

Łódź and Silesian voivodships, and especially their capital cities (Łódź and Katowice), are among the fastest depopulating areas of Poland. Interestingly, a parallel intensive labour immigration is noted there. The present dynamics of immigration, calculated as an average annual increase in the number of issued work permits for foreigners in 2015-2019, was the highest in the Łódź region and the fourth highest in the Silesian region. Inflow of immigrants is, however, mostly of temporary and circular nature with some symptoms towards permanent residence of foreigners. In this context the self-government officials start then to perceive immigration as a chance to mitigate negative demographic trends. What do the local officials offer then to make these regions attractive places to work and live for immigrants?

The proposed project aims at conducting **a comparative analysis of policy responses of self-government of various levels in the** at the time of rapidly increasing immigration to Poland in recent years. It focuses on key areas of policy development undertaken in both regions in order to, first, stabilise inflow of immigrants and, second, create conditions for their settlement. Particular attention is given to **Ukrainian labour immigrants** who constitute the majority of foreigners undertaking jobs there.

In detail, the project has **five interrelated objectives**. First, it attempts to fill in a knowledge gap and conduct quantitative **analysis on migration situation** in both regions after Poland's accession to the EU in 2004 that was the moment which accelerated and made migration movements massive in that country. Second, it aims at identifying **policy-making processes and (in)coherence of undertaken actions in response to growing immigration**. It especially examines the discrepancies between the narrative and real activities of local authorities (policy instruments) aimed at enhancing migrants to come and stay in these regions. Third, the project offers an innovative (not conducted yet) insight into the policy-making process towards immigration and migrant integration through **comparative in-depth analysis covering all three self-government tiers: voivodeship** (region), including capital cities (Łódź and Katowice), *powiat* (county), c) *gmina* (commune). Fourth, these findings on institutional context of immigration will be confronted with **individual immigrants' perspective on integration and settlement offer** (basing on the experience of Ukrainian citizens working in both regions). And finally, the project attempts to develop **a concluding map of factors determining the regional policy towards immigration** on particular self-government tiers together with analysis of their importance for the decision-making process.

This study is **important for the development of science** as it attempts to fill a knowledge gap on immigration to the Łódź and Silesian voivodeships, which are the few remaining Polish regions that have not been satisfactorily studied so far. It also gives an insight into the development and implementation of policy solutions towards immigration and migrant integration in these two regions. Furthermore, it goes beyond the traditional approach of studying migration-related policy making on the national or regional levels (voivodeships and their capital cities) and takes into account broader institutional context (the bottom tiers of self-government - counties and communes of urban and rural character) in the comparative perspective.

What makes this project of original nature is not only the fact it challenges existing knowledge gaps on immigration and proposes innovative approach to analyse policy solutions towards immigration at every level of self-government, but it also utilises diverse methods and approaches incorporated from sociology, political sciences and public policy analysis to study these issues. Within the 36-month timeframe this **mixed-method and multi-sited study** will use the triangulation approach in collecting and analysing data. In details, the **desktop research of secondary data** will be conducted to reconstruct the structural context of immigration in both regions. It will cover a critical review of academic literature on national and regional policies towards immigration and migrants integration; a review of statistical registers, legal regulations and other documents of public and non-public migration-oriented entities; local discourse analysis in order to investigate the narrative dimension of policy towards immigration in both regions. Furthermore, the **analysis of quantitative and qualitative primary data** will be also carried out to deconstruct policy-making process and its target groups. It will rely on analysis of expert IDIs with representatives of public and non-public migration-oriented entities involved in policy development and implementation, CAWI-based survey with policy addresses (Ukrainian immigrants), IDIs with Ukrainian immigrants to further deepen survey results, as well as FGIs with Ukrainian immigrants and representatives of their socio-institutional surrounding to confront individual perspectives on integration and settlement offer with policy-makers' statements.

In order to maximise the project's impact the research findings will be broadly disseminated during conferences in Poland and abroad, and submitted for publication in reputable Polish and international journals. Furthermore, the research results should contribute to the formulation of integration programs focused on the real needs of foreigners and the definition of migration challenges facing both depopulating voivodeships.