurkowski established the first sanatorium for lung ailments. The engineer Władysław Dobrowolski rose to become director of a railroad in the Province of Buenos Aires, as well as serving as a university professor. Several others also found employment in Argentina's universities including Karol Loewenherd in spatial geometry, cosmography, and topography; Gustaw Kujawa in mathematics; Fryderyk Muntawski in foreign languages; Ryszard Sudnik in pathology and electric therapy;

Karol Nowakowski at the English College; and Michał Górski who headed the Fryburg Institute.⁷

While all of these Poles made contributions to the development of Argentina, throughout the nineteenth century migration from Poland remained mostly confined to individuals and small groups who arrived for political reasons. Larger-scale migration for economic purposes did not begin until the century was nearly over.

THE AGRICULTURAL MIGRATION, 1897-WORLD WAR I

The year 1897 is usually identified as the beginning of Polish economic immigration to Argentina. In that year, fourteen Polish and Ukrainian families numbering about 120 people from Austrian-occupied Galicia arrived in Buenos Aires, from where they traveled on through La Plata to Apóstoles in Misiones Province. A former Jesuit mission that had been abandoned since about 1700, the

⁷Pyzik, *Los polacos*, 77-78, 81-85; Radzyńska, *Biały Orzeł*, 19-21; Ciawłowski, "Poles in Argentina," 179-80, 183; *Boletín Histórico del Ejército* (Montevideo, Uruguay: Estado Mayor del Ejército, 1976), Nos. 171-74, 188.

region had been identified by the Argentine government for agricultural development, hence the arrival of the new residents. Each family received from 25 to 50 hectares of land depending on its size, along with a financial loan to assist with the construction of a home and the purchase of supplies, tools, seeds, and other material needed to turn the area into productive farms. By the end of the first year, visitors reported that the area had taken on a distinctly Polish look with small homes, roadside chapels, churches, and schools. Aside from foodstuffs, the major commercial crops were tea and *yerba mate*, a plant that produces a drink somewhat like green tea that is popular in Argentina and the surrounding countries.⁸

Although the original colony proved successful, some of the initial settlers did not like the quality of the land. Following an appeal to the governor, in mid-August of 1900 a group led by Andrzej Czajkowski moved south about twenty kilometers to land they believed better suited to their crops and petitioned the governor for official sanction of the new settlement. On July 21, 1901, the town of Azara, named for the naturalist and geographer Don Felix de Azara, formally came into existence. It was a land of gently rolling pastures, wetlands, and rich earth good for gardens, raising livestock, and commercial agriculture based on tea

⁸"Los Polacos in Argentina," <http://www.pom.org.ar/PolArg.htm>; Ciawlowski, "Poles in Argentina," 183-84; "East European Immigration to Argentina," <http://www.casahistoria.net/easteurope.htm>; "Los polacos en Río de la plata," [# Poles](http://es.wikipedia.org/wiki/Inmigraci%C3%B3n_en_Argentina); Muzeum Emigracji Gdynia, <http://en.muzeumemigracji.pl>. Among the first arrivals in Apóstoles were Mateusz Bednarz, Jan Maksymowicz, Albert Szczesny, Ignacy Herzun and Jan Kozlowski. Listed as "Austrians" in Argentine immigration records, the early families came from these villages of Horodenka, Tlumacz, Jezierzany, Oberty, Buczacz, Tarnopol, Peremyshlane, Trembowlia, Kolomyja, Czortkow, Husiatyn, Skalat, Zaleszczyki, Chortkiw, Borshcziv, and Lisko. Since Misiones had the highest proportion of Polish settlement in the country, reaching in excess of one quarter of the population, most studies of the Poles in Argentina focus on this area. See A. Gallardo, *Territorio Nacional de Misiones. Colonización austro-polaca. Su comienzo, desarrollo y situación actual. Informe a su respecto de Carlos Gallardo al Ministro del Interior Joaquín V. González* (Buenos Aires: Peuser, 1903); Federico Vogt, *La colonización polaca en Misiones: 1897-1922* (Buenos Aires: Tipografía El Semanario, 1922); Leopoldo Bartolomé, "Sistema de actividad y estrategias adaptativas en la articulación regional y nacional de colonias agrícolas étnicas: el caso de Apóstoles (Misiones)," in Esther Hermitte and Leopoldo Bartolomé, compilers, *Procesos de articulación social* (Buenos Aires: Amorrortu Editores, 1977), 257-81; Leopoldo Bartolomé, *Los colonos de Apóstoles. Estrategias adaptativas y etnicidad en una colonia eslava en Misiones* (Posadas: Editorial Universitaria de Misiones, 2000); Claudia Stefanetti Kojrowicz, "Los inmigrantes polacos en Misiones y su primer pan de maíz," Ponencia presentada en la XII Conferencia Internacional de Historia Oral, Pietermaritzburg, Sudáfrica, 24 al 27 de junio, 2002; Claudia Stefanetti Kojrowicz and Amanda Szychowski, "El Museo Histórico Juan Szychowski. Apóstoles, capital nacional de la yerba mate," Ponencia presentada en el Congreso Argentino de Inmigración, IV Congreso de historia de los pueblos de la provincia de Santa Fe, Argentina, 2005.



Some of the extensive yerba mate fields in Misiones Province.

Courtesy of the Misiones Province Museum.

and yerba mate. Letters from Polish settlers in Misiones Province back to their relatives in Europe encouraged another 138 families to migrate in 1901, and approximately 1,600 more people to arrive in the following year. Subsequent arrivals established homes in nearby San José, Azara, Cerro Corá, Bonpland, Yermal Viejo (now Oberá), Gobernador Roca, Colonia Lanusse and Colonia Wanda. By 1905 the region had expanded to some 5,000 people.⁹

On October 29, 1903, Rev. Józef Bayerlin Marianski arrived to establish a permanent Polish parish in Misiones Province. Born in Poznań in 1868, his family was originally of German ancestry but had resided in Poland for some two centuries. He was an excellent choice for the new church since he spoke both Polish and German, the two languages most prominent among the immigrant population he would serve. Newly ordained in the same year that he arrived, “Padre José” was exceptionally energetic and could be found riding about the countryside on horseback, or later by automobile, to meet with his parishioners and conduct services in outlying towns. Under his leadership a new church rose, a large bell was obtained to summon people to mass, a school and nursery were established, and organizations for music, theater, and other cultural expressions took form. Marianski founded the Jan Sobieski Club and the Quo Vadis Literary Society which soon boasted more than 500 volumes. On April 8, 1911, the

⁹“East European Immigration to Argentina,” <http://www.casahistoria.net/easteurope.htm>; “Los polacos en Río de la plata,” http://es.wikipedia.org/wiki/Inmigraci%C3%B3n_en_Argentina#Poles. Aside from Andrés Czajkowski, the families who chose to move included those of José Czajkowski, Nicolás Czajkowski, Victor Kitajgroki, Tomás Luty, Juan Micak, Juan Ostapowicz, Juan Raczkowski, and José Zakowicz. For additional information on the Azara colony, see Marta C. M. Potocki de Rendiche, *Azara. Un lugar de mi patria* (Azara, Argentina: Edit Novigraf, 2000).

Hermanas Siervas del Espíritu Santo (Sisters in Service of the Holy Spirit) arrived to administer the school and nursery.¹⁰

Impressed by the new immigrants, as early as 1901 Governor Juan José Lanusse of Misiones wrote that the people were “eminently Catholic, the first thing they do upon arrival ... is go to church.” As farmers, “there are Poles who have re-sown three or four times in a season fields destroyed by ants with a patience and persistence inconceivable in Italian, Spanish or any other farmers.” Further, “their crime rate is very low; they are very moral and marry very young and their women are most fecund.”¹¹

With the beginnings of the oil industry in Comodoro Rivadavia shortly after the onset of the century, some Poles migrated there to find jobs, while others also arrived directly from Poland. Others occasionally left for opportunities in Santa Cruz and Patagonia. During the initial years of the new century Poles also established the beginnings of a community in Berisso, Buenos Aires Province, a major port and the center of the Argentine meat processing industry. Antoni Moszyński arrived in Berisso from Poland in 1912. A year later, with the assistance of other Poles in the area, he founded the first Polish organization in Buenos Aires Province, the Sociedad Polaca de Berisso (The Polish Society of Berisso) to preserve Polish culture and traditions, serving as its first president. With the outbreak of World War I in 1914, the Society worked with the Comité Patriótico por la Liberación de Polonia (Patriotic Committee for the Liberation of Poland), established by Gustaw Jasiński in Buenos Aires to coordinate efforts in Argentina on behalf of Poland and for that purpose to work with the Polish Central Committee in Paris led by Roman Dmowski. The committee published the wartime *Dziennik Polski* (Polish Daily News), organized recruiting for General Józef Haller’s Polish Army in France, and otherwise attempted to support the Polish national cause.¹²



Rev. José Marianski ca. 1933.
From the cover of his biography
by Juan Czajkowski.

¹⁰Further information on Rev. Marianski and the Polish colonies in Misiones may be obtained from his biography by Juan Czajkowski, *Un soldado del evangelio* (Posadas, Argentina: Impreso en Imprenta Dino, 1971).

¹¹Michael Soltys, “A Different Kind of Multinational: Immigrants to Argentina from Eastern Europe,” *Buenos Aires Herald*, September 1988. The Lanusse quote was originally published in the *Buenos Aires Herald* and was also reprinted in *The Argentina Independent*, <http://www.argentinaindependent.com/life-style/expat-life-style/polish>.

¹²“Los Polacos in Argentina,” <http://www.pom.org.ar/PolArg.htm>; “Los polacos en Río de la plata,” http://es.wikipedia.org/wiki/Inmigraci%C3%B3n_en_Argentina#Poles.



The Chapel of the Sacred Heart of Jesus in Colonia Lanusse in 1944.
Courtesy of the Museo Virtual de los Polacos en Argentina.



Poles in Buenos Aires to celebrate the Constitution of the Third of May in 1921 .
Courtesy of the Museo Virtual de los Polacos en Argentina.

Determining the number of Poles who settled in Argentina before 1919 is difficult because with their homeland partitioned between Austria, Germany, and Russia, those who arrived were listed as natives of those nations. What can be said is that those who came were largely political refugees who migrated as individuals or in very small groups. As such, the immigrants' contributions were also those of individuals with many of the refugees from unsuccessful Polish uprisings finding employment in the Argentine armed forces, while others used their professional qualifications to find positions in government, educational institutions, and the construction and oil industries. Only during the first decade of the twentieth century did the tentative beginnings of an organized Polish community begin to appear once the agricultural immigration began to arrive in Misiones Province and then later in Buenos Aires Province. Large-scale development of an Argentine Polonia would only begin after the First World War.

THE INTERWAR PERIOD AND WORLD WAR II, 1919-1945

The end of World War I in 1918 brought independence to Poland. Argentina was the second nation in Latin America, after Brazil, to recognize the new Polish state. Consular relations were established in early 1920, with an official embassy opened two years later. The nation was relatively poor from more than a century of foreign occupation and the wartime devastation causing many Poles to seek economic opportunities abroad. When the United States passed restrictive immigration laws in 1921 and 1924 greatly reducing the number of Poles who could enter the country, Argentina, with its growing industries, became a popular destination. Argentine immigration records reveal a net Polish immigration of 119,410 people in the decade from 1921 to 1930, and another 31,500 during the depression years of 1931-40.¹³ It has been estimated that about 25 percent of the Poles were Catholic, between 25 and 30 percent Jews and the remaining 45 to 50 percent Orthodox Christians, most of who were of Ruthenian heritage.¹⁴

Most of the interwar arrivals were farmers from the eastern borderlands of Poland who planned to earn money as seasonal agricultural laborers or through jobs in the growing oil, railroad, and meat processing industries, and then return to Poland. A minority determined to settle permanently as farmers in the rural communities, while some with professional training tended to settle in the urban areas. Most found jobs or settled in Buenos Aires, Córdoba, Mendoza, Misiones, Neuquén, Rosario, and Tucumán. During the depression of the 1930, most settled

¹³DNM. 1976. Cuadros por Nacionalidades 1857-1976.

¹⁴"El Caso polaco: La organización campesina tradicional," in *Las Razas Humanas* (Barcelona: Instituto Gallach, 1989), 308; "Los Polacos in Argentina," <http://www.pom.org.ar/PolArg.htm>; "Pioneros polacos del Río de La Plata," [# Poles](http://es.wikipedia.org/wiki/Inmigraci%C3%B3n_en_Argentina).



Poles arriving in Argentina have their photograph taken with the ship's captain.

Courtesy of the Museo Virtual de los Polacos en Argentina.

around Buenos Aires, Córdoba, Rosario and Santa Fe.¹⁵

The burgeoning oil industry in Comodoro Rivadavia began to draw Polish technicians and other skilled workers in the years before the First World War, but the number increased greatly during the 1920s. The Polish workers often gathered at a bar owned by Vincente Wyoczynski where they could converse in their native language, listen to Polish music, and practice the customs of their homeland. In 1922, on the suggestion of Stefan Koprowski, Władysław Turchin and Francisco Leniek, and others, the group formally organized as the Sociedad Polonesa "Dom Polski" (the Polish Society "Polish Home"). José Batko was elected president, with Juan Samuta as secretary. After several years of raising funds, they were able to erect a building for the society that opened in 1927 with great fanfare

under the twin flags of Argentina and Poland.¹⁶

At the same time, the beginnings of an organized Polonia were taking root elsewhere as well. As early as 1890, Wincenty Olewiński led the formation of the Polskie Towarzystwo Demokratyczne (Polish Democratic Society), generally believed to be the first Polish association formed in South America, and the Catholic Franciscan Order, led by Rev. Józef Makar, established the Polskie

¹⁵Ciawlowski, "Poles in Argentina," 183-84; "Los Polacos in Argentina," <http://www.pom.org.ar/PolArg.htm>; "Pioneros polacos del Río de La Plata," http://es.wikipedia.org/wiki/Inmigraci%C3%B3n_en_Argentina#Poles.

¹⁶The other names appearing on the original list of member included Pedro Ambroz, Juan Atamanszuk, José Bendowski, Titus Biały, Vincente Binkowski, Juan Boguslawski, Pedro Bukowski, Carlos Dubicki, – Fanfara, Julio Fetter, Bolesław Fiajak, José Gorzynski, Constantino Grzechowiak, Miguel Janiszewski, Maria Koprowska, Stefan Koprowski, Ladislao Kuzniewcki, Francisco Lebruk, Mieczysław Lysakiewicz, Tomasz Marchewka, José Piotrowski, Magdalena Pulapkowa, Juan Pulawka, Valentino Ropec, Carlos Rus, Adalberto Samulota, José Sieniewicz, Juan Skwarek, Estanislao Sobko, Andre Spirskorz, Estanislao Szymid, José Watko, Estanislao Wisniewski, Ladislao Wisniewski, José Wolny, Vincente Wyoczynski, Estanislao Zawadzki, Ladislao Ziemiński, Domenieco Zisakiewicz.

Towarzystwo Katolickie (Polish Catholic Society) in Buenos Aires. The arrival of a number of Poles in Buenos Aires in the wake of the 1905 revolt in Russia led to the creation of the Związek Polaków w Argentynie (Union de los Polacos en Argentina; Union of Poles in Argentina) as a central cultural organization. The Związek began publishing *Głos Polski* (The Polish Voice) as a bilingual weekly Polish and Spanish newspaper in Buenos Aires in 1922, and established a bookstore called the Libreria Polaca (Polish Library). Six years later Buenos Aires witnessed the birth of the only Polish daily newspaper published in the country before World War II, the *Codzienny Niezależny Kurier Polski w Argentynie* (The Daily Independent Polish Courier in Argentina). This joined a growing list of publications produced by the emerging Polish communities including the influential Misiones biweekly *Orędownik* (The Go-Between; established 1924); *Bóg i Ojczyzna* (God and Fatherland; established 1939), a biweekly Catholic journal edited by Rev. Aleksander Michalik; the bilingual Polish-Spanish monthly magazine *Argentyna* (Argentina); and *Osadnik* (The Colonist), the organ of Union of Polish Associations in Misiones (established 1933). Clearly, the Poles in Argentina were rapidly developing a nation-wide community presence during the interwar period.¹⁷

The invasion of Poland that ignited World War II in Europe sent shock waves through Argentine Polonia and led to a new influx of refugees. Polish organizations immediately began raising funds and collecting other donations to support their homeland, sent parcels to prisoner of war camps, offer funds for refugees to travel to Argentina, and provided other assistance. An estimated 1,140 volunteered for service in the Polish armed forces reorganizing in Great Britain, some 70 of whom later gave their lives. Following the war, a memorial to Poles who were killed after returning to fight during World War II was erected in the Unión de los Polacos in Palermo.¹⁸

Following the war, between 1946 and 1950 an estimated 25,000 Poles migrated to Argentina, including 16,020 members of the Polish armed forces fighting in the West who chose, with their families, not to return to a Communist-dominated Poland after the war. Unlike much of the agricultural migration at the beginning of the century, most of these brought at least some money with them

¹⁷Ciawlowski, "Poles in Argentina," 181; Pietraszek, "The Other Child," 91; Michał Więckowski, "The Polish-Argentine Press Before and After World War II," in Edward S. Urbański, ed., *Polish Contributions to Latin American Culture* (Miami, FL: American Institute of Polish Culture, 1996), 189; "Los polacos en Río de la plata," http://es.wikipedia.org/wiki/Inmigraci%C3%B3n_en_Argentina#Poles; "East European Immigration to Argentina," <http://www.casahistoria.net/easteurope.htm>.

¹⁸Ciawlowski, "Poles in Argentina," 184; Vicky Gashe, "Polish-Argentines, A Hidden Community," *The Argentina Independent*, June 11, 2010; "Pioneros polacos del Río de La Plata," http://es.wikipedia.org/wiki/Inmigraci%C3%B3n_en_Argentina#Poles; Muzeum Emigracji Gdynia, <http://en.muzeumemigracji.pl>.

and many, having served in the Polish Armored Division, had considerable technical skills. More than 300 scientists, engineers and managers arrived including geologists, meteorologists, mining engineers, and others with technical skills. The number of such people is evident when one considers that the new Association of Polish Engineers and Technicians in Argentina numbered 441 members. Other professionals included pilots, physicians, attorneys, pharmacists, musicians, artists, and singers. Many of these new arrivals settled in Merlo, a Buenos Aires suburb, where they established a distinctive area called Aguila Blanca (White Eagle).¹⁹

A LOOK AT THE POLES IN BUENOS AIRES PROVINCE TODAY

Net figures for Polish immigration to Argentina between 1921 and 1976 are provided in Table 1. By the year 2000, between 500,000 and one million Argentines were believed to be of Polish heritage (between 1.25 percent and 2.5 percent of the population). In 2004, the Polish embassy in Buenos Aires estimated that Argentina contained the sixth largest number of Poles outside Poland. Most resided in the provinces of Buenos Aires, Misiones, Córdoba, and Santa Fe. Of these, Misiones continued to record the highest percentage of Poles in its population.

TABLE 1
NET POLISH MIGRATION TO
ARGENTINA, 1921-76²⁰

<u>Years</u>	<u>Number</u>
1921-30	119,410
1931-40	31,500
1941-50	16,784
1951-60	325
1961-70	1,745
<u>1971-76</u>	<u>- 529</u>
Total	169,335

In this section I shall examine Polish immigration in the province of Buenos Aires, and especially in the towns of La Plata, Berisso, and Ensenada.²¹ Since the

¹⁹Ciawlowski, "Poles in Argentina," 184, 187; "Los Polacos in Argentina," <http://www.pom.org.ar/PolArg.htm>; Muzeum Emigracji Gdynia, <http://en.muzeumemigracji.pl>.

²⁰DNM. 1976. Cuadros por Nacionalidades 1857-1976.

²¹The research for this portion of the article was undertaken during 1999 through a scholarship from the Commission of Scientific Research of the Province of Buenos Aires.

number of studies focusing on Buenos Aires is small, my goal is to present information that will constitute the basis for a more thorough understanding of Polish migration in the province of Buenos Aires. This research was carried out, on the one hand, through the analysis of bibliographic information and documentation about the group in question, and, on the other, through the implementation of a socio-cultural survey whose results were loaded into a database built for that purpose as part of the research project "Mapping Socio-Cultural Groups of Immigrants and Their Descendants Settled in the Province of Buenos Aires." This research project was developed at the National University of La Plata between 1999 and 2001. It included 2,300 interviews involving 319 immigrant associations in more than 100 locations in the province spread out over 35 communities of migrants and their descendants.

The main variables taken into account in the survey were sex, age, language, occupation, marital status and marriage patterns, religion, education, and cultural practices linked to the place of origin (such as food, the execution of musical instruments and dance, among others). Interviews were conducted with immigrants or descendants of any generation, of both sexes, from an age as young as six. First, we constructed a preliminary register of individuals to interview. This register had its origin in associations that brought ethnic residents together and was then expanded to relatives and friends who were identified by means of *ad hoc* questions in the forms. Our survey was conducted during 1999 and involved 76 individuals whose information was entered into a database between the years 2000 and 2001. The information obtained was complemented, adjusted and tested on the basis of other techniques such as in-depth interviews and life stories.

It should be perhaps clarified that Polish immigrants, and mainly their descendants, settled throughout the province of Buenos Aires (not only in the towns selected for this study) and in other Argentine provinces, especially in the agricultural colonies in the province of Misiones. For this reason, locating this group proved difficult due to two main factors: the aforementioned dispersion and the dilution within the local population due to intermarriages. The choice of the cities of reference—La Plata, Berisso, and Ensenada—was due to the presence of a significant number of individuals of Polish origin (by birth or descent) concentrated in a relatively small geographical area, and to the Unión Polaca en Berisso (Polish Union of Berisso), the first Polish society founded in the province. The cities of La Plata, Berisso and Ensenada formed a large urban industrial and commercial triangle located about 60 km from the city of Buenos Aires, the political and economic center of Argentina. In the last thirty years this region has gone through a series of transformations which were accompanied by a process of deindustrialization, as well as a tendency toward lower average income. Until the mid-twentieth century, however, it was one of the most attractive places for Poles in country.

The city of La Plata, capital of the province of Buenos Aires, was founded in

1882 and attracted from its beginnings large contingents of foreigners to work in the construction of the harbor, housing, and public buildings of the nascent city. The oldest foreign institution is the Italian Association of Mutual Aid, which was founded in 1883. Other associations of Spanish, French, German, Irish, Japanese, Syrian, Lebanese, Swiss, Portuguese, Greek, Armenian, Israeli, and more recently, Uruguayan, Chilean, Peruvian, Bolivian, Paraguayan, and Brazilian immigrants were founded over time. The city of Ensenada was founded in 1801, but its growth began around 1893 with the construction of the Apostadero Naval building and the nationalization of its port on the banks of the Rio de La Plata. The attraction of this area was reinforced in 1923 when a shipyard was created on the Santiago River and in 1925 when the oil distillery Yacimientos Petrolíferos Fiscales was built. Berisso was founded in 1871 and, by 1900, was an important port with a well-developed shipbuilding industry and a particularly important refrigeration industry for meat processing which attracted thousands of immigrants to the city.

The importance of immigrant communities is reflected in the number of clubs or organizations founded in the area: an Albanian society was created in 1907; a Greek organization and fraternity in 1911; the Polish Union in 1913; a Portuguese Society in 1915; and, in the same year, an Irish Society. Between 1917 and 1935 further associations were created by Italians, Ukrainians, Armenians, Belarusians, Bulgarians, Germans, Yugoslavs and Czechs. This foreign presence led to the formation of the Federation of Foreign Institutions which, since the 1970s, has organized an annual Festival of the Immigrant. In 1978 Berisso was declared "Provincial Capital of the Immigrant."

POLISH MIGRATION IN BUENOS AIRES

For this study we were not able to locate descendants of immigrants who settled in Argentina during the first period of immigration before 1919. Actual migrants born in Poland residing in the towns mentioned above in 1999 belonged to the interwar and postwar migrations. The vast majority came from the eastern and central regions of Poland including towns and villages which disappeared as such after World War II or whose territories passed to control of the Soviet Union. Our research indicated that the reasons which led Poles to migrate after the First World War were rumors of a potential new war and the desire to find a better life for themselves and their families. In this period, Polish immigration to Argentina consisted of 114,200 individuals for the 1921-30 decade and 42,300 for the period between 1931 and 1940.²² Those who migrated in the postwar years alluded to Soviet rule of Poland as their primary reason for relocation in hopes of finding

²²These data are taken from the Instituto Nacional de Estadísticas y Censos de Argentina (INDEC), *Anuario Estadístico 1987-1988*. They differ somewhat from Table 1 which were presented in the DNM. 1976. Cuadros por Nacionalidades 1857-1976.

better prospects for the future in a new country.

Argentine embassies encouraged immigration, as did the experiences of relatives or friends living in the new country. In this regard, María Inés Barbero and Cristina Cacopardo noted that the end of the Second World War was not accompanied by any decline in productivity in Argentina. On the contrary, the period 1945-48 was one of unprecedented economic growth. The immediate post-war boom transformed the country into a desirable destiny for a large number of Europeans who left their countries of origin due to the economic and political postwar crisis.²³ Barber and Cacopardo also pointed out that the composition of immigrants according to their country of origin revealed the strong presence of Spanish immigrants during the postwar period, followed closely by Italians. The flow of Poles, Yugoslavs, and Russians was more pronounced in 1948. Statistical sources disclosed the following numbers of Polish immigrants during the immediate postwar period: 4,350 in 1946-47 and 12,083 in 1948-49. By the beginning of the 1950s numbers began to decrease significantly with only 1,950 arriving in 1950-51, 130 in 1952-1953, and 295 in 1954-55.²⁴

Both Polish interwar and postwar migration to the province of Buenos Aires was a collective migration of families because of their primary reasons for migration. Those earlier immigrants with years of residence in the country served as intermediaries between newly arrived migrants and the host country. Both ties of kinship and friendship are involved in the migration process from the outset as the previous migration of relatives and/or friends can be considered a factor seriously affecting the decision to migrate. Once in Argentina, earlier immigrants assisted the newcomers in their integration into the host society through the mechanisms of the ethnic mutual aid societies and family or friendship ties. In accordance with the classic definition of J----- and L-----, MacDonald, migratory chains were thus formed through which the new immigrants learned about business opportunities and often obtained their initial job through relationships with previous arrivals.²⁵ The providing of assistance from the previous immigrants to newer arrivals was not only characteristic of the postwar era, but was also present in the earlier stages of immigration.

Ethnic associations can be regarded as the basic unit to understand the factors of settlement and integration of the immigrants into the new society. They contributed both to creating ties of solidarity and maintaining affective, cultural,

²³María Inés Barbero and Cristina Cacopardo, "La migración europea en la Argentina en la segunda postguerra: viejos mitos y nuevas realidades," *Estudios Migratorios Latinoamericanos*, Vol. 19 (1991), 293.

²⁴INDEC, *Anuario Estadístico, 1979-1980*.

²⁵J. and L. MacDonald, ----- (- - - - - : - - - - - , 1964); Fernando Devoto, *Movimientos migratorios: historiografía y problemas* (Buenos Aires: Centro Editor de América Latina, 1992), 95.

religious, and even political connections with the place of origin. Clubs and Polish associations were founded in order to bring together the natives of Poland and their families and re-create through dance, language, food, and events the cultural patterns of their homeland. In this respect, the brief history of the founding of the Polish Union of Berisso, mentioned earlier, will serve us as an example. In 1912 Antonio Moszynski, a Polish immigrant, settled in Berisso along with his family after meeting a fellow Poles who owned a printing press in that city. Struck with the idea of organizing all Polish residents in Berisso into a single organization, Moszynski, assisted by other Poles, founded the Polish Union of Berisso on April 20, 1913. The goals of that association were to organize cultural events, found a Polish language school, sponsor events to mark patriotic dates, provide various forms of mutual aid, and establish its own headquarters building. Moszynski was elected the first president of the Union, also serving as the first teacher of Polish language at the school. During the First World War the Union collaborated with the Patriotic Committee for the Liberation of Poland established in Buenos Aires. After the conflict, when Poland was reestablished as an independent Republic, the Polish Union in Berisso hosted numerous visits of members of the Polish Embassy, consuls and members of other associations.

In 1936 the Argentine Senate extended legal recognition to the Polish Union of Berisso. The basic purposes articulated in its documents were to promote all forms of Argentine-Polish friendship, maintain unity among the Poles in Berisso, cooperate in encouraging connections between Polish organizations in Argentina and Poland, support cultural activities, commemorate Polish national and religious holidays, sponsor festivals and conferences, maintain a library including subscriptions to newspapers or magazines, support artistic events, and organize social gatherings. One of its projects, beginning in the 1960s, was the Polish "Ballet Folklorico Poznan," while the independent ballet "Przyjacieli" began performing in 1986. In 1994 the two merged into the "Ensemble Poznan-Przyjacieli."

CHARACTERISTICS OF POLISH RESIDENTS IN LA PLATA, BERISSO AND ENSENADA

The information contained in the database gives us a general profile of those of Polish heritage residing in Buenos Aires Province.²⁶

²⁶For immigrants in Buenos Aires, see Mariela Ceva, "Movilidad social y movilidad espacial en tres grupos de inmigrantes durante el periodo de entreguerras. Un análisis a partir de los archivos de fábrica," *Estudios Migratorios Latinoamericanos*, Vol. 19 (1991), 345-61; Héctor Lahitte and Marta Maffia, "A modo de conclusión: Los migrantes caboverdeanos, polacos y griegos," *Cuadernos LARDA*, Vol. 25 (1986); Marta Maffia, Silvia Fontana and Juan José Cascardi, "Estudio antropológico de los inmigrantes en provincia de Buenos Aires," *Sapiens*, Vol. 5 (1985); Marta Maffia, *¿Dónde están los inmigrantes? Mapeo sociocultural de grupos de inmigrantes y sus descendientes en la provincia de Buenos Aires* (La Plata: Ediciones Al Margen, 2002). The research upon which this portion of the article is based appears in Maffia, *¿Dónde están los inmigrantes?*



An advertisement for a Polish festival in Buenos Aires.
In 1996, the Argentine legislature approved June 8 as
"Día del Colono Polaco," Polish Settlers Day.

ORIGIN²⁷: Among the 76 individuals surveyed, both immigrants and descendants, we found 16 individuals born in Poland whose ages ranged between 5 and 25 at the time they entered in the country. Most came from Poland when they were still children between the years 1924-49, with some interruptions due to the war between 1940 and 1946. As an example, two individuals who arrived in Argentina as adults after World War II departed from Poland at the beginning of the conflict; after participating in it and having been in Italy, France, and England, they opted for Argentina as their final destination. The survey also allowed us to know whether the Polish origin of individuals derived from both parents (63 percent) or from a single line (37 percent).

²⁷The origin of the respondent, the respondent's parents, grandparents and spouse, was determined taking into account the presence of any ancestor who was an immigrant in either the paternal or maternal line and in any generation in the descent of the person interviewed.

SEX AND AGE GROUP: The percentages of male and female respondents are quite similar, the number of women being slightly larger, although more males were born in Poland. The age of the interviewed ranged from 16 to 92. Thus, four generations of people of Polish origin are living in the area.

MARITAL STATUS AND MARRIAGE PATTERNS: Regarding the civil status of the respondents, 46.7 percent were married, 16.8 percent widows, 32.4 percent unmarried, 2.6 percent separated, and 1.3 percent divorced. In reference to the origin of the respondents' spouses, 74 percent are of different origin and only 26 percent are of the same origin. Regarding the origin of the spouses (in the case of intermarriages), the results of the survey show a marked preference in the choice for spouses of Italian and Spanish origin, ranking first and second respectively. Only 29 percent of both spouses were Polish. Distinguishing immigrants from descendants, it is noticeable that the immigrant generation exhibited a much higher percentage of marriages with spouses of the same origin (67 percent). In all cases, those who arrived in Argentina already married came with their whole families. There were no cases, very common among other groups of immigrants, in which the male migrated first and then his wife and children came once the father was established in the country. Thus, we can conclude that there was a strong preference for spouses of Polish origin among immigrants, as well as a preference for family preservation. The former was not the case among descendants.

LANGUAGE²⁸: One of the elements related to the identity of the groups considered in this study is language and the degree of its maintenance in the descendants. Using data from the survey we obtained the following information. Of the respondents, 37 percent spoke Polish as their first language; the second language included mostly Polish (45 percent) and Spanish (31 percent). The remaining 24 percent was distributed among Ukrainian, Italian, English and German. It is interesting to note that 45 percent spoke Polish as a second language. In all of these cases the respondents were children of the original immigrants, or in some cases grandchildren who, being born in Argentina, considered Spanish their first language but had learned Polish in their homes or at courses taught by some Polish associations. When the language was learned at home, both parents were Polish. With the exception of Spanish, the most significant of the remaining languages was Ukrainian which was always learned by immigrants whose place of origin was in Polish towns

²⁸With regard to language, we distinguish between the mother tongue or first language, defined as the language that a person acquires primarily and turns into his natural instrument of thought and communication, and the variable second language, the one acquired by a person after acquiring a first language. The latter usually coincides with the official language of the country of residence.

near the border with Ukraine. When those who did not know Polish were asked if they were interested in learning it, only 27.6 percent expressed interest.

RELIGION: All of the immigrant respondents were Catholic, as were their parents, and they reported never having practiced any other religion. Among the descendants, except for one case of the Evangelical religion, all were also Catholic. There were only a couple of cases of individuals who, although raised in the Catholic faith, were not professing it at the time of the survey.

FOOD, MUSIC, DANCE: These variables were believed not to have too much weight and therefore not to serve well as indicators of ethnic identity. Nevertheless, these were the main elements on which the appearance and functioning of the ethnic associations were based; however, it should be clarified that only 32 percent of respondents participated in or regularly attended events organized by these associations. Generally, it appeared that immigrants engaged in a kind of bilingualism (language of the country of origin / language of the new country) where one prevailed over the other in accordance to the context in which the situation occurred. Immigrants had to learn the new language, which allowed them to establish personal contacts—including labor contacts—and to acquire social mobility in the community in which they now resided. As Yolanda Hipperdinger indicated, Argentina offered optimal conditions for linguistic assimilation of immigrant groups. The accelerated urbanization and industrialization of Argentina at the beginning of the twentieth century pushed the immigrants into a radical change in their habits, predisposing them favorably to learn the language of the host country. The possibility of educational and socioeconomic advancement encouraged the learning of Spanish. Polish children who started going to school in Argentina took the language of the host country home, with the result that parents who knew some Spanish reinforced it in their children while those parents who did not know Spanish began learning it.²⁹

CHOICE OF SPOUSE: The choice of spouse was another important element. The need to strengthen ethnic identity promotes in the immigrant marriage to a person of the same ethnic background. Ruth Freundlich de Seefeld showed that intermarriage patterns between members of the various foreign communities and the natives are a key indicator—although not the only one—of social integration. Immigrant men and women interacted within systems or frameworks of relations that had been more or less institutionalized, and the

²⁹Yolanda Hipperdinger, "Las colonias alemanas del Volga en Coronel Suarez: mantenimiento lingüístico," *Estudios Migratorios Latinoamericanos*, Vol. 15-16 (1990), 407-24.

choice of the spouse was only one aspect of these frameworks. By examining the marriage patterns of some groups (Spanish, Italian, French, English and Argentine) in the city of Buenos Aires during the period 1860-1923, Seefeld concluded that foreigners constituted communities and social integration, mediated by their marriage patterns, represented a kind of "cultural pluralism"; that is, each group kept its social and cultural peculiarities. Some groups were more exclusive than others, but in general a decreasing trend of marriages between spouses of the same ethnicity was perceived in the several groups over time.³⁰

From a more critical perspective, the likelihood of marriage was conditioned not only by ethnicity but also by a series of variables that delimited the universe of "real options" of the spouses. In that context the existence of high levels of endogamy was expected. Rather than the desire for national solidarity, as Dedier Marquiegui argued, this would be a consequence of family and interpersonal social networks established in the pre-migratory stage.³¹ As noted above, the majority of Poles who migrated chose a Polish spouse. A large percentage met their spouse as a result of habitual contacts with individuals of the same ethnic group in the neighborhood, in an ethnic association, by visiting fellow Poles, or other family or ethnic contacts. The children of such marriages (between individuals of the same origin) expressed a greater participation and belonging to the ethnic group of their parents than those born of marriages between individuals of different ethnic groups. This is manifested mainly by an interest in Polish culture, learning the language, typical food preparation, and participation in activities of ethnic associations, as well as by traveling to Poland to learn about the land of their parents. The "transgressions" of the marital "rules" began to appear among the immigrants' descendants. In the second generation (the first generation of descendants), however, the general tendency was to marry individuals of Polish origin. The desire to marry someone who shared a common ethnic origin arose from the need to perpetuate the identity of the group by not allowing ethnicity to be diluted as a result of intermarriage.

Many of the Polish descendants interviewed who married individuals of different ethnic origin shared with them the same religion, Catholicism. It seems that religion was often more important than ethnicity. As one interviewee said: "I married a son of Spanish parents, but Catholic, since it was

³⁰Ruth Freundlich de Seefeld, "La integración social de los extranjeros en Buenos Aires según sus pautas matrimoniales: ¿pluralismo cultural o Crisol de razas? (1860-1923)," *Estudios Migratorios Latinoamericanos*, Vol. 2 (1986), 203-31, see especially 231.

³¹Dedier Marquiegui, "Revisando el debate sobre la conducta matrimonial de los extranjeros. Un estudio a partir del caso de españoles y franceses en Luján, 1880-1920," *Estudios Migratorios Latinoamericanos*, Vol. 20 (1992), 3-36, especially 6.

unthinkable to marry someone who did not have the same religion.”³² Among those surveyed, there appeared to be no marriages between Polish immigrants with a spouse who professed a religion other than Catholic. It is noteworthy that the importance religion played in this group, where “Polishness” is inevitably linked with Catholicism, appeared to exclude Jewishness which was also found among a high percentage of other arrivals from lands that were within Poland in the interwar or postwar periods. As one respondent explained, “We Poles are Catholic and there is not a Pole who is not Catholic.... Well, there are Jews, but they are not ... are not one of us, they are not Poles.” Jews born in Poland did not participate (and in general they have not participated) in associations within the Polish communities in Argentina. They identified themselves by means of religion rather than by nationality, and therefore they joined Jewish institutions. It is also interesting that, to a great extent, ethnic associations of Polish immigrants—prior to the emergence of the Polish State and even later—have been encouraged and led by the Catholic Church.

CONCLUSIONS

Early Polish migration to Argentina largely consisted of individuals motivated by political events. Since many of these were refugees of European revolutions, several joined the Argentine armed forces or obtained professional positions either in government or in the civil society. Especially prevalent among the group were academics, engineers, technicians, and other professionals. Beginning about 1897, an agricultural migration began with people settling as small farmers or workers on larger plantations, especially in Misiones Province. The exploitation of oil resources and the general movement of the Argentine economy toward industrialization brought a number of engineers, technicians, skilled industrial laborers, and other professionals to Argentina during the interwar period, most of whom settled in urban areas. During this time the beginnings of an organized Polonia matured with the appearance of local and national ethnic organizations and a growing press. While the Second World War slowed immigration briefly, its conclusion brought another large group of Poles to Argentina, once again including a high percentage of engineers, technicians, professionals and skilled workers.

A study of the interviews conducted among those of Polish ethnicity in Buenos Aires Province found that the immigrants, caught between two different cultural affiliations, developed their identity dynamically. Carolina Mera noted that the changes produced due to the migratory displacement often caused ambiguous situations that were sometimes painful. Individuals migrating share

³²This and succeeding quotations from respondents were obtained from Polish descendants in 1999.

language, a history, values, a way of interpreting life, a way of working, certain forms of organization, behaviors that are conditioned by socialization, a specific cultural heritage and different modes of integration the original society proposes. In the context of a migration process, socialization becomes conflictive and often contradictory. The individual internalizes a double set of values: those of the society of origin and those of the host society with its new rules and values. This double condition of integration makes problematic, in a very particular way, the everyday life of the new settlers.³³

According to Nasim Yampey, adjustments to those changes imply different developmental stages, both at the level of the individual and the group. The first stage—that of the initial contact with the host country—is characterized by a certain exultation of the cultural values of the country of origin. That is, when immigrants create institutions to organize compatriots for mutual aid among the older immigrants and newcomers, the former act as agents of adjustment, satisfying basic needs like lodging, food, employment, and so on. “To be in the Association was as if being in Poland. We talked in Polish, we prepared our typical meals, we helped each other to get jobs ... it was like a small Poland.”³⁴ A second stage appears when immigrants seemingly adjust themselves to the new country. This stage was often accompanied by the fantasy of feeling almost like a tourist who will soon return to the native country. “We were married for seven years, had two children, and my husband wanted to travel with the whole family. We had to make money and return.” The third stage, in turn, starts when the immigrant postpones the return to the country of origin. It is postponed but not ruled out, which prevents them from making an active adjustment. The fourth stage is when the immigrant finally gives up the idea of returning to the country of origin and assumes his or her relocation is permanent. This requires an adjustment of the values which have been already internalized and the acquisition of new ones. However, the immigrant never totally abandons the idea of going back. “When we came here I brought some money to travel back and forth. Return to our country? My husband worked for a month and then for three month he was jobless; later, when the children were a little older, I started working in the cold storage facility [for meat processing] too, and our situation improved, we bought a little house and we stayed here.” “We always wanted to return, but we bought the house, we had children, grandchildren ... and finally we stayed here.”

The immigrant always takes as a reference his/her country of origin, which organizes perceptions in the new place of residence. Furthermore, it is possible that the immigrant reinforces this attitude through contact with other compatriots and individuals who maintain identical patterns of ethnic behavior and perception of reality. In this way, one who migrates to a new country, who has to deal with

³³Carolina Mera, *La inmigración coreana en Buenos Aires. Multiculturalismo en el espacio urbano* (Buenos Aires: Eudeba, 1998), 14.

³⁴Nasim Yampey, *Migración y transculturación* (Buenos Aires: Galerna, 1982).

living in a new context, unable to detach himself/herself from the old frame of reference, finally structures daily life around two opposites. On the one hand is the family and life among ethnic compatriots in a context that recreates that of the country of origin, where people speak the mother tongue, listen to and dance music of that country of origin, eat typical foods, and so on. The opposite is that of public life and employment amid an unfamiliar culture where communication is carried out in the language of the host country. The interviews conducted among the sample used in this review clearly illustrate the differing orientations between the immigrants and their descendants and the tendencies to assimilate into the country of residence increasingly from the immigrant generation through the children and grandchildren born in Argentina.