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## A QUALITATIVE APPROACH TO THE MIGRATION ATTRACTIVENESS OF A CITY: ŁÓDŹ IN THE OPINIONS OF NEW RESIDENTS

**Abstract:** From all previous research on migration patterns, it is clear that some places are more attractive to migrants than others. The relatively low migration attractiveness of Łódź, which exacerbates the city's unfavourable demographic situation, has inspired questions concerning those people who decide to settle there and the main reasons for their decisions. The subject matter falls within the broader perspective of research on the migratory attractiveness of cities, but was approached in a qualitative manner. The empirical basis for the paper is a study conducted in 2016, the main aim of which was to determine the factors that attract people to Łódź, those that push them away from their previous places of residence, and to trace how new residents of the city evaluate it in terms of living conditions. The research was conducted using unstructured interviews with 32 respondents. The main reasons for settling in Łódź cover the most important institutional areas such as the labour market, education, health care and public services including culture and leisure; personal or family reasons, mainly the finding of a life partner in Łódź, or the desire to live close to relatives; and taking up higher education and staying in the city after graduation.

**Keywords:** migration attractiveness, reasons for migration, Łódź, living conditions, qualitative research.

### PODEJŚCIE JAKOŚCIOWE W BADANIACH ATRAKCYJNOŚCI MIGRACYJNEJ MIASTA: ŁÓDŹ W OPINIACH NOWYCH MIESZKAŃCÓW

**Abstrakt:** Z wszystkich wcześniejszych badań nad wzorcami migracji jasno wynika, że niektóre miejsca są bardziej atrakcyjne dla migrantów niż inne. Relatywnie niska atrakcyjność migracyjna Łodzi, która pogłębia niekorzystną sytuację demograficzną miasta, stała się inspiracją do sformułowania pytań, kim są osoby, które decydują się związać swoje losy z miastem, oraz jakie są główne powody ich osiedleńczych decyzji. Podjęta problematyka mieści się w szerszej perspektywie badań nad atrakcyjnością migracyjną miast, lecz ujęta została w sposób jakościowy. Empiryczną podstawą artykułu są badania przeprowadzone w 2016 r., których głównym celem było ustalenie czynników przyciągających do Łodzi oraz wypychających z poprzednich miejsc zamieszkania, a także prześledzenie jak nowi łodzianie oceniają miasto w kontekście obecnych warunków życia w nim. Badania przeprowadzono w technice wywiadu swobodnego wśród 32 respondentów. Do głównych powodów osiedlenia się w mieście należą: po pierwsze funkcjonowanie najważniejszych kompleksów instytucjonalnych, takich jak rynek pracy, edukacja, opieka zdrowotna oraz usługi dla ludności, w tym usługi kulturalne i czasu wolnego; po drugie względy osobiste i rodzinne, w tym głównie znalezienie partnera życiowego w Łodzi lub chęć zamieszkania blisko krewnych; a po trzecie podjęcie studiów oraz znalezienie tu pierwszej pracy.

**Słowa kluczowe:** atrakcyjność migracyjna, przyczyny migracji, Łódź, warunki życia, badania jakościowe.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

It is now widely acknowledged that human mobility is an integral part of the process of human development. For communities, regions, cities and countries, human movements bring knowledge, skills and labour to the

locations where it is needed to enhance economic development and social wellbeing. For individuals, families and households, mobility provides a mechanism to pursue aspirations and respond to opportunities

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(Bell, Muhidin, 2009). Mobility, in its diverse forms, thus represents “a means to ends across space” (Hooimeijer, van der Knaap, 1994).

From all previous research on migration patterns, it is clear that some places are more attractive to migrants than others. What is debatable, however, are the attributes of a place that make it relatively attractive or unattractive to migrants. Identifying such attributes is useful for both explaining and predicting future migration trends (Fotheringham, Champion, Wymer, Coombes, 2000). This is particularly important for places that have been affected by a long-term substantial outflow that has led to population loss. Furthermore, it is well known that migration is a process influencing demographics by affecting not only the size of a population but also its structure (Józefowicz, 2020). In this context the problem is the selective impact of migration from areas that have lost primarily younger, more skilled and more enterprising people, and on cities that have been affected by the outflow of better-off inhabitants to surrounding areas (Fotheringham, Champion, Wymer, Coombes, 2000). Therefore, the investigation of migration attractiveness should not only be of interest for academics, but also for practitioners (including local authorities) who can influence the attraction of new residents.

An important issue in empirical study is the ambiguous understanding of migratory attractiveness and the way in which it is measured. As Śleszyński (2020) pointed out two main ways of understanding this notion can be found. The first, most common, means migration attractiveness in its popular meaning, i.e. the existence of such features and circumstances in a given area that encourage people to settle. At the same time, migration attractiveness is identified empirically or simply as migration inflow or migration balance (Kwiatk-Sołtys, 2006; Rogers, Sweeney, 1998; Smętkowski, 2011; Šimpach, Dotlačilová, 2013). The second, narrower, understanding is more formalised and refers to the migration efficiency indicator in demography, i.e. the ratio of the migration balance to migration turnover (Jagielski, 1974). It is a commonly used indicator (Kałuża-Kopias, 2010, 2014; Kupiszewski, 2002; Łabędzki, 2009; Potrykowska, Śleszyński, 1999; Rosner, 2007) because of its simplicity and easy interpretation, but has the disadvantage of not taking distance into account (Śleszyński, 2020)<sup>1</sup>.

This study focuses on the reasons for choosing Łódź as a place to live, treating them as an important aspect of the city’s migration attractiveness. The issues addressed here fall within the broader perspective of research on the migratory attractiveness of cities discussed above. However, it should be noted that the study and its results are qualitative in nature, hence the most commonly used definition of migratory attractiveness, understood quantitatively, was not applicable here.

The main aim of the research was to find out what factors attract people to Łódź, and at the same time push them away from their previous places of residence. The analysis was complemented by tracing how the new residents of Łódź assess the city in the context of their current living conditions. As a result, the aim was to identify the main assets of the city that can determine its attractiveness for both new and existing residents as well as elements that may constitute barriers to migration. The research assumes, according to one of the classic theories of the causes of migration, the so-called push-pull theory of Lee (1966) and a later model of migration behaviour by Hugo (1982), that a migration decision is made on the basis of a comparison of the characteristics of the place of origin and the destination, and a set of factors that can either favour or discourage a given area (Lee, 1966); and that migration is the result of a decision that is positive when the expected benefits of mobility exceed its costs (Hugo, 1982).

## 2. ŁÓDŹ: THE CONTEXT OF ITS MIGRATION ATTRACTIVENESS

From the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, one of the main factors attracting people to cities was the development of industry opening up new employment conditions and causing massive job-related spatial mobility (Limmer, Schneider, 2008). In the case of Łódź, it was such a development that caused the city to become a migration phenomenon and, achieving record population growth in a short period of time, the second largest city in Poland. The city’s rapid demographic and economic development began in 1820, when a decision was made by the authorities of the Kingdom of Poland to locate a handicraft settlement here and promote it to the rank of ‘factory town’. At that time, in less than a hundred years (until the outbreak of World War I), the city grew from an agricultural settlement of less than 800 inhabitants to a metropolis of almost half a million, thus showing record demographic growth on a European scale (Liszewski, 2001).

The population growth, which began in the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, reached its peak in the 1980s when the city’s population was 850,000 (Szukalski, 2012). The situation changed dramatically at the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century when changes in the economic situation triggered by the transformation processes caused a significant decline in population. Today, Łódź is a city with one of the highest depopulation rates among all large Polish cities. Over the last 30 years, the city has lost over 150,000 inhabitants, losing (in 2007) its status as the second largest city in Poland to Kraków. As a consequence of this loss, just as its population growth was phenomenal in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, its decline

was equally spectacular at the turn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Compared to the maximum population recorded in 1984 (848,000), that recorded in 2020 (672,000) was more than 20% lower.

The main reason for these negative population changes was a natural loss expressed in the unfavourable ratio of births to deaths. Compared to other large cities, it has the lowest birth rate and the mortality rate under 50 is twice as high. Unfavourable depopulation trends for the city are complemented by migration processes, although in comparison to long-term problems with a natural decrease, their impact on population decline is minor. The biggest problem is not the migration outflow but the very low inflow, as much as 50–60% lower than that recorded in other large Polish cities (Kałuża-Kopias, 2014). In the case of the migration of Łódź inhabitants, emigration within the voivodeship, connected with moving to areas adjacent to the city as a consequence of 'suburbanisation', prevails (Kałuża-Kopias, 2010). In the case of extra-regional migration, however, that to other cities predominates. At the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century especially, Warsaw was the main destination. In recent years, the migration balance between these cities has fluctuated around a migration loss of 230 per year for Łódź (Szukalski, 2012).

The migration attractiveness of Łódź in the last three decades has not been helped by its situation in the labour market, which according to many classical migration models (cf. Górny, Kaczmarczyk, 2003) is one of the main factors attracting people to cities. The Łódź labour market, despite the improvement recorded in recent years (at the end of December 2019, the unemployment rate was 4.7%), has been in much worse shape than in other large Polish cities since the beginning of the political transformation. For comparison, in 2002 the unemployment rate in Łódź was 18.8%, while in Warsaw it was 6.2%, in Kraków 8.4%, in Poznań 6.9% and in Wrocław 12.3% (GUS, 2002). A decade later (in 2012), despite a significant improvement (12%), it was still at least twice as high as that recorded in Poland's other large cities (GUS, 2012).

This situation undoubtedly contributes to the distance between Łódź and other metropolitan centres in the country. This has been confirmed by research conducted by Price Waterhouse Cooper in 2011 and in 2015 (PWC, 2011; PWC, 2015). Both studies have shown that in terms of the level of the seven capitals examined<sup>2</sup>, Łódź had one of the lowest positions among the twelve cities, and its characteristics are similar to those of much smaller cities, such as Bydgoszcz, Szczecin and Białystok, rather than cities with over 500,000 inhabitants, such as Warsaw, Kraków, Poznań or Wrocław. In particular, the image of Łódź, still associated with declining industry, neglect and developmental problems as well as the quality of life and housing, was rated particularly low (see also Czapiński, Panek, 2015; Michalska-Żyła, 2014).

It is noted that the quality of life of a given community is largely determined by accessibility, as well as the quality, of certain institutions. This, in turn, is important for the sense of attachment to a local community (Brehm, Eisenhauer, Krannich, 2004) and the desire to maintain one's role as a member of it, thus dampening migratory tendencies. The number and quality of institutions and local amenities is an important factor influencing the assessment of a place of residence as a convenient, attractive place to live, and it is also an indicator of the development of a community (Besser, Recker, Parker, 2009; Clark, 2004; Florida, 2002).

As Kryńska (2015) points out, a population decline of 20–30% or more in a large city leads to serious social, economic and spatial consequences. This is because it contributes to the loss of human capital, and if it concerns those referred to in the literature as the creative class (Florida, 2002; Landry, Bianchini, 1995), i.e. young, highly qualified and well-educated inhabitants, it significantly reduces its potential and attractiveness. This phenomenon, known as a 'brain drain' in international migration<sup>3</sup>, consequently limits the potential and pace of a city's development, which in turn affects both the degree to which residents' needs are met and their opportunities to realise their aspirations (Kryńska, 2015).

In the context of the negative demographic processes described and the socio-economic situation of the city, it is interesting to ask what induces people to live in a city which is subject to a process of shrinkage that sometimes testifies to the inhibition of urbanisation or even to a transition into a phase of de-urbanisation (Kryńska, 2015). This normal situation, according to some, of cities at a certain stage of their development (see Couch et al., 2012) may be a consequence of the collapse of the existing economic base (Hasse, 2013, after Kryńska, 2015) and leads to an urban crisis (Majer, 1997).

It is worth noting, however, that despite the small and still negative migration balance, new inhabitants are recorded every year in Łódź. This raises the question: who are the people who decide to live in this city and, what seems much more interesting, what are the main reasons for their settlement decisions. This article is an attempt to answer these questions.

### 3. RESEARCH METHODS AND SOURCE MATERIALS

The empirical basis for this article is the qualitative research conducted on behalf of the local authority of Łódź<sup>4</sup> in 2016. Its aim was to find out who the new inhabitants of Łódź are and what reasons have determined their permanent settlement. The intention of this research was above all to obtain knowledge that

would enable a more effective promotion of the city (externally and internally) and consequently attract new residents while preventing the outflow of current ones.

Respondents were selected in two stages. The first stage was the analysis of unpublished data from population registrations in Łódź in the two years preceding the study (2014 and 2015), on the basis of which specific categories of migrants were distinguished taking into account their age and origin. The data showed that 5540 people registered in Łódź in 2014 and 2015, 2738 and 2822 respectively. A closer analysis of the age structure and origin of this group showed that, as in previous years, it was dominated by those aged 26–35 (almost 60%). Approximately 25% came from the Łódź Metropolitan Area (ŁMA), 35% from more distant districts of Łódź Voivodeship, and 40% from outside the voivodeship. Among the latter, the largest number of new residents came from neighbouring voivodeships, Mazowieckie and Wielkopolskie, the nearby Świętokrzyskie voivodeship, which for many years has been a migration base, and the Kujawsko-Pomorskie voivodeship.

Respondents were then selected from each of the identified age and origin groups so that the internal proportions of the sample reflected the actual pattern of migrants. The study involved adult residents of Łódź belonging to four age groups distinguished on the basis of functional-economic criteria (19–25, 26–35, 36–60 and 61+), representing three categories of areas of origin: Łódź Metropolitan Area (ŁMA), Łódzkie Voivodeship (outside ŁMA) and outside the voivodeship.

The research was conducted based on an unstructured interview technique with a standardised list of the information sought, on the basis of which the author's interview scenario was constructed. A total of 32 interviews were conducted.

#### 4. REASONS FOR MIGRATION TO ŁÓDŹ

The first element of the analysis was to determine the main reasons for settling in Łódź that emerged from the respondents' statements. In the literature on the subject, the basic reasons for migration most often included economic, family, educational, housing, sentimental, political and forced reasons (Łabędzki, 2009). Apart from the last two, which generally occur in the case of external migration, the others occurred in the statements of the respondents.

One of the main reasons for moving to Łódź was, of course, the arguments related to getting a job in the city. The choice of Łódź as a place of residence was therefore dictated by finding a job, but this was not always planned. "It's a coincidence that I live in Łódź. It

was my first job offer right after graduation (in Kraków – author's note). I made the decision that I would take the job and so I stayed. And then my boyfriend found a job here" (F, 27, village in Świętokrzyskie Voivodeship). However, Łódź has also sometimes been chosen as a place to work and live intentionally. Encouraged by the recommendations of other people who found a job in Łódź, the respondents decided to try it as well. Most were from areas where the labour market situation is difficult. "A lot of friends were moving to Łódź and finding work here, and I came to work too. Because there is no work in my town" (M, 40, small town in ŁMA). The deliberate choice of Łódź as a place to work and live was mainly made by those who perceived the Łódź labour market as relatively better functioning and offering the opportunity of finding a job in their occupation. As one respondent highlights: "In my place, where I lived, it was practically impossible to find a job in my line of work" (M, 33, village in Warmińsko-Mazurskie Voivodeship). Success on the Łódź labour market was therefore one of the most important motives for deciding to come to the city, even for those from nearby towns. This situation is perfectly illustrated by the following statement: "I found a job here and at first I commuted but then I decided it was a waste of time and started to rent a flat in Łódź, and then I bought one" (F, 27, small town in ŁMA).

From the respondents' opinions, therefore, emerges a picture of a city that creates professional opportunities for newcomers. It is worth noting that people finding a job here came mainly from the countryside or small towns, which may indicate that the Łódź labour market was perceived as attractive in comparison with the one operating in rural areas which did not provide opportunities to find a job in a diverse range of fields, especially in a specific profession. It was not, however, attractive to residents of other large urban centres, which seems obvious in the light of objective data on markets in other large Polish cities.

The second main reason for settling in Łódź was family, among which living with one's wife/husband after getting married was predominant. As one respondent reports "the reason for moving was my wife, i.e. my love for my wife. We met in the mountains and that's how it started, I came here and now we have a daughter" (M, 31, medium-sized town in Małopolskie Voivodeship). The same reason for moving is indicated by another respondent: "The main reason was getting married. My husband lived here and I decided to live here too. We met by chance where we studied" (not in Łódź – author's note) (F, 37, medium-sized town in Łódzkie Voivodeship). Family reasons, however, are not limited to those related to marrying someone from Łódź and moving. The oldest group included grandparents who had moved to the city or returned

after a period of not living there, to help their adult children look after their grandchildren. "I moved back to Łódź because my granddaughter went to school and it was necessary for me to be close by and to be able to take the child to and from school, as her parents work" (F, 65, city in ŁMA). It also happens that older people choose to live close to their children, usually after the loss of their spouses. "I was left alone, my wife died, and I have a daughter here and I watch over her and she over me..., we live close to each other" (M, 79, medium-sized town in Łódzkie Voivodeship). Family reasons centred on the desire to live close to family members, most often children and grandchildren, and a willingness to help them or benefit from their support, seem to be very important motives for migration to the city. Many researchers (cf Pawłowska, 1996) emphasise this desire to live among 'one's own' as an important factor in the choice of place of residence.

The third important reason for choosing Łódź as a place to live is related to higher education in the city. Łódź is one of the most important academic centres in the country, annually attracting tens of thousands of students who come from different, sometimes distant areas of Poland, although mostly from the Łódź region (see Liszewski, Szafrńska, Wolaniuk, 2012). One of the reasons emphasised by respondents for choosing Łódź as a place to study was the recommendation of other people who had studied here. This justification is found in the statement of one of the respondents: "I moved to Łódź because my sister had previously studied here and rented a flat. I used to come to visit her... she showed me the city and I also came here to study" (F, 25, medium-sized city in Kujawsko-Pomorskie Voivodeship). In another case, the choice of Łódź was dictated by the choice of university subject: "I came here to study because this was the major I wanted to take, and at the same time I found here what I didn't have (in my previous place of residence – author's note), so I stayed" (F, 25, small-sized town in Lubelskie Voivodeship). Higher education as a city asset in the opinions of students from Łódź's universities has already been shown in previous work (Boryczka, Sulikowski, 2008). Entertainment and cultural opportunities were also highly rated in these surveys and this also seems to be a big incentive for young students to decide to stay in the city, at least for the duration of their study. The central location of Łódź in the country's settlement network is also an important factor in the choice of study destination. It is worth emphasising that graduates of Łódź's universities often decide to stay in the city, although research shows that most of them plan to leave (Boryczka, Sulikowski, 2008; Liszewski, Szafrńska, Wolaniuk, 2008). Another advantage of Łódź is the lower cost of living than in other large academic centres, which seems to compensate for the

more modest salaries offered on the local labour market. In the opinion of one respondent: "It is an inexpensive city to live in. And although you don't earn much, you can live a little cheaper than elsewhere" (M, 47, city outside Łódzkie Voivodeship).

Significant factors influencing migration to Łódź also include some push factors encompassing various types of deficiencies and inconveniences in previous places of residence which made the respondents decide to leave them. Among the most frequently mentioned were:

- lack of work (work in general or financially rewarding employment and/or a job with specific qualifications);
- lack of educational opportunities (education in general or in a specific field and/or level);
- poor transport connections with Łódź and the resulting inconvenience of commuting to the city (in the case of people already working in Łódź or caring for family members);
- lack of leisure facilities (lack of night life, "my town would die in the evening");
- lack of cultural and entertainment offerings, "boredom, nothing happening, no place to go out";
- insufficient social and service infrastructure at the place of residence;
- the desire to 'get away' from the countryside or a small town, due to a lack of anonymity or life prospects.

A closer analysis of these factors pushing people out from their previous places of residence means it can be concluded that Łódź is perceived as a city possessing certain resources that determine its attractiveness to migrants. This seems to be primarily due to the fact that, as the capital of the region, it concentrates many metropolitan functions that make it attractive as a settlement, especially for people from smaller centres. The development of these and especially of urban amenities will undoubtedly be an incentive for potential migrants. A modern city is supposed to be a friendly place for residents and users who are drawn in by the wide range of attractions available. It is an 'entertainment machine', attracting residents and tourists with numerous amenities that become one of the most important factors in improving the quality of life and quality of living environment with a wide availability and variety of services and cultural institutions (Clark, 2004).

## 5. ASSESSMENT OF LIVING CONDITIONS IN ŁÓDŹ IN THE OPINION OF NEW INHABITANTS

The attractiveness of a city for migrants is undoubtedly derived from the living conditions and quality of life and residence of the population. One way of measuring the

quality is to assess specific areas of the city's functioning. The accessibility and efficiency of institutions such as health care, educational institutions, the labour market, public services and cultural institutions largely determine the quality of life.

When assessing living conditions in Łódź, the respondents focused their attention on the availability and functioning of basic institutions such as health care and education. The former was indicated most often by older people. As one respondent highlighted: "Living conditions are very good... Good access to specialist doctors" (F, 69, from outside the voivodeship). The friendliness of the city's offer to senior citizens was also mentioned: "It's a good life. The city is starting to care about seniors, it's doing various campaigns and we have a bit more facilities" (F, 65, ŁMA). In contrast, young people had a positive perception of the availability of other public services, the labour market, housing conditions and the functioning of public transport. One statement highlighted: "I would rate well the culture and housing conditions and the job I have" (F, 23, Łódzkie Voivodeship). In another, the perception of living conditions in the city was complemented by a positive evaluation of services and public transport, which both influence the recommendation for young people to live in the city: "I live a very comfortable life. I have access to shops, I can get to the city centre quickly by car or tram... Work is also close, I can get to Manufaktura... and to the botanic garden and everywhere. I could recommend this city to young people to move to" (F, 25, Łódzkie Voivodeship). The city's cultural life and leisure opportunities were also positively evaluated: "...And the culture is at a good level, and there is somewhere to go" (F, 25, from outside voivodeship). In the assessment of living conditions, there were also positive, but at the same time very general statements, expressing satisfaction with living in Łódź and perceiving good prospects for the future. One of the respondents emphasises: "I have a good life, I am satisfied, the city is developing and there are great opportunities for people here" (M, 46, from outside the voivodeship). Contrary to the negative image of Łódź among the public and in media discourse, supported by research results (Michalska-Żyła, 2009; Tobiasz-Lis, 2013), the respondents emphasised the general attractiveness of the city: "I have a nice life in Łódź. I like this city very much" (F, 27, from outside the voivodeship).

Negative evaluations of urban living conditions, on the other hand, focused on the shortcomings of the big-city environment, such as the need to travel long distances, the lack of social integration in the place of residence and weak neighbourhood ties. The issue of distance to travel, although compensated to some extent by convenient transport, was indicated by one

respondent: "The worst are these distances in the city... Communication is good, but these distances are scary" (F, 37, from outside the voivodeship). Another respondent stressed that she feels these inconveniences especially during the winter period. On the other hand, there were positive references to the city's urban bike system, which is seen as an important amenity for residents: "In winter it is hard, but in summer I live well, e.g. now it is possible to use the city bike and the parks" (F, 25, from outside the voivodeship). It is worth recalling at this point the data which show that this form of public transport is very popular in Łódź, as in 2017 over 1.3 million rentals were recorded and 27,000 new users took advantage of it. The inhabitants of Łódź and tourists can use 148 rental stations and 1490 bicycles, which strengthens its position as the second largest and second most popular bicycle system in Poland (Łódzki Rower Publiczny, 2018).

A source of negative perceptions of city life is the relationships that exist between inhabitants. One respondent expressed his feelings about the relations like this: "I live well, but I am not used to the fact that there is no contact with neighbours... Here, everyone is closed behind their own doors... I would like to stop with my neighbour and talk, but there is none of that here" (M, 79, Łódzkie Voivodeship). It seems that such a picture of the urban social environment confirms ideas about the atrophy of bonds and social atomisation which is manifested by a lack of possible bonds at the microscale of the neighbourhood (Bujwicka, 2011).

Negative opinions were also held regarding the structure and spatial development of the city and its aesthetics. Attention was drawn to socio-spatial differentiation and the degradation of the central areas. One respondent described Łódź as follows: "A city of contrasts, well-kept and green districts, where people feel good, and in the centre – tenement houses falling apart, dives, drunks sleeping on benches" (M, 33, from outside the voivodeship). Another respondent expressed his critical attitude towards the investments made in the city and the general prospects for its development, although, as he himself emphasised, he finds life in Łódź good: "Generally life is good, although I think this city is heading for destruction... everywhere rebuilding and changing what it is. And these investments are not for the people at all, just to make a buck" (M, 33, from outside the voivodeship).

In summary, positive evaluations of living conditions in the city referred to health care institutions, education, public transport and services, including above all culture and opportunities for leisure. On the other hand, the size of the city and the need to travel long distances, neighbourhood relations, and the aesthetics of the city and prospects for its development were assessed negatively.

## 6. CONCLUSIONS

An analysis of the structure of migrants coming to Łódź and settling here permanently has shown that they are mainly young people belonging to the 26–35 age category, i.e. those whose position in the life cycle makes them particularly predestined to take a decision to settle permanently. What makes them choose Łódź? The main reasons for settling in the city mentioned by those in these and older groups (36–60 years) can be divided into two main categories. The first is related to the functioning of basic institutions such as the labour market, education, health care and the quality of services for the population, as well as opportunities to meet cultural and leisure needs. An accessible and well-functioning social infrastructure and a relatively well-assessed labour market, complemented by urban amenities and attractions, are the main factors perceived as a value of Łódź and strengthen its attractiveness as a migration destination. The second, no less important category for choosing Łódź are personal and family reasons, among which having found a life partner from Łódź was dominant. Research has shown that living conditions in the city do not seem to disappoint respondents, as they are generally satisfied with their life there and evaluate it positively. Some, however, point to the visible socio-spatial diversity of the city and the neglect of some parts which translates into an unfavourable image. Attention was also drawn to the city's poor development prospects, although opposing opinions forecasting a good future for Łódź were equally frequent. It can therefore be concluded attitudes on this last point are rather ambivalent.

Representatives from another category of new Łódź citizens aged between 19 and 25, i.e. those starting their independent lives, chose Łódź mainly to study at one of its universities or to find their first job there. This proves the obvious and repeatedly verified thesis that the best guarantee of retaining young graduates is the opportunity for them to find a satisfying job. Justifications for choosing Łódź were therefore mainly related to the quality of the local universities, the quality and availability of sought-after fields of study and the opportunity to take up a job matching one's competences. In addition, this age group pointed to the city's rich cultural life, and well-developed entertainment and leisure opportunities as important factors in its attractiveness.

In the oldest migrant group, comprising those aged 61 and over, the main reasons for settling in the city, or for returning there after years of living elsewhere, were focused on family. The desire to live close to children and/or grandchildren and an associated willingness to help them and benefit from their support in old age were the primary motives for the elderly moving to

Łódź. In their opinion, one important advantage of the city was, above all, an accessible and well-functioning health care and the improving offer of city attractions and amenities dedicated to this part of the urban population. This is all the more important as this group will constitute a very significant category of the city's population in the near future due to its rapid ageing.

## ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup> In an attempt to address the lack of consideration of distance in existing measurement methods, Śleszyński (2020) has presented his own proposal for a new indicator of migratory attractiveness based on the matrix data from registered leavings and arrivals between administrative units.

<sup>2</sup> The survey covered the following types of "capital" determining a city's development potential: institutions, people, investments, quality of life, image, infrastructure and finance.

<sup>3</sup> This concept, first used at the beginning of the 1960s, has nowadays, in the age of globalisation, increasingly given way to the terms "brain exchange" or "brain circulation" (Tarasiewicz, 2013).

<sup>4</sup> The research was carried out on behalf of the Municipal Strategy Department. Due to the fact, that one of the authors of the present paper participated in creating the interview scenario and processing the results of the study, the Department consented to its publication for academic purposes.

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