

KAMILA ZIÓŁKOWSKA-WEISS
Pedagogical University of Krakow, Poland

Evaluation of Selected Components of Standard of Living and Quality of life within a Polish Diaspora: the Example of the Greater Toronto Area

Abstract: The main goal of the article is to describe selected components of standard of living and quality of life within the Polish diaspora of the Greater Toronto Area which includes four districts: Halton, Peel, York and Durham. An author-composed model of mutually affecting objective factors (standard of living) and subjective factors (quality of life) will be presented in the paper. Individual factors (demographic, social, cultural, economic, legal, educational, geographical, and health-related) included in the field research among respondents and based on assigned indices influencing the quality of life in the Polish diaspora of the Greater Toronto Area, will be presented. The evaluation of satisfaction with areas of life selected by the Canadian Polish diaspora will be discussed, as well as their evaluation of standard of living in the Greater Toronto Area, such as Polish schools, parishes, travel agencies, and non-governmental organisations (such as the Song and Dance Ensemble or scouting). Their evaluation of whether their needs were met and accessibility to selected components of the city will also be analysed. Data correlating the length of time respondents have lived in Toronto, and a general evaluation of the quality of life will be presented.

Keywords: Greater Toronto Area; quality of life, Canada; Polish Diaspora; standard of living

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INTRODUCTION

Statistical data shows that despite relatively restrictive regulations, and plans for additional tightening, Canada remains an attractive country for newcomers. It receives around a quarter of a million immigrants every year and, apart from Australia, it has the highest rate of immigration per capita in the world. A positive migration balance means that Canada has the highest population growth among G8 countries and one of the highest among highly developed countries (Population growth rate 2011). Therefore, it is

worth examining whether Canadian Polonia is satisfied with life in this country and what caused them to choose Toronto as a place of residence.

According to Reczyńska & Soroka (2012) in the list of ten countries constituting the most important sources of immigration to Canada in 1991, Poland was in the second place (after Hong Kong). By 1996 it had moved to sixth (after Hong Kong, China, India, the Philippines, and Sri Lanka) but was still ahead of other European countries.

Since 2001, Poland has not only disappeared from the top ten but is not even in the top fifteen (Immigration in Canada 2006: 10) so available Canadian statistics publish much less data on Polish immigrants than on larger groups. Therefore, the proposed sociological and cultural research on standard of living and quality of life would add to the information on the Polish diaspora in Toronto.

Canada is a country with a strong immigrant provenance which, due to the standard of living offered, attracts immigrants from all parts of the world. Toronto is a modern multicultural metropolis that encompasses the entire spectrum of social and cultural diversity (Mamzer, 2003). It is a space with ethnic and racial diversity where each other's symbols are respected. Multiculturalism defined by Fish (1997) manifests itself above all in the ethnic diversity of modern cities' inhabitants.

A metropolis which illustrates this state of affairs is undoubtedly Toronto, the largest city of Canada founded in 1793, which could be called the multicultural capital of the world. In 2019, the city was inhabited by representatives of over 200 ethnic groups, which makes the city more ethnically diverse than Miami, Los Angeles or New York. According to the latest national census (2016), 2.5 million inhabitants live in Toronto and 5.5 million in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA). In the years 2001–2006, 267 855 immigrants settled in Toronto. Data from 2011 show that 47% of its population belongs to minorities. Among them, the most numerous are South Asians (298 372, 12% of the population), Chinese (283 075 – 11.4%), African-Canadians (Black Canadians) (208 555 – 8.4%), Filipinos (102 555 – 4.1%), Latin Americans (64 860 – 2.6%), West Asians (42 755 – 1.7%), Southeast Asians (37 495 – 1.5%), Koreans (34 220 – 1.4%), Arabs (22 485 – 0.9%) and Japanese (11 965 – 0.5%). Among the remaining inhabitants of the Canadian metropolis, 19% are immigrants of the British origin (England, Scotland, Ireland) (Reczyńska, 2001).

The remaining population of Toronto, not included among the so-called visible minorities, is 1 313 930 – 53.1%. These include Native American residents of Canada. Overall, a total of 5 million representatives of visible minorities live in Canada, 96% of whom live in cities, forming 68% of all Canadian metropolitan residents. Before 1961, the population of people of colour represented 3% of Toronto's population (Anisef & Lanphier, 2003).

Toronto is slowly becoming a foreign city to the people who have lived there for generations. They are primarily the descendants of European immigrants who are now moving to new centres on the outskirts of the city. Today, this is primarily Mississauga where the most significant number of those of Polish origin live and where the world's largest Polish parish church outside Poland is located (Reczyńska, 2010a).

According to the Canadian census of 2006, 984 000 people were declaring Polish origin (in total, i.e. those who chose Polish origin as the primary one, and those who included Polish roots among others). This number accounts for over 3% of the entire Canadian population (Statistics Canada 2006 Census), and, as of 2011, just over 190 000 Canadians spoke the Polish language (Statistics Canada 2011 Census of Population).

Canadian Polonia is exceptionally active. The Canadian Polish Congress, established in 1944, has its headquarters in Toronto and brings together numerous Polish diaspora organisations from all over the country. Other institutions founded by Canadian Polonia include the Polish Institute of Arts and Sciences in Canada (*Polski Instytut Naukowy w Kanadzie*), the Canadian Polish Research Institute (*Kanadyjsko-Polski Instytut Badawczy*), the Polish Library (*Biblioteka Polska*), and foundations such as the Canadian Polish Millennium Fund (*Fundusz Wieczysty Millennium*) and the Adam Mickiewicz Foundation (*Fundacja Adama Mickiewicza*). The Polish diaspora organisations promote Polish culture and traditions as well as contacts with Poland (Reczyńska, 2010b). They organise exhibitions, concerts and conferences, take care of Polish schools, and are responsible for the Polish-language mass media (press, television and radio programs).

The very term Polonia is understood as Poles living outside the historical borders of Poland (Polonia Yearbook, 2006). According to the 'Polish Community' Association (*Stowarzyszenie Wspólnota Polska*, 2014), only Polish immigrants are recognised as Polonia. Those who came here after partitions of 1795, including people who immigrated from the areas which ceased to be part of the Polish state after 1939, as well as their descendants, are not included in this specification. The argument is that these people did not leave Poland as such, but the borders of the country ruled by Poles changed. They consider themselves Poles, but not Polonia. Poles or their descendants can be found in every corner of the globe. Numerous communities exist in most European countries, in North America – mainly in the USA and Canada, in South America – Brazil and Argentina, on the African continent – in South Africa, and in Australia (Report by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2013). According to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (2013), up to 21 million Poles and people of Polish origin live outside Poland. In 43 countries, including all European, there are considerable Polonia communities (Rybczyński, 2006).

Given the multiculturalism of GTA and the interpenetration of different cultures, nationalities, and origins, it is essential to examine how Polish Canadians assess their life in this metropolis. Therefore, the primary purpose of this study is to determine the standard of living and quality of life of the Polish community living in the Greater Toronto Area, which includes the city of Toronto and four regions: Halton, Peel, York, and Durham. Because the field research has been extensive, this article presents only some of the results obtained. Polish Canadians' assessment of the areas of life selected by the author will be described briefly, while an assessment of the elements of standard of living according to the Polish community in the Greater Toronto Area will be presented in detail.

STANDARD OF LIVING AND QUALITY OF LIFE

The issues of standard of living and quality of life of a population are hugely diverse and require various socio-statistical studies. Much research in this area was undertaken as part of the Integrated Household Research System, which has been implemented by the Central Statistical Office of Poland (GUS) since 1982. Surveys of standard of living and quality of life of the population have been carried out by various academic and research institutions. Until recently, this issue was also addressed as part of the so-called 'Central and inter-ministerial research problems'. It concerned mainly social indicators, the idea of the standard of living and quality of life of families, minimum subsistence,

the role of social benefits, social poverty, the participation of the population in culture and changes in the broadly understood level and structure of consumption. As a result, many studies have been published, and new papers are continually appearing in articles and books.

The term 'quality of life' appeared in the second half of the 20th century. The research was initiated by Allardt in Finland, who proposed that research on standard of living should be extended by two new elements that make up 'quality of life': analysis of emotional states (*to love*) and a sense of existence, being someone (*to be*). The rise of interest in quality of life was caused by disappointment in economic growth and the belief that an increase in material goods was not enough to make human life better. Attention was drawn to the fact that, apart from positive effects, economic growth also causes negative ones such as degradation of the natural environment, the disintegration of interpersonal relationships and social pathologies.

It has been noticed that a person's satisfaction with life depends not only on the material goods but also on the opportunity of fulfilling higher needs, such as state of mind, sense of security, the possibility of self-realisation and participation in the environment in which we operate as a resident (Ostasiewicz, 2002, 2004).

Quality of life is of interest to economists, statisticians, sociologists, and politicians. Human life is the highest value, and its quality determines the satisfaction and development opportunities of every individual as well as the whole of society. The quality of life of the population is associated with socio-economic development and economic growth and influences one of its factors – human capital. It determines the physical fitness of people, shapes their productivity, the pace of work, and forms their psycho-intellectual condition, education and the level of professional training, which develops creativity and innovation. Besides, societal feelings regarding the quality of life and the prospects for its improvement affect the economic climate, in particular the investment climate, which then translates into the economic situation.

There are two approaches to quality of life in the literature:

- an objective approach, according to which quality of life is found in objective living conditions, measured using objective variables such as GDP, environmental pollution, infant mortality, health, material and social living conditions;
- a subjective approach that equates quality of life with satisfaction in various spheres of human lives. According to this approach, quality of life is a sense of well-being experienced by the individual, and satisfaction or dissatisfaction with life.

Skrzypek (2001, 2007) defines the quality of life as a combination of objective and subjective elements. The underlying determinants include:

- objective conditions which include economic conditions, leisure time, security, housing, human environment, health, social environment, and many others;
- subjective conditions perceived uniquely by each person, manifested in well-being, including assessment of standard of living expressed in terms of satisfaction, happiness, fear, hope, and also loneliness.

Rapley (2003), a researcher on quality of life, stated that it is a synonym for happiness, satisfaction, freedom from coercion, a complete sense of well-being (physical, mental and social), and not just the absence of illness, mental balance, well-being, self-fulfilment, mental comfort, or low unemployment, high income, good life experiences, and meaningful existence. As noted by Jankiewicz-Siwiek & Bartosińska (2011),

there is currently no universal measure that can be used to assess the quality of life. It is described employing many variables which are expressed in different measurement units. These are qualitative features whose measurement is subjective.

According to Słaby (1990, 1994), quality of life includes all those elements of human life that are associated with the fact of human existence, being someone, and feeling various emotional states, for example, resulting from having a family, colleagues or friends.

For social policy, quality of life occurs as a synthetic assessment of standard of living (the state of satisfaction of material and non-material needs). In contrast, social life and the nature of social bonds are measured subjectively as satisfaction with life, a measure of good or bad individual and collective well-being (Rysz-Kowalczyk, 2007).

The definitions of quality of life presented are closely related to Maslow's theory of needs which is based on the assumption of the hierarchical nature of those needs. The lowest level in the hierarchy is physiological needs, followed by the need for security and safety. Maslow defines physiological needs, along with security and safety, as material needs. The next level in this hierarchy are social needs and the need to belong, and here the most important thing is the need for a sense of human value. Maslow defined material and social needs as 'deficiency needs'. The highest position is occupied by needs related to self-fulfilment, including needs for love, truth, justice, perfection, beauty and meaning in life.

The term 'quality of life' covers all of these groups of needs. In addition to material needs, it also includes social and spiritual needs. Therefore, quality of life is satisfied by meeting all human needs.

Słaby believes that whereas 'standard of living' should be determined based on a set of objective measures (quantitative and qualitative), quality of life should be assessed mainly by using subjective measures (indicators). The objective ones record the existing state of affairs, e.g. the level and structure of income, expenses, consumption, while the others tell us about how this state is perceived and assessed by individuals or social groups. These are the indicators that are suitable for assessing the quality of life, understood as the level of personal satisfaction with how various needs are being met.

Subjective measures can be roughly divided into those that express value judgements and those that relate to the respondent's intentions. Value judgements include, in particular, degree of satisfaction (e.g. from work, home, financial situation, etc.) and self-assessment (e.g. whether you have sufficient training for a job, self-assessment of the level of income, accommodation, the standard of available services, etc.) (Rutkowski, 1991, 1987).

Apart from the extensive literature on the subject of standard of living and quality of life, there has not yet been an academic publication analysing them for the Polish community living in the Greater Toronto Area. This study thus is essential from sociological, geographical, migration, and cultural points of view.

THE RESEARCH AND ITS TEMPORAL AND SPATIAL SCOPE

The main area of research was the Greater Toronto Area which was chosen because it contains the largest Polonia in Canada, comprising five districts in the Greater Toronto Area: Peel, Halton, York, Durham and the city of Toronto itself. The research took place in 2017, 2018, and 2019. In 2017, pilot studies were conducted, while actual research

in Canada was carried out in two stages: the first took place from 16 August to 18 September 2018, and the second between 10 and 19 September 2019.

During the research, the author used quantitative methods. These are commonly associated with research in which statistics are used to characterise the phenomena and/or to present research results (although other, 'non-numerical' forms are used, e.g. graphs or relations). Quantitative research is identified with statistical methods, which is justified because they occupy a dominant position in quantitative methods. The essence of quantitative research is to explain the phenomena studied by measurement. Their results are subjected to mathematical-statistical analyses, which make it possible to determine causes, as well as the links and correlations that occur between them, and which in turn are used to determine principles and regularities, sometimes also laws. In quantitative research, the primary and essential activity is a measurement which most often refers to the frequency of occurrence or the degree of intensity of the examined feature (Aleziak, 2008, 2011).

One type of quantitative research is a diagnostic survey, and this method was used here. The empirical basis was research conducted among the Polish community living in the Greater Toronto Area, which took the form of a representative diagnostic survey among the Polonia population of the Greater Toronto Area. The research included 612 respondents (15+ years old); 583 questionnaires were used for analysis. The survey questionnaire was prepared in two languages, Polish and English, and consisted of 17 main questions with a further 15 questions regarding respondent's data.

OBJECTIVE (STANDARD OF LIVING) AND SUBJECTIVE FACTORS (QUALITY OF LIFE)

One of the main aims of the research was to construct a model of objective factors (standard of living) and subjective factors (quality of life) and to examine whether the proposed indicators/measures interact with each other. The created model was based on questions, including individual factors that have or may have an impact on the overall assessment of the standard of living and quality of life. The model described is presented in Table 1. In this study, the particular correlations are not described, but only the factors that the author examined during research in the Greater Toronto Area. A thorough analysis will be included in another paper assessing the standard of living and quality of life of the Polish community in Canada.

Correlations between individual elements on the subjective assessment of services and the social characteristics of the respondents were examined using the Pearson linear correlation coefficient. This coefficient is a descriptive measure of the strength and correlation of two measurable features (Krzysztofiak, Luszniwicz, 1979) whose formulae determine the links between two sets of features, regardless of measurement units. It is a dimensionless indicator whose value ranges from -1.0 to 1.0 inclusive and reflects the degree of the linear correlation between two data sets.

Alongside the term 'quality of life', terms such as 'living conditions' or 'standard of living' are used interchangeably. It should be noted that 'standard of living' is determined by objective living conditions, and 'quality of life' is influenced by subjective factors such as aspirations and level of satisfaction or perception.

Table 1. Model of objective factors (standard of living) and subjective factors (quality of life)

Objective conditions	Indicators of standard of living	Subjective conditions	Indicator of quality of life
Demographic factors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - gender - age - household size - marital status 	Demographic factors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - satisfaction with personal life - satisfaction with having a family (partner) - satisfaction with children
Social factors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - belonging to a socio economic group - life expectancy in Toronto - social assistance - activities - relationship between people, neighbours - pension system 	Social factors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - satisfaction with having friends - satisfaction with having neighbours - satisfaction with social position
Cultural factors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - sense of national identity - religious conditions - activities of parishes and priests (religious structures) - access to culture 	Cultural factors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - satisfaction with the way of spending free time - use of cultural institutions (cinema, theatre)
Economic factors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - income level (individual) - level of household income - material situation - professional situation 	Economic factors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - satisfaction with material living conditions, housing and its fixtures and fittings - satisfaction with income and financial situation - professional satisfaction
Political and legal factors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - residence status - police and security service activities and qualifications - activities of local authorities - city mayor's activities - activities of administrative offices - admitting refugees - country's emigration policy 	Political and legal factors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - sense of security - satisfaction with the work of local authorities - satisfaction with prospects
Educational factor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - education access to education/ training - activities of schools and other educational institutions - the opportunity to develop a hobby 	Educational factor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - having the appropriate qualifications, which allows performing work
Geographic factors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - availability of public transport - transport connections with other cities - respondents' place of residence - quality of the natural environment 	Geographic factors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - satisfaction with the place of residence - satisfaction with transport accessibility - bond with the city - satisfaction with the environment
Health factors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - access to health care - ways of spending free time - conditions for relaxation - access to tourism - access to doing sports 	Health factors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - health satisfaction - satisfaction with mental well being - satisfaction with the possibility of doing sports

Economy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - road infrastructure - availability of grocery stores availability of non grocery stores service availability media availability housing availability 	Economy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - satisfaction with the availability and functioning of the quality of services satisfaction with the availability of services (stores) satisfaction with material living conditions – housing and its fixtures and fittings
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Source: author based on research

The proposed standard of living and quality of life include demographic, social, cultural, economic, legal, educational, geographical, health and economic factors. Individual indicators/measures have been selected for each factor related both to the standard of living and quality of life. The primary thesis of the research is that there is a correlation between selected subjective and objective factors.

As for demographic factors, the indicators determining standard of living included sex, age, household size and marital status. While determining the quality of life, satisfaction with personal life, satisfaction with a family (partner), and satisfaction with children were taken into consideration.

In order to determine the standard of living, social factors such as belonging to a socio-economic group, life expectancy in Toronto, social assistance, human relationships, and the pension system were included. While to determine the quality of life, the author looked at satisfaction with having friends, satisfaction with having neighbours, and satisfaction with social position.

The proposed model also considers cultural factors. In the objective group, these are a sense of national identity, religious conditions, activities of parishes and priests (religious structures), and access to culture. In the subjective group, these are satisfaction with the way of spending free time, the quantity of free time, and the use of cultural institutions (cinema, theatre).

The author also focused on economic factors: assessment of income level (individual), level of household income, material situation, and professional situation as objective factors. Satisfaction with material living conditions – housing, fixtures and fittings, income and financial situation, and work performed, were selected as subjective factors.

Political and legal factors have also been proposed. The assessment of standard of living was examined using the following measures: residence status, activities, and qualifications of the police and law enforcement, work of local authorities, activities of the city mayor, activities of administrative offices, admission of refugees, and emigration policy. At the same time, the quality of life was measured by a sense of security, satisfaction with the work of local authorities, and satisfaction with prospects.

Education factors and access to school are an essential aspect for Canadians, so these were included. The assessment of standard of living was considered through the following indicators: own education, access to education/schooling, the activity of schools and other educational institutions, and the possibilities to develop a hobby. In comparison, the assessment of quality of life was examined by possessing appropriate qualifications for work.

The author also included geographical factors in which freedom of movement and place of residence are particularly important in assessing both standard of living and quality of life in Canada and Toronto. Geographical factors included accessibility of public transport, transport links with other cities, respondents' place of residence, quality

of the natural environment (standard of living) and, subjectively, satisfaction with the place of residence, transport accessibility, bonds with the city, and the natural environment (quality of life).

The assessment of well-being, mental health, and health is an important aspect. Therefore, these factors were included in the research. The author asked respondents how they assessed the availability of health care, free time, conditions for relaxation, access to tourism, the opportunity to play sports (standard of living), as well as their subjective assessment of satisfaction with health, mental condition and well-being, and playing sport (quality of life).

Economic factors were the last group to be taken into account. Standard of living was assessed with the following measures/indicators: road infrastructure, the availability of grocery and non-grocery stores, availability of services and utilities, and housing (objective conditions), as well as satisfaction with the availability and functioning of services (stores), material living conditions – housing and fixtures and fittings (subjective conditions).

ANALYSIS OF SELECTED RESEARCH RESULTS

Due to the extensive research material, only part of the empirical research will be discussed in this article. One of the questions in the survey referred to the assessment of satisfaction with specific areas of life. The results of the answers given are summarised in Table 2. Respondents were asked to rate each of these elements, marking their opinion on a six-point Likert scale – from ‘I am very happy’ to ‘I am very dissatisfied’ or ‘I have no opinion’.

Table 2. Satisfaction assessment of selected areas of the life of Polonia in the Greater Toronto Area

satisfaction with selected areas of life	very satisfied	satisfied	fairly satisfied	dissatisfied	very dissatisfied	no opinion
satisfaction with children	123	215	93	30	19	108
having friends	169	172	114	28	36	64
marriage / stable relationship	63	137	152	89	23	119
neighbours	100	168	183	55	32	45
personal life	181	202	60	38	32	70
place of living	98	103	206	89	27	60
professional career	69	206	158	37	36	77
education	160	196	140	32	19	36
income and financial situation	54	102	250	77	50	50
material condition, housing and its fittings	81	302	102	25	25	48
having the right qualifications to work	109	209	156	42	17	50
social status	50	30	153	73	47	230
health	120	263	96	32	16	56

way of spending free time	40	361	38	60	22	62
feeling of safety	98	112	135	152	37	49
the activity of the local authorities	101	289	92	23	11	67
natural environment	87	69	123	63	54	187
urban infrastructure	48	156	122	74	27	156
access to services (stores)	289	175	52	34	12	21

Source: author based on research

Analysing the assessment by respondents of selected areas of life, the highest rating ('I am very satisfied') was the availability of services (289 responses), personal life (181), having friends (169) and education (160). The largest number of 'I am very dissatisfied' answers were given to an assessment of the natural environment (54), income and material situation (50), social position (47), and having friends and professional career (36 each).

The largest number of 'I am satisfied' responses related to satisfaction with ways of spending free time (361 responses) and with material living conditions (housing and its fittings) – 302. The performance of local authorities was highly rated: 289 respondents were satisfied with the work of officials; respondents were also satisfied with their children (215), career (206), and personal life (202). Regarding satisfaction with having children, 108 responded with 'I have no opinion', but such a large number is probably because, among the respondents, 104 were under 25 who probably do not have children yet.

Moreover, the respondents were asked to assess meeting their needs in terms of selected aspects of life and general accessibility (see Table 3).

Table 3. Assessment of meeting the needs of Polonia in the Greater Toronto Area

Meeting needs in the city (Toronto)	very good	good	fairly good	poor	very poor	no opinion
availability of culture	152	231	127	27	23	23
availability of tourism, rest and relaxation	115	268	63	26	17	94
possibilities of doing sport	109	209	156	42	17	50
health care	123	260	100	73	11	16
availability of education and training	263	160	80	15	20	45
availability of social care	49	31	153	73	48	229
possibilities of developing interests and hobbies	106	194	132	48	14	89
public safety	123	145	183	50	37	45
political stability	60	140	152	85	27	119

Source: author based on research

Respondents rated their overall satisfaction in nine areas using the same scale as before: from 'very good' to 'very poor'.

The respondents rated access to education and training very highly. As many as 263 'very good' responses were given, and only 35 were 'poor' or 'very poor' (15 and 20

respectively). The respondents rated the availability of tourism, rest, relaxation (268), health care (260), access to culture (231), and sports opportunities (209) highly. Most often, they answered 'very poor' when assessing access to social care (48), while as many as 229 replied that they had no opinion on this issue. Public safety and political stability were rated by respondents as 'fairly good' (183 and 152 respectively).

When examining the assessment of the standard of living and quality of life of the Polish community living in the Greater Toronto Area, the author needed to explore and learn opinions about how Polonia assess Polish aspects in this city. They referred to the issue of the activities of Polish schools, parishes, Polish NGOs, as well as Polish travel agencies and the availability of Polish stores affect the overall assessment of standard of living in Toronto. Table 4 presents the respondents' assessment of individual Polish aspects.

Table 4. Assessment of Polish aspects of standard of living by Polonia living in the Greater Toronto Area

Polish aspects of standard of living	very good	good	fairly good	poor	very poor	no opinion
activities of Polish schools	289	122	89	46	26	11
activities of Polish NGOs (scouts)	123	260	100	73	11	16
activities of Polish travel agencies	102	198	132	50	12	89
activities of Polish parishes	403	103	60	2	3	12
activities of Polish stores	263	160	80	20	20	40

Source: author based on research

Analysis of the data shows that Canadian Polonia assesses Polish aspects of this city as 'very good' or 'good'. The activity of Polish parishes was rated the highest and as many as 403 respondents rated Polish churches as 'very good' (403) or 'good' (103). The activity of Polish schools (289) takes second place, followed by Polish stores (263), while 200 respondents rated the activity of Polish NGOs (scouts, song and dance ensembles) as 'very good', and 198 responses – the activities of Polish travel agencies as 'very good'. Among 583 respondents, only a few negative responses referred to the activities of Polish organisations and institutions. Such a positive opinion among the respondents proves that Polonia knows their organisations, benefits from their activities, and desires a spirit of Polishness and patriotism in the emigrant land of Canada.

SUMMARY

Quality of life is commonly referred to as an indicator of well-being, contentment, happiness, and a sense of satisfaction in existence but is often used interchangeably with the level, conditions, or standard of living. Quality of life is satisfaction with meeting all human needs, and assessing it is a difficult task because there is no universal way to measure it.

Assessing standard of living and quality of life is difficult in sociological research and is closely related to the diverse nature of particular aspects, criteria, or variables, taken into account. Whether or not deeper issues that remain unresolved, concerning the very essence of quality of life and its measurement is not considered. It is about answering the questions 'What is the quality of life?' and 'How is it measured?'. The

answer to the first of these questions must appeal to philosophy and psychology, but also ethics, economics, geography and sociology. Therefore an answer is difficult, if not impossible. However, it can be replaced by an operational definition: 'Quality of life is a quantity measured in the following way...

By characterising standard of living and quality of life, a general model would be acceptable, even if approximate, while defining the framework for further analysis and empirical research. A model like this would make it possible to organise elements that make up quality of life to be assessed to a level corresponding to particular variables or their groups, and determine how they are considered. However, no such general model is entirely accepted in the literature. Therefore, the author proposes her model, taking into account elements belonging both to objective conditions (standard of living) and subjective conditions (quality of life).

As Reczyńska (2007) writes, a community of Polish descent is found in the Province of Ontario in Canada. There are almost 161 000 who declare only Polish origin (62.2% of the whole group) and over 224 000 who declare Polish roots. The number of people of solely Polish origin living in other provinces is much smaller. A comparison of statistical data clearly shows that Polonia is concentrated in large cities in Canada, and this process is increasing. While in 1971 almost 40% of Canadians of Polish origin lived in the seven largest Canadian cities, in 2001 74.5% declaring only Polish origin and 44.1% with Polish roots were living in the same cities.

Toronto is the capital of the Canadian Polonia. The city has more than 83 000 (32% of the total Polonia number) declaring only Polish origin and the same proportion mentioning Polish origin as one of many. Since the 1940s, Toronto has been attracting most Polish immigrants. Since the 1980s, the Polish community has been mainly concentrated in Mississauga and Brampton. It is why the research was not only conducted in the city of Toronto but also within the Greater Toronto Area.

Taking into consideration the large number of people of Polish origin living in the described area, the assessment of standard of living and quality of life by Polonia in Toronto, discussed in this article, seems to be a subject of significant relevance as there has not been such extensive research so far. The presented material is only part of the research on the issues that were examined among the Polish community in the Greater Toronto Area in 2017–2019. Based on the data presented, it can be concluded that:

- Polonia in Canada is most satisfied with their children, material living conditions, personal well-being, and personal life;
- Polonia in Canada assesses the activity of Polish parishes and Polish Saturday schools the highest;
- Polonia in Canada assesses the availability of tourism, leisure, and access to culture the highest.

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Kamila Ziółkowska-Weiss, PhD, Pedagogical University of Krakow, Institute of Geography, Department of Tourism and Regional Studies. Graduate of Culture Studies at the Jagiellonian University and Geography at the Pedagogical University in Krakow. She has graduated from postgraduate studies in International Tourism Management at the Krakow University of Economics. Since 2012 she has been a research worker, acting as an assistant in the Department of Tourism and Regional Studies of the Pedagogical University in Krakow. An active tourist guide and author of several academic publications. Her main academic interests are in cultural tourism, ethnic groups in the Małopolska region, and the Polish minority in the USA.

Address:

Uniwersytet Pedagogiczny w Krakowie
Instytut Geografii
Katedra Turystyki i Badań Regionalnych
ul. Podchorążych 2, 30-084 Kraków, Polska
e-mail: kamilazw@up.krakow.pl