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SLAVIC COMMUNITIES IN AUSTRALIA: THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND AND THE CURRENT SITUATION

Migration to the Australian continent has ancient origins. On 1 January 1901, the Federation of the Commonwealth of Australia included six former colonies: New South Wales, Victoria, South Australia, Tasmania, Queensland, and Western Australia. The British origin had 78% of those who were born overseas. The immigration was high on the national agenda. The most ambitious nation-building plan based on immigration was adopted in Australia in the post-World War II period. The shock of the war was so strong that even old stereotypes did not prevent Australians from embarking on immigration propaganda with the slogan "Populate or Perish". In the middle 1950s, the Australian Department of Immigration realized that family reunion was an important component of successful settlement. In 1955 the Department implemented "Operation Reunion" – a scheme was intended to assist family members overseas to migrate to the continent and reunite with the family already living in Australia. As a result, 30000 people managed to migrate from countries such as Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Poland, Romania, the Soviet Union, and the former Yugoslavia under this scheme.

Today Australia's approach to multicultural affairs is a unique model based on integration and social cohesion. On governmental level, the Australians try to maintain national unity through respect and preservation of cultural diversity. An example of such an attitude to historical memory is a database created by the Department of Home Affairs (DHA). For our research, we decided to choose information about residents of East-Central European origin (Ukraine-born, Poland-born, and Czech Republic-born citizens) in Australia, based on the information from the above mentioned database.

The article provides the brief historical background of Polish, Ukrainian and Czech groups on the Continent and describes the main characteristics of these groups of people, such as geographic distribution, age, language, religion, year of arrival, median income, educational qualifications, and employment characteristics.

Key words: *Australia, immigration, the Department of Home Affairs, Ukraine-born, Poland-born and Czech Republic-born citizens in Australia.*

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СЛОВ'ЯНСЬКІ ГРОМАДИ В АВСТРАЛІЇ: ІСТОРИЧНЕ ПІДҐРУНТЯ ТА СУЧАСНИЙ СТАН

Міграція на австралійський континент має давнє походження. 1 січня 1901 року була створена федерація Співдружності Австралії, що включала шість колишніх колоній: Новий Південний Уельс, Вікторія, Південна Австралія, Тасманія, Квінсленд та Західна Австралія. Британське походження мало 78% тих, хто народився за кордоном. Імміграція займала важливе місце в національному порядку денному. Найамбітніший план державного будівництва на основі імміграції був прийнятий в Австралії в період після Другої світової війни. Шок війни був настільки сильним, що навіть старі стереотипи не завадили австралійцям розпочати імміграційну пропаганду з гаслом «загинути чи заселити». У середині 1950-х років австралійське Міністерство імміграції зрозуміло, що возз'єднання сім'ї є важливою складовою успішного переселення. У 1955 р. Міністерство здійснило «Операцію возз'єднання» – схема мала на меті допомогти членам сімей за кордоном переїхати до континенту, щоб возз'єднатися з родиною, яка вже жила в Австралії. В результаті 30000 людей встигли іммігрувати з таких країн, як Болгарія, Чехословаччина, Угорщина, Польща, Румунія, Радянський Союз та колишня Югославія за цією схемою.

Сьогодні підхід Австралії до мультикультурних справ є унікальною моделлю, заснованою на інтеграції та соціальній згуртованості. На державному рівні австралійці намагаються підтримувати національну єдність через повагу та збереження культурного різноманіття. Прикладом такого ставлення до

історичної пам'яті є база даних, створена Міністерством внутрішніх справ. Для нашого дослідження ми вирішили обрати інформацію про жителів Східно-Центральної Європи (громадяни України, Польщі та Чехії) в Австралії, виходячи з інформації представленої у цій базі даних.

У статті стисло розповідається про історичні передумови та досвід польських, українських та чеських груп на континенті, а також наведено основні характеристики цих груп людей, такі як географічний розподіл, вік, мова, релігія, рік прибуття до Австралії, середній дохід, освітня кваліфікація та характеристики зайнятості.

Ключові слова: *Австралія, імміграція, Міністерство внутрішніх справ, громадяни Австралії, народжені в Україні, в Польщі та в Чехії.*

On 1 January 1901, the Federation of the Commonwealth of Australia was created. It included six former colonies: New South Wales, Victoria, South Australia, Tasmania, Queensland, and Western Australia. The British origin had 78% of those who were born overseas. The immigration was high on the national agenda and was prioritised as a constitutional responsibility [8, p. 46]. From that time and till the early 50s the policy of "White Australia" was applied to all emigration processes. This historical policy maintained "a restricted approach to immigration that primarily favoured migration from Britain. Throughout the first half of the 20th century, non-British migrants were not encouraged, and non-Europeans were excluded altogether, although some European groups did manage to filter through" [1, p. 7]. The politicians tried to keep the population of Australia as long culturally and mentally British as possible.

"The White Australia" policy was followed by the government in the period of the First World War and during the interwar period. The threat of the Second World War and the international tension influenced Australian political elites and Australian society. The idea that the population was insufficient for the country's defence became a strong belief. The shock of the war was so strong that even old stereotypes did not prevent Australians from embarking on immigration propaganda with the slogan "Populate or Perish". Moreover, a dynamically developing economy caused the need to rethink immigration policy. A national opinion poll, conducted in 1943, found that 90% of Australians wanted post-war immigration, while 40% favoured unlimited immigration [2, p. 63].

Today Australia's approach to multicultural affairs is a unique model based on integration and social cohesion. On governmental level, the Australians try to maintain national unity through respect and preservation of cultural diversity. An example of such an attitude to historical memory is a database created by the Department of Home Affairs (DHA). It is available as "The Community Information Summaries" (CIS) on the official web site of the institution [4] and allows tracking statistical information about people born in more than 100 birthplaces. A broad range of statistical data is provided by Australian Census of Population and Housing by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS). Last time data were updated on January 2019.

The main task of the article is to provide the newest information about the residents of East-Central European origin (Ukraine-born, Poland-born and Czech Republic-born citizens) in Australia. The aims are to describe not all, but main characteristics of these groups of people, such as historical background, geographic distribution, age, language, religion, year of arrival, median income, educational qualifications, and employment characteristics.

Historical background

The first settlers and visitors. According to the Australian Census of Population and Housing held by the ABS, the earliest contact of Poland-born people with Australia took place in 1696, when ten citizens of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth were included in the crew of Captain Willem Vlamingh's Dutch expedition that explored the Western Australian coast [6, p. 1]. We can add that among these ten men could be either Ukrainians or Lithuanians, since the chronicles are unlikely to separate them. However, the first mention regarding Lithuanians in Australia dates back to the period after World War II, not the time of Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth: "Lithuanian refugees fled to Germany when their country was invaded by the Soviet Red Army in 1940. Following the end of World War II, they were unable to return home, as the Baltic States fell under Soviet rule. Between 1947 and 1953, 9906 Lithuanian refugees arrived in Australia as displaced persons" [5, p. 1]. The first Polish settler in Australia was a convict who arrived in 1803 and became a successful wheat farmer in Tasmania. Later arrivals included a group of Poland-born people who established a community in South Australia which grew to about 400 people by the 1880s. Some Poles joined the Australian gold rush in the 1850s [6, p. 1].

About the first Ukrainian person in Australia, the site provides the following information: "One of the first Ukrainian migrants to Australia was Mykhailo Hryb, a soldier in the Austrian army, who came from the western part of Ukraine when it was part of the Austrian Empire. In the 1860s, Hryb sailed to Australia, where he established a sheep farm" [9, p. 1].

The first Czech to visit Australia was Bohemia-born Tadeáš Haenke, a botanist, physician, chemist and geographer who sailed with the Spanish navy to South America on a spying and scientific mission. The mission landed in Sydney in 1793 and stayed there for one month [3, p. 1]. The earliest known settler in Australia from Bohemia was Mark Blycher, a convict who arrived in Sydney in 1830. The gold rushes of the 1850s attracted a number of Czechs to settle in Victoria, but the community remained small.

Period of World War I and World War II. In 1921, there were 1780 Poland-born residents in Australia and by 1933 this number had almost doubled. Following World War II, many Polish refugees came to Australia. Between 1947 and 1954, the Poland-born population increased from 6573 to 56594 people [6, p. 1]. Many refugees worked under two-year contracts as unskilled workers jobs and continued doing similar jobs for some period after their contracts ended.

Before World War I up to 5000 Ukrainians had arrived in Australia (along with a larger group of Russians), who were workers of the Chinese Eastern Railway, which was completed in 1902 [9, p. 1]. Most of them lived in Brisbane and were politically active. A large number also returned to Ukraine at the outset of the Russian revolution.

Following World War II, the first Ukrainians arrived from the displaced persons camps in Europe in 1948. They came to Australia on assisted passages, which included two-year work contracts with the Australian Government. Among the migrants were priests, lawyers, doctors, and engineers, but the vast majority were people from a rural background. In the 1930s, economic crisis and Nazi occupation of Bohemia and Moravia resulted in several hundred Czechs, including Czech Jews, arriving in Australia. The first wave of migration from Czechoslovakia occurred after 1948 when it was made a satellite state of the Soviet Union, leading to the departure of large numbers of political refugees. By 1954, there were 12680 Czechoslovakia-born people in Australia [3, p. 1].

Period of the middle of the XX century. In the middle 1950s the Australian Department of Immigration realized that family reunion was an important component of successful settlement. In 1955 the Department implemented "Operation Reunion" – a scheme was intended to assist family members overseas to migrate to Australia to reunite with the family already living in Australia [2, p. 131]. As a result, 30000 people managed to migrate from countries such as Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Poland, Romania, the Soviet Union and the former Yugoslavia under this scheme [1, p.35].

Speaking about further movement from Poland to Australia, there were some changes in the Polish emigration laws, which helped to overcome difficulties in border crossing. During the next wave of migration, almost 15000 Poland-born people came to Australia between 1957 and 1966 [6, p. 1]. In 1954 Australian Census recorded 14757 Ukraine-born citizens [9, p. 1]. After that, the number of migrants from the Soviet Ukraine was negligible, apart from a few Ukrainian Jews. There was also limited migration of Ukrainians from communities in Poland and Yugoslavia.

The second wave of Czech migration to Australia occurred after the Soviet Union occupation of Czechoslovakia in 1968. Around 240000 Czechs left the country, with around 6000 coming to Australia [8, p. 251].

Period after 1991. The emergence of the Solidarity movement influenced the Polish emigration laws, among others. During the early 1990s, Australia granted permanent entry to more than 25000 Poland-born settlers. Many of them arrived as refugees. The total number of Poland-born population of Australia in 1991 was 68500 people. Since that time the improvement of living conditions in Poland and its membership in the European Union have significantly reduced the levels of Polish migration to Australia.

Since the democratization of Czechoslovakia in 1989 and its dissolution into separate Czech and Slovak republics in 1993, there has been little migration of Czechs to Australia. Recent Czech migration is mainly for economic and tertiary opportunities.

The other situation is about migration from Ukraine. It increased after 1991 and today is mostly for skilled and family migrants.

The Current Situation

Geographic distribution. The latest data (2016) recorded 45368 Poland-born people in Australia, a decrease of 6,8% from the 2011 data (see Fig.1). This distribution shows: Victoria had the largest number with 14706 followed by New South Wales (13451), Western Australia (5573) and Queensland (5030) [6, p. 1].
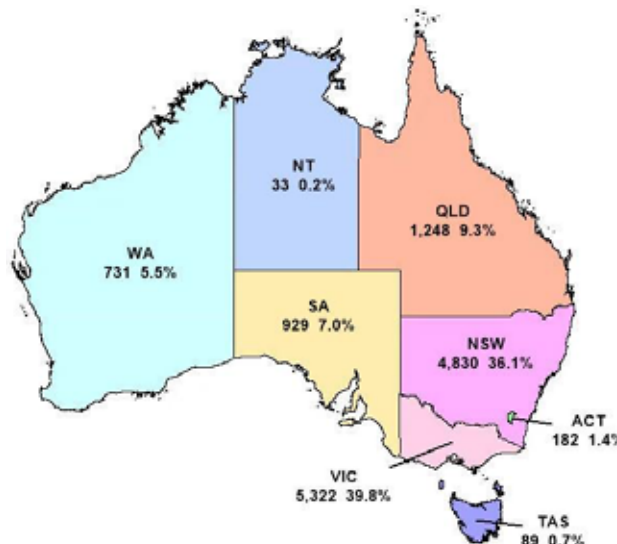
Figure 1. Geographic distribution. Poland-born
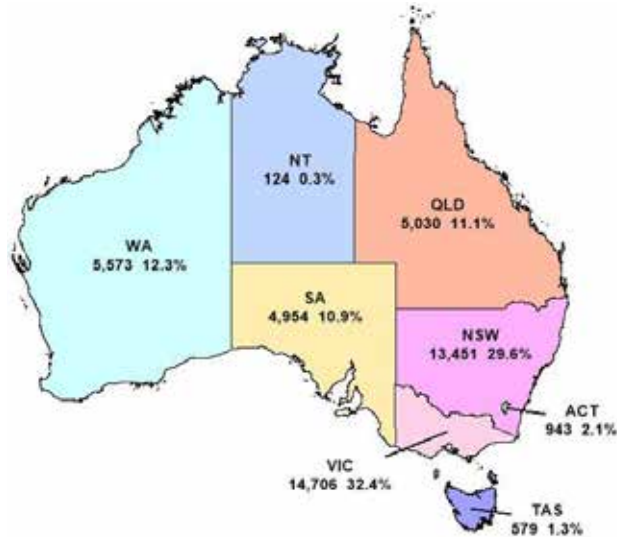
Source: [6, p. 1].

There are 13366 Ukraine-born people in Australia (decrease of 4,5%) (see Fig.2). Like in Poland-born communities, Victoria had the largest number with 5322 followed by New South Wales (4830), Queensland (1248) and South Australia (929) [9, p. 1].

Figure 2. Geographic distribution: Ukraine-born

Source: [9, p. 1].

The data recorded 7702 (see Fig. 3) Czech Republic-born people in Australia (an increase of 3,5%). New South Wales had the largest number with 3310 followed by Victoria (1595), Queensland (1307) and Western Australia (749) [3, p. 1].

Figure 3. Geographic distribution: Czech Republic-born
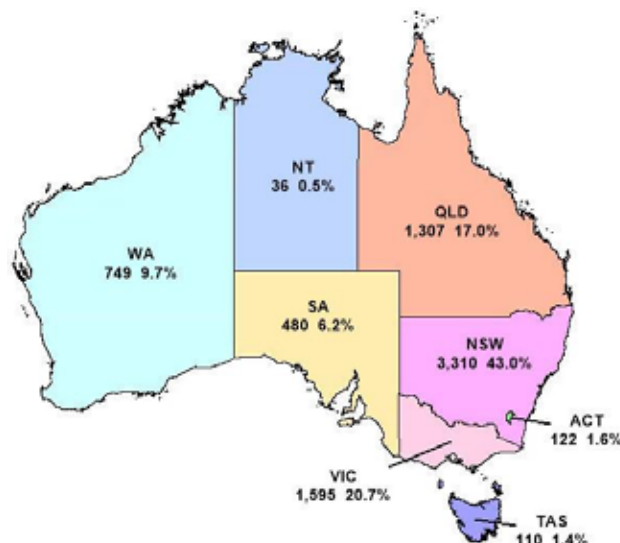
Source: [3, p. 1].

Age and Sex. The median age of the <u>Poland-born people</u> in 2016 was 59 years compared with 44 years for all overseas-born and 38 years for the total Australian population [6, p. 2]. There were 19458 males (43%) and 25907 females (57%) – 75 males per 100 females.

The median age of the <u>Ukraine-born</u> in 2016 was 50 years. There were 5382 males (40%) and 7986 females (60%). The sex ratio was 67 males per 100 females [9, p. 2].

The median age of the <u>Czech Republic-born</u> in 2016 was 47 years (compared with 44 years for all overseas-born and 38 years for the total Australian population). There were 3501 males (45%) and 4200 females (55%): 83 males per 100 females [3, p. 2].

Year of Arrival. 85% of the <u>Poland-born people</u> arrived in Australia prior to 2007 (see Fig.4). According to the 2016 Census [6, p. 3]:

• 5,4% arrived between 2007 and 2011;
• 6,3 % arrived between 2012 and 2016.

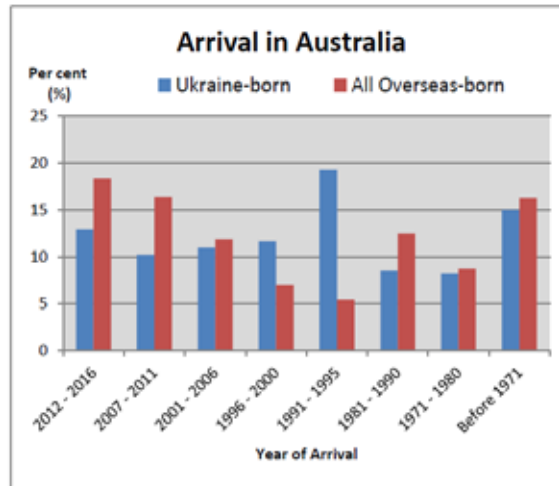*Figure 4. Poland-born people in Australia*
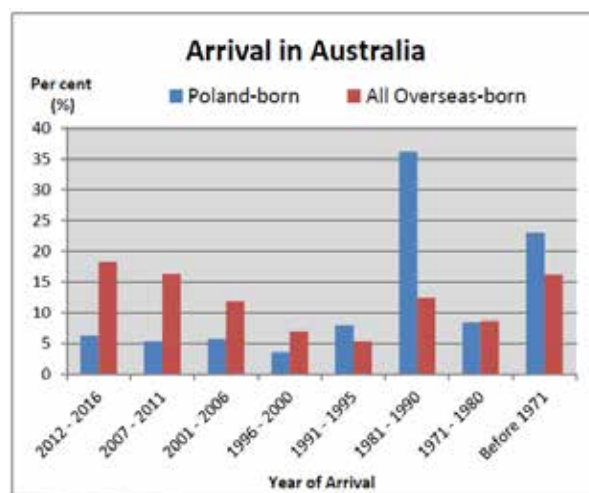
Source: [6, p. 3].

74% of the <u>Ukraine-born</u> arrived in Australia prior to 2007 (see Fig.5). Among the total Ukraine-born in Australia, according to the 2016 Census [9, p. 3]:

• 10,2% arrived between 2007 and 2011;
• 12,9% arrived between 2012 and 2016.
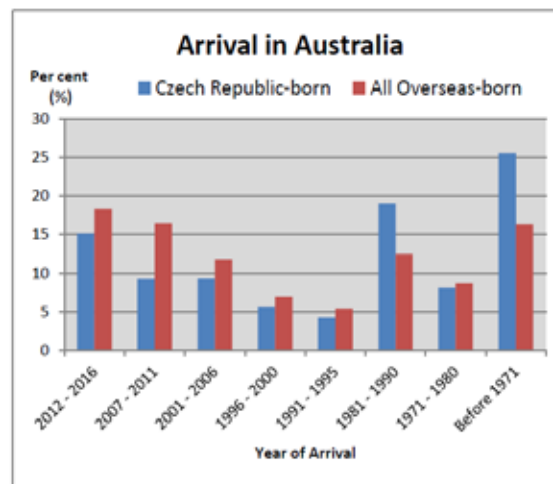
Figure 5. Ukraine-born people in Australia

Source: [9, p. 3].

72% of the Czech Republic-born people arrived in Australia prior to 2007 (see Fig.6). According to 2016 Census [3, p. 3]:
• 9,3% arrived between 2007 and 2011;
• 15,1% arrived between 2012 and 2016.

Figure 6. Czech Republic-born people in Australia

Source: [3, p. 3].

Language. According to J.J. Smolicz, there are numerous ethnical groups (he names Lithuanians and Poles, among others) in Australia whose members "often show a great attachment to their native language, so that the second and even third generation easily use it, of course, together with English" [7, p. 20].

Poland-born: the main languages spoken at home are Polish (32245), English (11130) and German (463) (see Fig.7). Of the 34078 Poland-born who spoke a language other than English at home, 86,3% spoke English very well or spoke English well, and 12,8% did not speak English well or did not speak English at all [6, p. 2].

Figure 7. Language. Poland-born
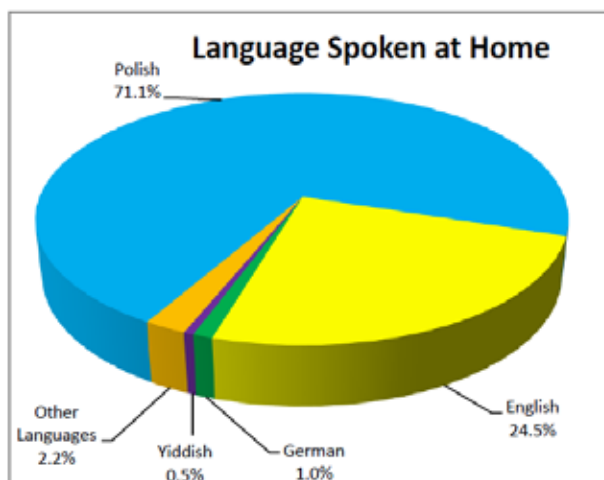
Source: [6, p. 2].

Ukraine-born: the main languages spoken at home are Russian (7552), Ukrainian (3248) and English (1981). Of the 11348 Ukraine-born who spoke a language other than English at home (see Fig.8), 80,3% spoke English very well or spoke English well, and 19% did not speak English well or did not speak English at all [9, p. 2].

Figure 8. Language. Ukraine-born
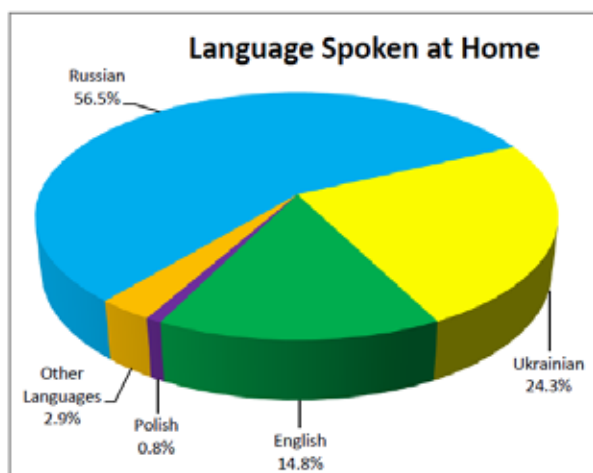
Source: [9, p. 2].

Czech Republic-born: the main languages spoken at home are Czech (4535), English (2629) and German (162). Of the 5040 Czech Republic-born who spoke a language other than English at home (see Fig.9), 94,3% spoke English very well or spoke English well, and 4,9% did not speak English well or did not speak English at all [3, p. 2].
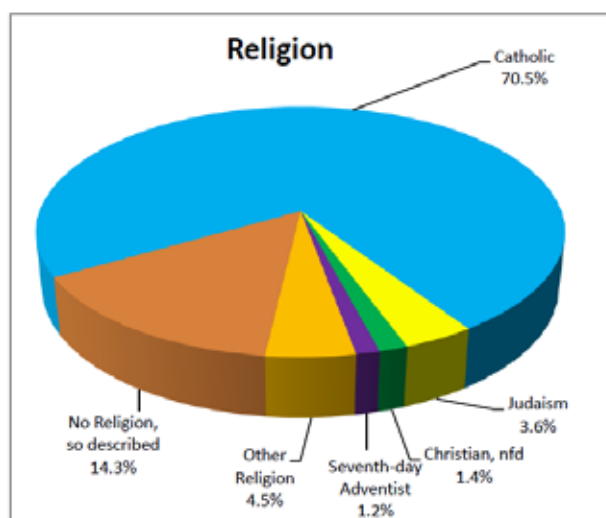
Figure 9. Language. Czech Republic-born
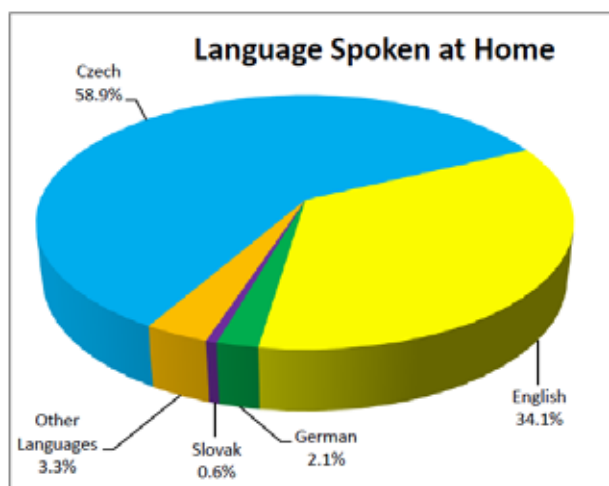
Source: [3, p. 2].

Religion. Poland-born: the major religious affiliations are Catholic (31974), Judaism (1622) and Christian, not defined (648). Of the Poland-born 14,3% stated "No Religion" (see Fig.10) which was lower than that of the total Australian population (29,6%), and 4,2% did not state a religion [6, p. 3].
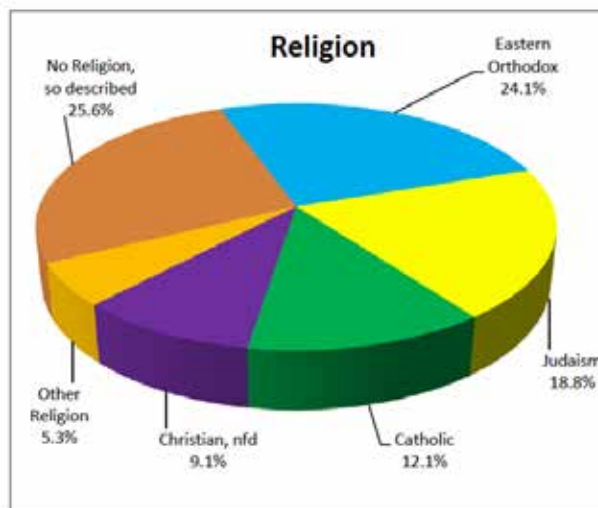
Figure 10. Religion. Poland-born

Source: [6, p. 3].

Ukraine-born: the major religious affiliations are Eastern Orthodox (3217), Judaism (2513) and Catholic (1621). Of the Ukraine-born, 25,6% stated "No Religion" (see Fig.11) and 4,5% did not state a religion [9, p. 3].
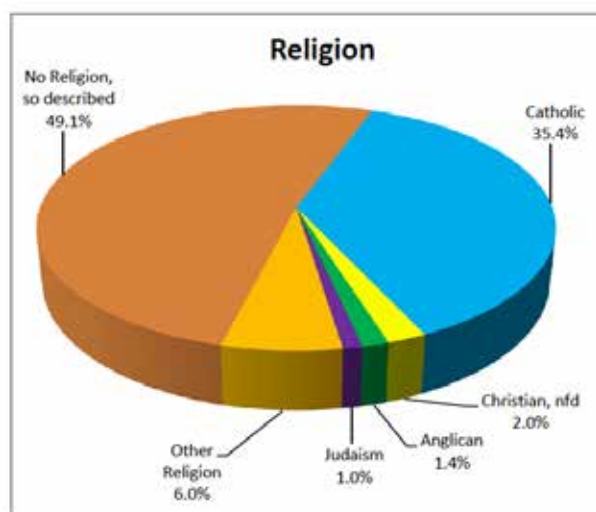
Figure 11. Religion. Ukraine-born

Source: [9, p. 3].

Czech Republic-born: the major religious affiliations are Catholic (2724), Christian, not defined (153) and Anglican (104). Of the Czech Republic-born, 49,1% stated "No Religion" (see Fig.12) which was higher than that of the total Australian population, and 4,8% did not state a religion [3, p. 3].

Figure 12. Religion. Czech Republic-born

Source: [3, p. 3].

Median income. The total Australian population aged 15 and over had a median Individual Weekly Income (IWI) is $662, compared with $615 for all overseas-born and $688 for all Australian-born. The median IWI for the Poland-born in Australia is $580 [6, p. 3], for the Ukraine-born – $511 [9, p. 3] and for Czech Republic-born – $616. [3, p. 3].

Conclusions

Australians share the benefits and responsibilities arising from the cultural, linguistic, and religious diversity of their society. A detailed comparison of the historical background and modern life of Polish, Ukrainian and Czech communities in Australia made it possible to confirm the thesis of much in common between waves of East and Central European migration. For example, we can find common features in the territorial distribution of such migrants or usage of native languages at home. We also examined such factors as age, religion, year of arrival, median income, educational qualifications, and employment characteristics (presented orally during the presentation).

Today after a long history of migration, Australia's approach to multicultural affairs is a unique model based on integration and social cohesion. On the governmental level, the Australians try to maintain national unity through respect and preservation of cultural diversity. Studying the migration to Australia from the previously mentioned countries (Ukraine, Poland, and the Czech Republic) we can add that today this direction is still popular for the skilled (because of a high level of income) and family (because of ecological and social benefits for children) migrants.

Australia was and remains a good place for economic and career opportunities.

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