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**Migration movements  
from and into Poland in  
the light of the  
East-West European  
migration**

**Krystyna Iglicka**

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# **Migration movements from and into Poland in the light of the East-West European migration**

**Krystyna Iglicka**

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## **Abstract**

This paper investigates migratory movements from and into Poland that took place before and after the collapse of the communism. The character and scale of movements from and into Poland are of considerable significance, not only for politicians and societies in CEE region but also for the European integration. In the predictable future Polish eastern border will remain one of only few places on the map of Europe where it will still be possible to control mobility on the East-West axis. One can not discuss the East-West mobility without discussing the emigration of Poles. One should also not analyse the recent immigration into Poland from the East without considering some implication of this phenomenon both for Poland and for the West. Therefore the paper examines basic trends of emigration from Poland and immigration into Poland along with the analysis of the basic demographic characteristics of migrants. Only official statistical data are considered here.

The migration pressure from the East induced by the collapse of the system combined with the restricted migration policy of Western Europe were both conducive to the formation of the Central European buffer zone. Poland is probably the best example of a buffer zone country. From the Western perspective it is also the most important country since the future of East-West migration depends on the extension of the visa regime by Poland. The author indicates that irrespective of a constant introduction of new hurdles there will be other ways channelling the movement from the East via Poland to the West. This is rather inevitable since according to the author the process of globalisation of migration will increase the flows from the East. Therefore it is argued that the key to the future European migration lies also in the West, more specifically it lies in the employment needs of the western labour markets.

## 1. Introduction

The aim of this paper is to investigate migratory movements from and into Poland with particular attention being paid to flows before and after the collapse of communism. Along with political, social and economic transition, which took place in CEE region after 1989 the mechanisms and patterns of migration have also changed. Recent emigration from Poland significantly differs from what it was a decade ago. Although Poland with a negative balance between emigration and immigration is still a country of emigration, unexpected population phenomena such as an inflow of asylum seekers, movement of transit migrants, permanent immigration from the East and the West have recently occurred. Along with the inflows of foreigners we can also observe now a beginning of processes of a new ethnic diversity and the creation of new ethnic consciousness.

The character and scale of movements from and into Poland are of considerable significance, not only for politicians in CEE countries, but also for those involved in European integration. Once Poland becomes a member of the European Union, and more specifically once (as a EU member) makes an agreement with the signatory countries of the Schengen Agreement, Polish eastern border will remain one of only few places on the map of Europe where it will still be possible to control mobility on the East-West axis. Furthermore one may assume that inevitable process of globalisation of migration will increase the flows from the East. Therefore the issues touched in this paper are highly topical, and should not be missed at this moment of time.

## 2. Patterns of emigration

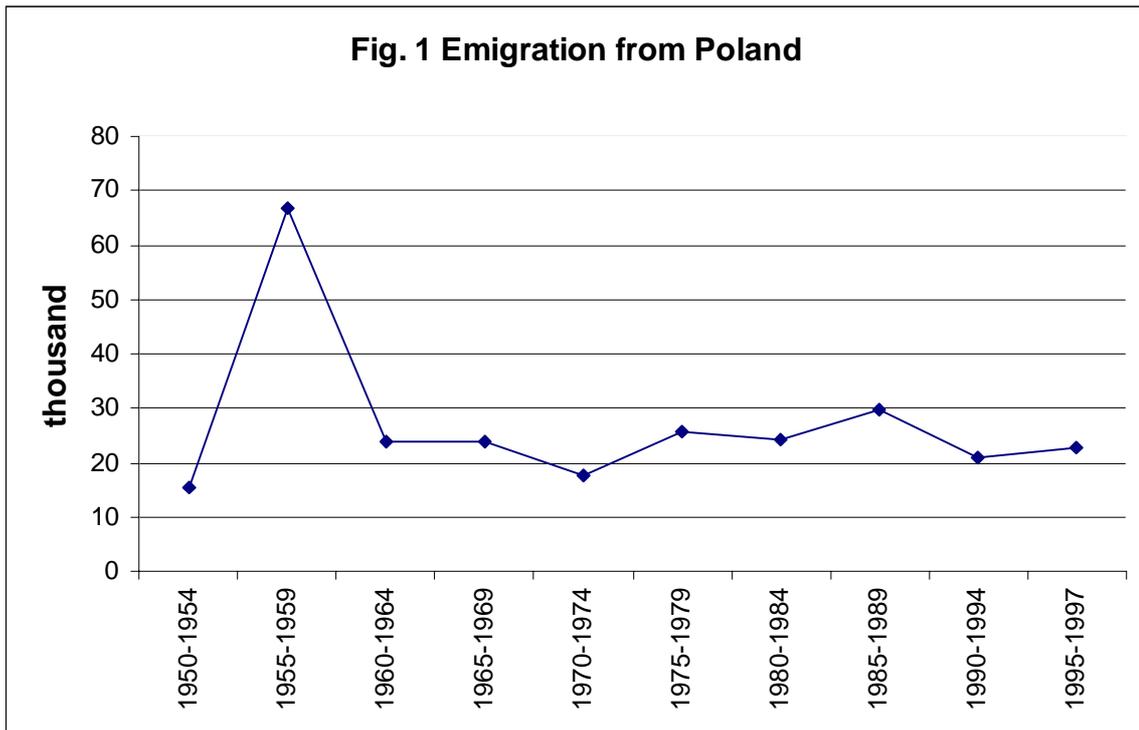
One can not consider inflows to the Western Europe without discussing the emigration of Poles. For centuries Polish lands served as a vast reservoir of labour for many countries, most notably for Germany (Okolski 1994). Human factor was one of the biggest Polish assets.

During the entire post-war period, migration waves from Poland either intensified or abated depending on the socio-political situation in the country. Between 1945 and 1989 all legal acts related to foreign migration strictly followed the main principles of the isolationist: they were simply repressive.

Knowledge about migration from Poland after the Second World War is not satisfactory. In the official Polish statistics the concept of a 'declared change of a permanent residence' remained (and still remains) a basic concept used in defining outflows and inflows as well. No wonder that due to a fear of repression those who wanted to emigrate during the communism era had not declared it officially (Okolski 1998). The deficiency of the official data is visible very well while comparing Polish statistics on emigration and data on immigration of the receiving countries. Serious under-estimations occur in Polish sources. For example, emigration to Germany in the 1980s (of ethnic Germans, their family members and those who simply used the lenient policy of the Federal Republic of Germany towards the application for Aussiedler status) was not registered. Therefore between 1980 and 1989 according to the official statistics around 271.000 persons emigrated whereas the estimated number (Okolski 1994) for this period was 1.1-1.3 million (majority of them to Germany). The German sources say about 700.000-800.000 Polish citizens who settled in Germany.

Since, migration surveys have been either rare or unrepresentative, official data turns to be the only source for the whole post-war period to describe general trends in migration. However, one should consider this source cautiously.

Analysing permanent outflows by five-year annual averages we can see that after 1989 emigration reached the lowest level since 1960 (with the exception of years 1970-1974). Emigration from Poland during the transition period was about 40 per cent below the average of 29.800 for 1985-1989 and about 19 per cent lower than the average of 24.400 for 1980-1984. There were many factors conducive to the decline of this outflow.



The most important in my opinion were the new developments, challenges and opportunities for a quite large part of the society (especially for younger cohorts of urban professionals) brought along with the political, social and economic transformation and an introduction of the foreign currency exchange rate regulated by market. However, transition of the system brought also an economic hardship. Social and economic transformation caused such negative phenomena as unemployment, difficulties with adaptation to the market requirements and lack of security among some segments of the society (especially working class and rural, middle age and poor educated). All this influenced the changes in migration patterns after the collapse of the system. To support this thesis I analyse below trends in emigration by such migrants' features as: sex, age, place of residence, education and country of destination.

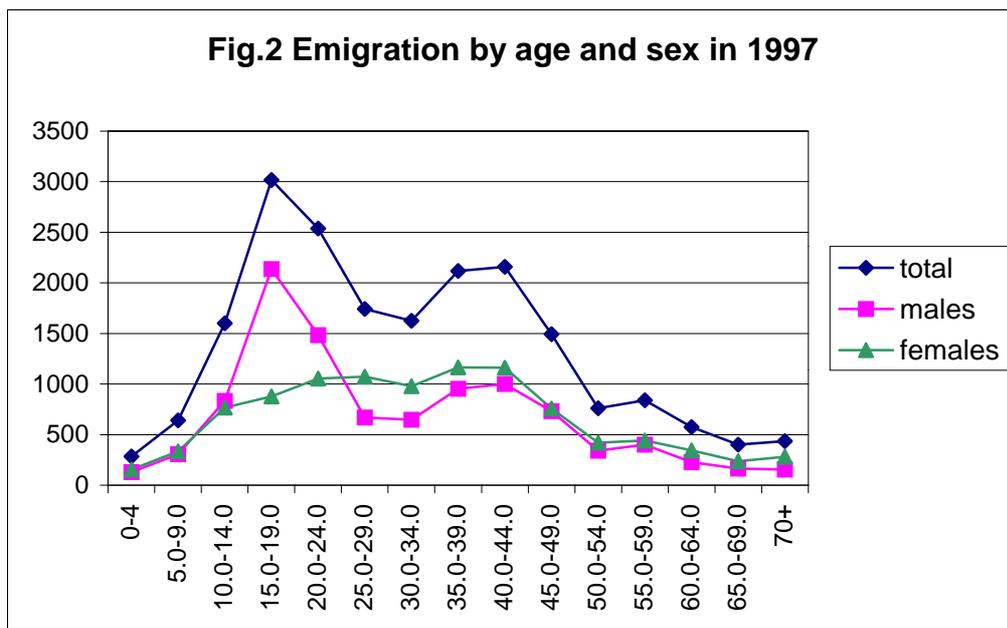
After many years of females' excess over males, in 1994 the number of males became higher (by 8%) than the number of females. This tendency was kept up in the second half of 1990s what means that a characteristic for the communist era pattern of illegal males migration which was followed by legal female migration has been broken (Iglicka, forthcoming a).

**Table 1.** Emigrants by sex: 1981-1997

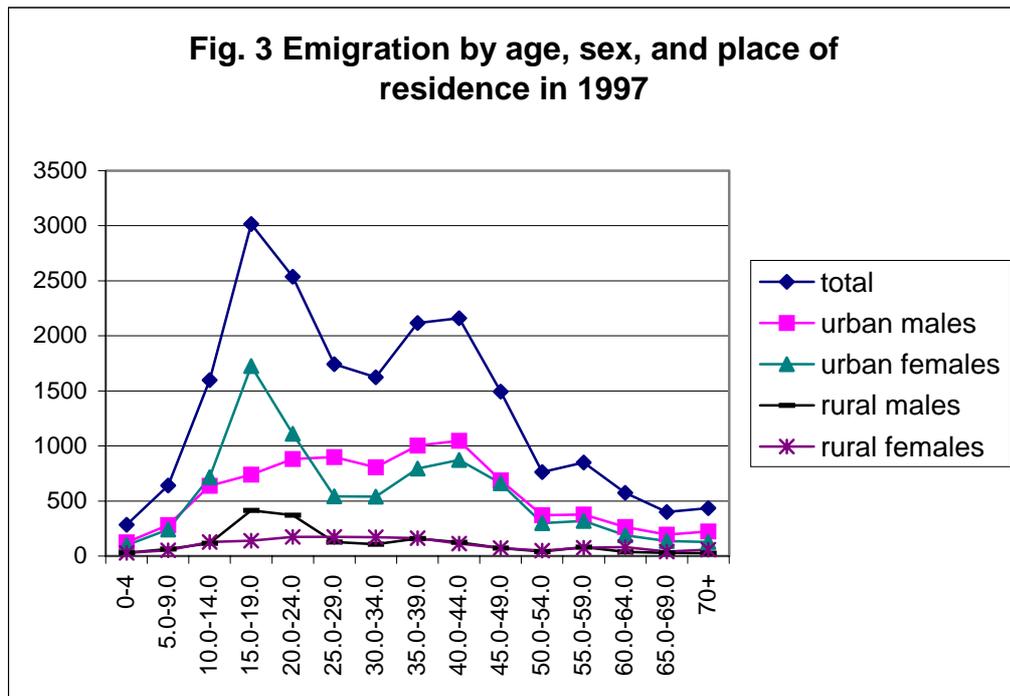
Year	Total	Males	Females
1981-1985	120148	54686	65462
1986-1990	146820	68668	78152
1991-1995	112716	56686	56039
1995	26344	13305	13039
1996	21297	10882	10415
1997	20222	10179	10043

Source: Rocznik Demograficzny (Demographic Yearbook) 1998: 340

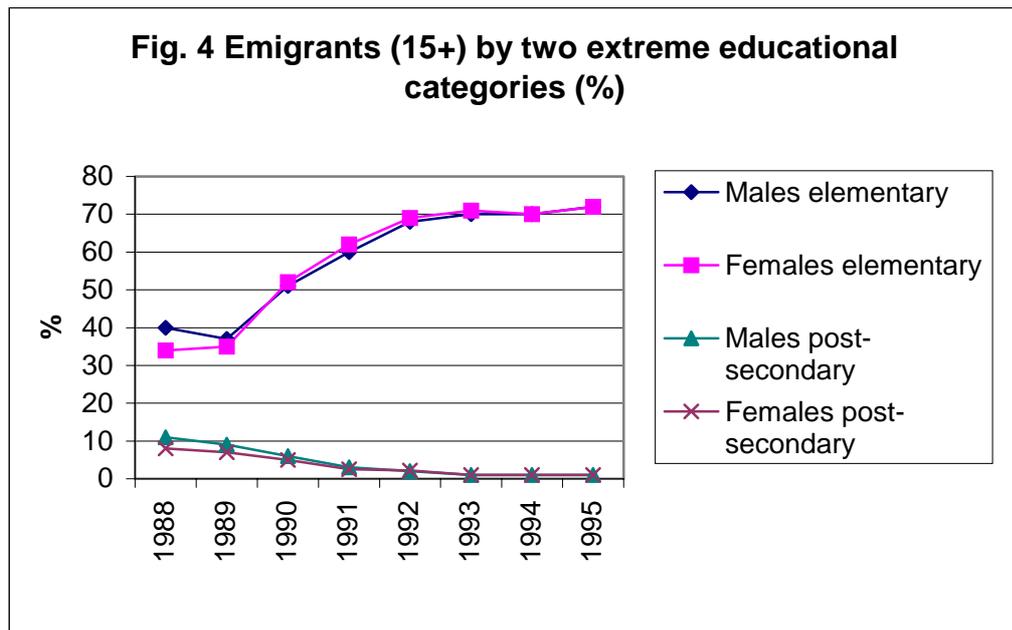
As far as age of emigrants is concerned the interesting characteristic for a transition period is a clear prevalence of age groups of 35-39 and 40-44 over the age groups 25-29 and 30-34 (for both males and females). Although figure 2 shows data for 1997 only, this tendency is not different from the trends observed since the beginning of 1990s. In comparison to the 1980s the emigrants' average age grew steadily; the middle age groups of productive age are better visible in the 1990s whereas 1980s were characterised over all by emigration of youngest cohorts (Iglićka, forthcoming a).



One can see from figure 3 that among the emigrants, young inhabitants of urban areas dominate significantly. Highly uneven spatial distribution of outflows, which was visible in the 1980s was kept up in the 1990s. About 50 per cent of migrants left from the four most urban, industrialised, main administrative units: Warsaw, Gdansk, Katowice and Opole.



The low educated people dominated among migrants and their share consistently increased in the 1990s. Furthermore, there were no sign of the brain drain, the phenomenon that was so characteristic for the emigration from Poland at the beginning of 1980s. The wave of academics among emigrants during the Solidarity period and martial law was very significant. It is enough to recall that as many as 15% of Polish scholars, most frequently computer scientists, physicists and biologists, either permanently emigrated or left the country on long-term contracts mainly for the United States (Hryniewicz, Jalowiecki and Mync 1992). Transformation created a lot opportunities and challenges for well educated Poles and this fact is significantly mirrored in the emigration statistics (Iglicka, forthcoming a).



As far as country of destination is concerned during the whole post-war period (since 1950) the West (and Germany in particular) was the prime destination of Polish emigrants. The United States followed Germany. This tendency continued during the transition period.

**Table 2.** Emigration from Poland by the main countries of destination, 1981-1994

Country of destination	1981-1985	1986-1990	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994
<b>Total</b>	120148	146820	18440	20977	18115	21376	25904
<b>Europe in this:</b>	99007	120733	13890	16779	14514	17059	21228
<b>Germany</b>	73362	87631	11587	14502	12851	15333	18876
<b>France</b>	4230	4962	398	328	265	212	309
<b>Sweden</b>	3787	3916	479	460	283	280	518
<b>USA</b>	11924	14654	2493	2158	1960	2592	2767
<b>Canada</b>	4273	6987	1586	1547	1232	1373	1457

Source: Rocznik Statystyczny (Statistical Yearbook) 1995: 70.

What seems to be the most important factor arising from the analysis of the fragmentary statistics pertaining to the registered outflow only is the fact the political factor did not play an important role in changes in population mobility from Poland. Collapse of the system and the liberalisation of migration policy did not cause massive emigration from Poland. Neither a restricted migration policy of Federal Republic of Germany reduced the official outflow. Emigration to Germany in the years 1991-1994 comprised 73.149 persons thus it was lower than for the peak period of 1986-1989 but on the similar level as it was for the years 1981-1985 (see table 2).

Looking at the future of Polish migration from the perspective of the European enlargement and a free access to labour markets by Poles, three factors seem to play an important role. These are as follows: an economic factor, a 'German' factor and a demographic factor.

It is visible that the registered outflow declined in the 1990s mainly because of the social and economic changes and new opportunities for one of the most mobile so far part of the society i. e. young and very young urban professionals. It seems that the phenomenon of emigration slowly becomes a domain of blue collars unable to adapt to market requirements. Assuming a moderately optimistic growth scenario for Polish economy and a gradual convergence of prices and wages in 10-15 years wage disparity between Poland and the rest of the European Union is likely to diminish to some extent. This would make segments of the society so prone for migration today to be more supine, and consequently reduce the potential of migration.

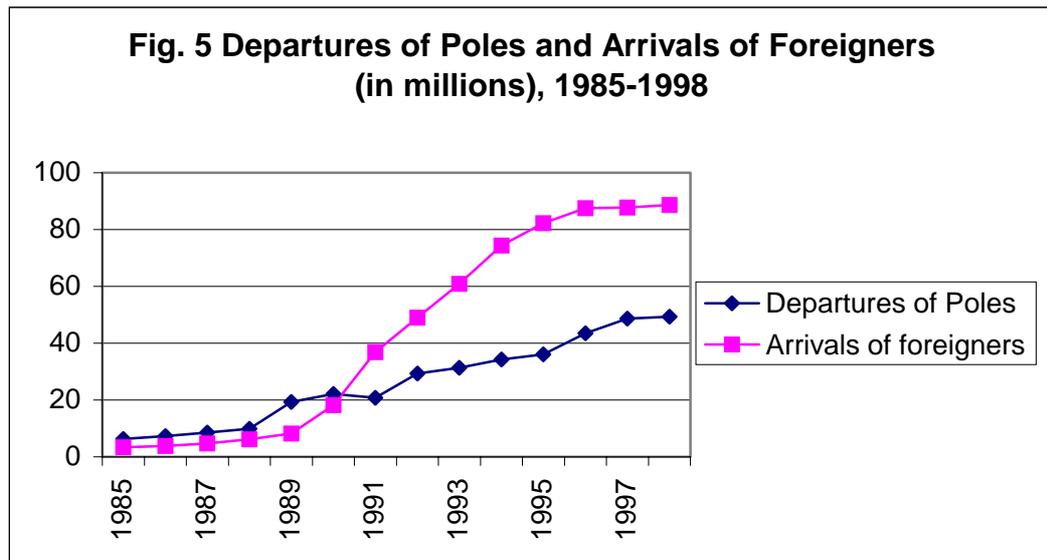
Since emigration to Germany reached in the past a form of an exodus, a phenomenon of further emigration on the basis on either ethnic claims or family reunification would undoubtedly remain visible in the future outflows. Its size is not easy to predict and the economic factor will play here a very important role again. The influence of this factor on shaping ethnic identification has been visible in Poland for years. Today it is illustrated by the facts that in recent years an interest in belonging to German minority organizations in Poland is declining. Another phenomenon is a return to Poland thousands of people who once proclaimed their German identity (Heffner 1999). These return migrants include both representatives of the native population of Silesia (which in a considerable part constitute a German minority) as well as those of other origins, who previously claimed to be German in anticipation of gaining material benefits from West German society (Kurcz, forthcoming).

As far as a demographic factor is concerned an active population of Poland, i.e. 15-64 age cohorts, will increase by about 960.000 persons in the years 1996-2020. There will be however a decline by about 570.000 in the age groups 15-44 i.e. the most mobile groups and an increase by 1.4 million persons in the group 45 and older. Thus, this will also be conducive to diminish a migration pressure (Stola, forthcoming). Of course there will still be a demand for short-term migration or irregular mobility in accordance with an idea 'earn there (in the West) and spend here' but this phenomenon is not a topic of this paper.

### **3. Patterns of immigration**

The fall of the communist system and the slow, sometimes painful, birth of the new one have generated phenomena which were completely unexpected both by people and governments in West, Central and East European countries, namely the new spatial mobility of people of the former Soviet bloc countries. At the beginning this mobility was perceived mainly as a threat. Then it turned out to have many positive effects (Iglicka and Sword 1999).

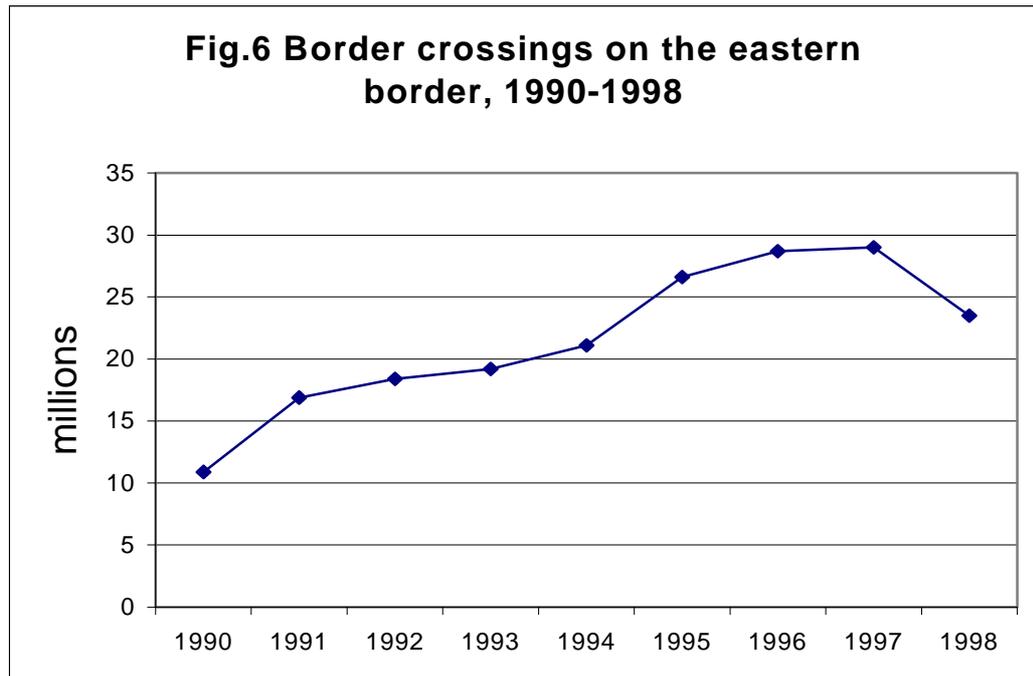
These unexpected geographic population movements recorded in statistics on border traffic shows that the number of arrivals of foreigners to Poland between 1989 and 1999 grew more than 10 times (from 8.2 millions to 88.6 millions). It is clear that the increase in the spatial movement of foreigners across Poland's borders was far more dramatic than it was for Poles (Iglicka, forthcoming b). The influx of foreigners from Germany and the former Soviet Union has been largely responsible for this growth. However, only a small percentage of the flow from Germany can be perceived as a migration since people arriving from there are mainly tourists.



As far as numbers of visitors from the former Soviet Union are concerned in 1989 fewer than 3 million of them entered Poland. Their number more than doubled the next year and continued to grow up to more than 14 million in the peak year 1997. In January 1998 Polish authorities complying with commitments arising from the forthcoming EU enlargement changed the Aliens Law<sup>1</sup> and regulations on documents for entry to Poland. This immediately affected movements from Belarus and Russia as Ukraine and Lithuania had signed new agreements on visa-free movement with Poland. With new, more strict entry regulations<sup>2</sup> and the Russian crisis in 1998, the numbers dropped; to date (mid-1999) this trend has not reversed (Stola, forthcoming).

<sup>1</sup> Alien Law is a comprehensive document that regulates: 1) entry, exit, transit and residence of foreign nationals; 2) activities of the state and competence of various government agencies with relation to migration; 3) rights of foreigners in accordance to the international standards; 4) repatriation of ethnic Poles (Stachanczyk 1998; Jagielski 1997).

<sup>2</sup> Citizens from the former USSR do not need visa in order to visit Poland. They still benefit from the old Polish-Soviet agreement signed in 1979. According to this agreement the only requirement to enter Poland is a voucher and an invitation from a Polish citizen. Till 1998 these were possible to buy for few dollars at kiosks on eastern border. The more strict policy means that Border Guard started to control whether the required documents are not false and whether the tourists hold a required, minimal quota of money.



Citizens of the former Soviet Union do not come to Poland to enjoy recently obtained freedom of movement. Most movements is a side effect of a sick post Soviet economy and take a form of ‘shuttle’ mobility which last from 3 to 7 days and is mainly for the purpose of trade (Iglicka 1999). The remainder comes to work since besides an easy access to Polish territory, migrants have also a relatively easy access to Poland’s informal labor market (Stola, forthcoming). An estimate made on the basis of survey conducted in Ukraine and Poland in 1995 suggest that there may be more than 500.000 Ukrainians who during travelling to Poland work illegally. A great majority of them are petty-traders who as a side effect of their trade activities engage in a various, usually very short work contracts<sup>3</sup> (Okolski 1998). According to the Polish Ministry of Labor and Social Policy’s estimates there are about 100.000–150.000 foreigners working illegally each year in Poland (Informal Labour Market 1995). Majority of them comes from the ‘East’. Although, according to that estimate, a substantial proportion of those people are seasonal workers, it probably omits foreigners who were employed for a very short period of time, e.g. for two weeks or shorter (Okolski 1998).

<sup>3</sup> The estimate for 1995 shows that migrants with valid work permits constituted only 0.2 per cent of that figure (Okolski 1998).

The massive flux of arrivals from the former Soviet Union caused many positive phenomena such as the development of some sectors of the Polish economy, competition on labor markets, etc. For several years, the citizens of the former Soviet Union visiting Poland to shop fostered local economic growth. Foreign demand for textile and leather products was one of the main factors, for instance, behind the boom in the growth of small, private textile and shoe businesses (Okolski 1996). Foreigners (especially those from the East) spent also a lot of money in Poland.

**Table 3.** The value of expenditures made by foreigners from neighboring states in Poland, 1994-1996

Country	1994 (in mln PLN*)	1995 (in mln PLN*)	1996 (in mln PLN*)
<b>Belarus</b>	456.9	778.1	1184.7
<b>Czech Republic</b>	421.2	512.5	870.7
<b>Germany</b>	3628.2	4470.1	4965.6
<b>Lithuania</b>	116.4	130.7	118.8
<b>Russia</b>	109.2	84.0	138.9
<b>Slovakia</b>	133.7	160.3	251.3
<b>Ukraine</b>	317.8	578.2	1248.9

\*1 US\$ = 2.9-3.4 PLN

Source: Ruch graniczny i wydatki cudzoziemców w Polsce, 1994-1996, 1997: 23.

When new, more strict policy regulations towards the flux from the East were introduced in January 1998 sales at big bazaars in eastern and central Poland declined dramatically. This immediately caused a heavy lobbying of Polish traders and manufacturers who made Polish government reconsider certain regulations (Stola, forthcoming). As a result the costs of tourists' vouchers and a required at the entrance to Poland minimal quota of money were lowered (Iglicka, forthcoming c).

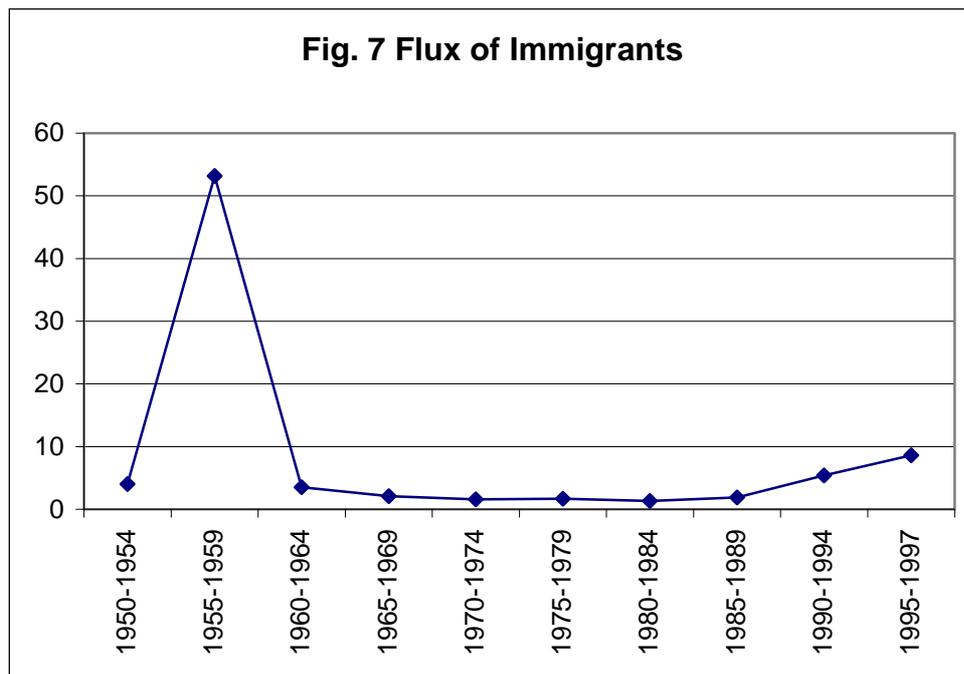
As far as the negative aspects of the flow from the East are concerned one of them – crime – is particularly visible. Statistics depicting crime amongst foreigners do not indicate a big scale phenomenon but they do indicate a growing trend in most serious crimes (including armed robbery and homicides) committed especially by Ukrainians. Thus, whereas in 1992, citizens of the former Soviet Union comprised 17.5% of all foreigners who were charged with a crime and faced judicial proceedings, in 1993 they made up 65.5% of which 10-20 percent were serious crimes. According to information and data made available by the Police Headquarter in Warsaw, these proportions were maintained in the period between 1994 and 1997.

After a decade of penetration of Polish trade and labor markets by petty-traders and seasonal workers, one can observe that some of them, and especially those with already established network in Poland, having realized restrictions in West European policy towards mobility from the 'East', consider possibility of long-term or permanent emigration to Poland<sup>4</sup> (Iglicka, forthcoming c). There are some ways of channeling this phenomenon. The most visible in official statistics are: application for a permanent

<sup>4</sup> As a result of the understanding reached by the European Union member countries in September 1995, all of the countries of the former Soviet Union (on the contrary to the other non-Soviet former countries of the Communist bloc) were put on the 'visa-rule list'.

residence permit, application for a visa with work permit, marriage to a Polish citizen, application for a repatriation visa.

According to a legal definition which is use in Poland, the stock of foreign citizens has to include foreigners who after being granted a permanent residence permit were registered at any specific address as permanent residents of Poland, and until a given moment did not leave for any other country nor acquired Polish citizenship. Barring a few exceptions, immigration as recorded by official Polish sources displayed an astonishingly stable pattern in the post-war period - annual inflows ranged from 1.500 to 3.000 (Okolski 1998). The sudden increase in the number of the flux of foreigners occurred after the collapse of the system only.



Official statistical data indicates an increasing tendency of people from the former USSR applying for work permits and permanent residence permit (PRP). Although it is not possible to prove that these are just the people who started arriving in Poland as petty-traders, the mass character of shuttle mobility inclines me to the assumption that many of them did.

As far as visas with work permit granted from the beginning of 1990s till 1996 Ukrainians were on the first place, since 1996 till today (mid 1999) they are on the second place. If we look at the nationality of foreigners granted the permanent residence permit (PRP) we see that the most numerous nationality is undoubtedly Ukrainian.

**Table 4.** Visas with work permit granted in 1994-1998 by most numerous nationalities (%)

Country	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998
<b>Ukraine</b>	13.0	14.0	15.8	15.2	13.1
<b>Vietnam</b>	11.0	13.0	14.6	17.8	15.1
<b>Russia</b>	8.5	7.5	7.6	6.5	5.6
<b>USA</b>	7.0	7.0	6.0	5.3	4.1
<b>China</b>	7.8	7.0	7.8	6.5	6.7
<b>Great Britain</b>	7.0	7.0	6.0	5.0	5.0
<b>Belarus</b>	5.0	3.5	3.0	3.3	4.0
<b>Germany</b>	4.6	5.0	6.0	6.0	5.5
<b>Total (absolute numbers)</b>	690	9057	7019	8978	10505

Source: Poland – statistical data on migration 1994–1998, 1999.

**Table 5.** Foreigners granted the permanent residence permit (PRP) in Poland according to the most numerous nationalities, 1993-1998 (%)

Country	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998
<b>Ukraine</b>	15	21	19	22	23	24
<b>Russia</b>	11	12	11	10	8	7
<b>Belarus</b>	7	6	7	7	8	7
<b>Germany</b>	5	5	6	5	4	4
<b>Vietnam</b>	4	4	7	9	8	10
<b>Kazakhstan*</b>	1	2	8	8	15	10
<b>Lithuania</b>	3	3	2	3	2	2
<b>Armenia</b>	1	2	2	2	2	5
<b>Total (absolute numbers)</b>	1964	2457	3051	2844	3973	1567

\*Ethnic Poles and their family members migrating to Poland on the basis of repatriation resolution issued by Polish government in Summer 1996. It is estimated that at least 100.000 ethnic Poles (able to prove ethnic descent) are in Kazakhstan without ever having planned to be there. They (or their predecessors) had been deported to this region by the Soviet (or Tsarist) authorities and could not (or would not) return or move to Poland. The Polish government resolution on repatriation states that persons who can prove Polish origin and are officially invited by local governments in Poland will receive a repatriation visa and permanent resident status. Immediately upon arrival they will be issued Polish citizenship. As from the autumn 1996 citizens of Kazakhstan of Polish descent however, are required to apply for a repatriation visa only. They are not required to apply for a permanent resident permit and this explains the drop for 1998. Along with the ethnic Poles arrive their family members who are in a majority not of a Polish descent. So far the repatriation process is regulated by local housing or employment situation but this phenomenon may undoubtedly generate pressure of ‘family reunion’ oriented migration from the East in the future (Iglicka 1998).

Source: Poland – statistical data on migration 1994-1998, 1999.

The result of the study on spatial distribution of the foreign born population of Ukrainians holding PRP in 1991 show that they were situated in big cities, in ethnically Ukrainian territories and territories where Ukrainians and Lemkos were resettled in 1947<sup>5</sup>. Thus some links between old diaspora of Ukrainians living in Poland for centuries and new arrivals are visible. Furthermore, a map of territorial distribution of Orthodox and Greek Catholic church covers spatial distribution of 'new' Ukrainians. It proves that network between 'old' and 'new' group plays an important role in the spatial formation of the latter (Jerczynski 1999).

The other interesting phenomenon is a phenomenon of mixed marriages. It is not possible to state what percentage of these marriages is false (if any) but a sudden growing trend may suggest that there may be some other factors (than traditional) shaping a rapid willingness of Ukrainians (and other nationalities from the former USSR) to marry Poles.

**Table 6.** Mixed marriages; 1990-1996 (selected years)

<b>Foreign wife</b>	<b>1990</b>	<b>1995</b>	<b>1996</b>	<b>Foreign husband</b>	<b>1990</b>	<b>1995</b>	<b>1996</b>
<b>Ukraine</b>	-	331	340	<b>Ukraine</b>	0	89	108
<b>Russia</b>	-	119	151	<b>Russia</b>	-	-	-
<b>Belarus</b>	-	95	104	<b>Belarus</b>	-	-	-
<b>Lithuania</b>	-	41	40	<b>Lithuania</b>			
<b>Armenia</b>	-	27	28	<b>Armenia</b>	0	44	64
<b>Latvia</b>	-	6	10	<b>Latvia</b>	-	-	-
<b>Kazakhstan</b>	-	13	11	<b>Kazakhstan</b>	-	-	-
<b>USSR</b>	255	-	-	<b>USSR</b>	210	0	0
<b>Germany</b>	370	61	63	<b>Germany</b>	1494	748	698
<b>Vietnam</b>	-	15	42	<b>Vietnam</b>	0	44	64
<b>USA</b>	88	46	33	<b>USA</b>	263	185	138
<b>United Kingdom</b>	14	-	-	<b>United Kingdom</b>	44	-	-
<b>Canada</b>	-	17	15	<b>Canada</b>	0	46	43
<b>Others*</b>	184	149	140	<b>Others*</b>	1318	1164	1062
<b>Total</b>	<b>911</b>	<b>920</b>	<b>977</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>3329</b>	<b>2320</b>	<b>2177</b>

\*Mainly western European countries

Source: Rocznik Statystyczny (Statistical Yearbook), various years.

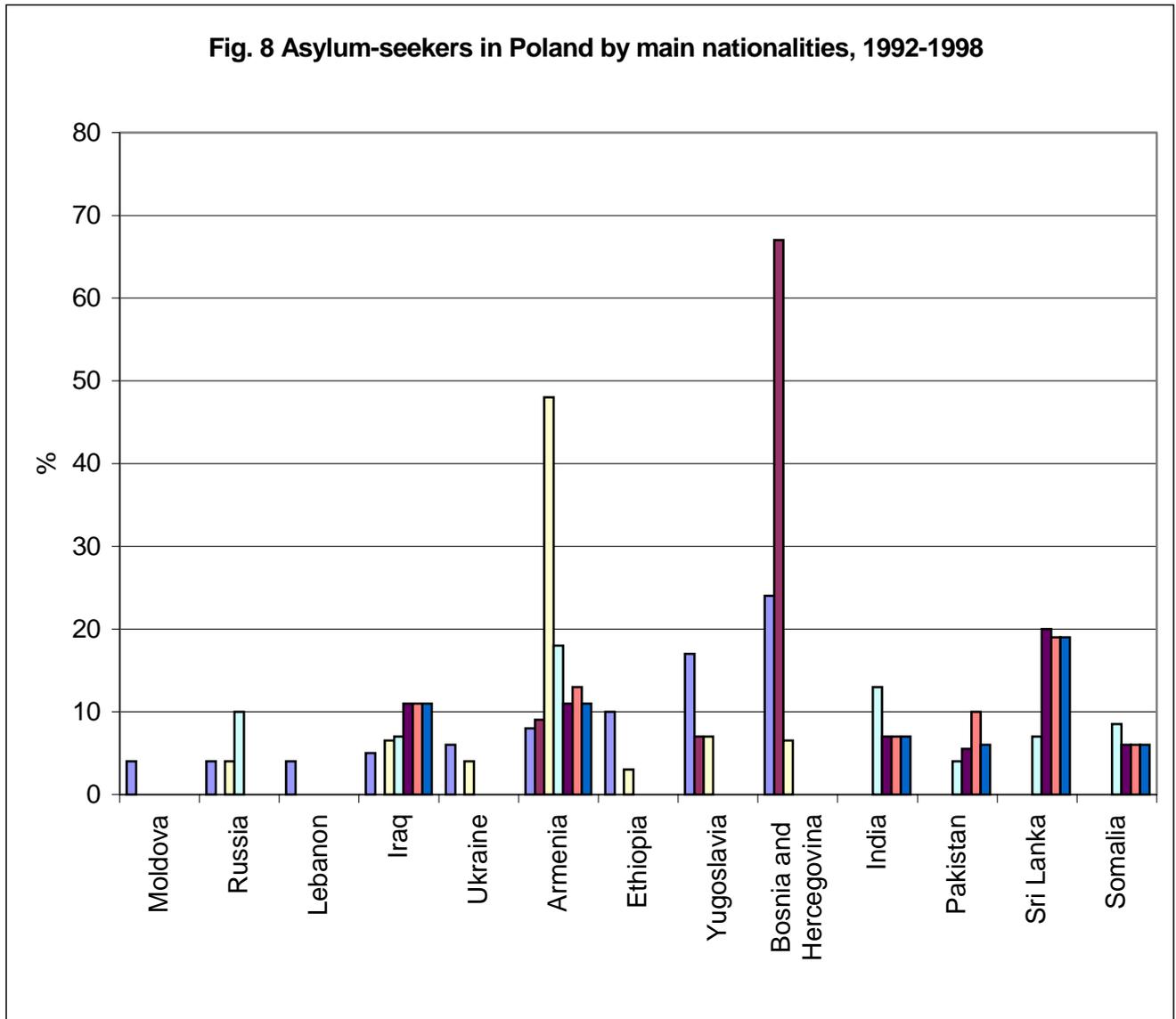
So far there are no any in-depth anthropological studies on the 'new' Ukrainians community. The partial information that exists show dynamic, very young and young people, who are rather not (so far) interested in maintaining their ethnicity while trying to settle in Poland. 'Survival strategy' seems to be most important for them. Furthermore, the 'new' Ukrainian group is not homogenous and there are many such strategies. It is possible however, to distinguish some typos. Firstly, those who are in Poland illegally as seasonal workers or petty-traders with the aim to earn quick money and return home, will realize the strategy of shuttle mobility as long as it will be profitable and as long as the visa-free movement will be in power. Here I predict a decrease in numbers of petty-traders (which in fact already occurred) and an increase of seasonal workers. Secondly,

<sup>5</sup> In 1947 Polish security forces unable to destroy Ukrainian national guerilla movement (UPA) operating since 1943 in southeastern Poland dislocated approximately 150.000 Ukrainians and Lemkos from this region Poland (an area which was ethnically Ukrainian) to the northern and western territories (formerly part of Germany). This operation was named *Akcja Wisła*.

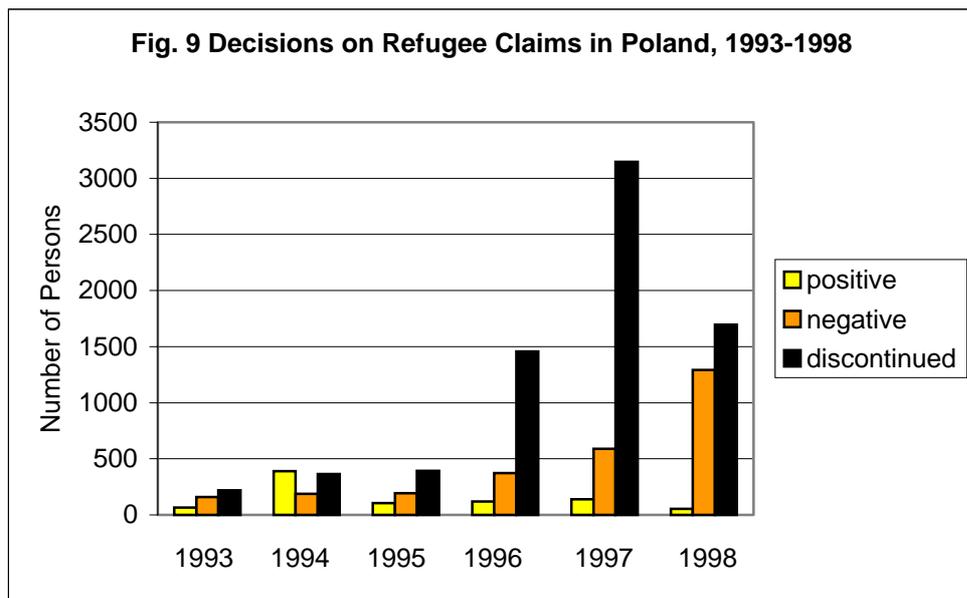
those who want to settle legally will try to integrate with the majority group. They perceive Poland as a country of opportunities and do not want to be associated with the negative stereotypes of being Soviet. With the further development of formal and informal networks and institutions the numbers of Ukrainians granted visas with work permit and PRP will be growing. There is however, an element in this group that treats Poland only as a transit place on the way to the West. Therefore we may assume that thirdly, the strategy is also to obtain Polish citizenship (through application or marriage) in order to emigrate to the West (Iglicka, forthcoming d).

The other interesting phenomenon concerning immigration is a phenomenon of arrivals from Armenia. This flow is a result of the drama in the Caucasus. Therefore Armenians arrive into Poland mainly as political refugees. Contrary to the other asylum seekers in Poland, they do not treat Poland exclusively as a country of transit to the West. As far as the applications for an asylum are concerned Armenians are the only nationality present each year during the whole period of 1992-1998. Other nations (with the exception of former Yugoslavia) mirror mainly some trends in the 'popularity' of Poland as a way to Western Europe.

**Fig. 8 Asylum-seekers in Poland by main nationalities, 1992-1998**



At this moment an important digression has to take place. One should remember that the majority of asylum seekers in Poland consists of people who were detained on the eastern border, or on the western border or somewhere in the country or after being readmitted from Germany. These are people who in majority do not want to stay in Poland but they want to move to Western Europe. The statistical formulation of this phenomenon is shown on figure 9. This figure displays the relations between types of decisions on asylum claims made in Poland between 1993 and 1998. The most important here are not numbers but the highly asymmetric proportion between the number of decisions on discontinuance and others. The decisions on discontinuance means that people who had applied for refugee status disappeared and as we can see from figure 9 they do disappear (Kozłowski 1999).



Coming back to those among asylum seekers who want to stay in Poland for at least few years i.e. Armenians, for part of them the way to achieve Polish residence seems to be through application for a permanent residence permit, for others through marriage with Polish citizens. Majority of them still thinks about going back home and therefore seems to prefer irregular status (i.e. extended visas). Some of them stay also illegally.

The activities of Armenians are particularly visible in the field of trade. In many cases this is an illegal street market trade. Armenians create their own micro-communities in Northern and Eastern Poland. Along with their arrival an ethnic consciousness among old, small group of old Armenians living for centuries in Poland and being almost totally assimilated started to flourish slowly.

Researchers have noted that among new arrivals are mostly educated people (Marciniak, forthcoming). Rarely, however, do they find employment commensurate with their knowledge and skills.

As it was already mentioned, from the beginning of 1960s until the beginning of 1990s the immigration flows to Poland were statistically not significant. However, one of the existing and quite visible inflows was movement of students from Vietnam – who arrived in Poland under a government's sponsored program of 'socialist co-operation' or academic exchange. After graduation majority of them returned to home countries where having a European diploma they placed high positions in social hierarchy.

After 1989, irrespective of being still a communist country, Vietnam started to pursue more liberal migration policy that caused inflows to Poland, not only of students (from privileged families), but people who were looking for place to work and to live.

Since the end of 1993, the number of Vietnamese citizens applying for work-permit visas has seen a sharp increase, and has resulted in rise in the number of Vietnamese legally coming to Poland. Until 1996 Vietnamese were the second largest group (after Ukrainians) as far as the number of visas with work permit granted (see table 4). Moreover, the growing presence of Vietnamese was also due to an illegal flow. Some of these illegals attempted to legalize their stay through an application for permanent residence permit or through marriage with Polish residence. At the end of 1996, the Vietnamese were the third largest group of immigrants receiving residence permits. Since numbers concerning flows from Kazakhstan pertain in fact to the process of repatriation of ethnic Poles and their family members, in 1997 among 'real' foreigners granted PRP Vietnamese were on the second place and this tendency was maintained till 1998 (see table 5). According to estimates there are around 30.000 Vietnamese living in Poland (Halik, forthcoming).

Vietnamese have become one of the main groups of foreigners involved in small trade. It is a group that is well organized socially, and, contrary to Armenians and Ukrainians, has not been involved much in crime and abuse. There is much to indicate that they feel 'at home'. They send their children to Polish schools, try to learn the Polish language, read Polish papers and watch Polish TV. They carry on a lively economic activity and not only in the field of small trade and gastronomy. They declare a feeling of 'well-being' within the Polish cultural sphere and they stress the tolerance and the possibility of being able to have an 'economic existence' within it. One should however, remember that "the Vietnamese form a fairly close-knit society which 'externally' adapt itself to dominant culture, 'internally' however, they still maintain their own individuality in the ethnic and cultural sense and as far as language is concerned" (Condominas and Pottier 1983: 85).

Analyzing official data on Vietnamese society and examining the results of research on the cultural awareness of the Vietnamese in Poland (Halik 1995), three scenarios of future development of Vietnamese community can be proposed. First, if the bulk of immigrants are young, poor educated men who stay in Poland illegally with the only aim to earn money, after realizing this goal, they will probably decide to return to Vietnam or try to migrate to the West. Such a scenario would mean that in the foreseeable future there would either be fewer Vietnamese immigrants in Poland or the number arriving would remain at the same level. Secondly, Vietnamese who are in Poland legally, especially those who have permanent residence and who also have network connections with their fellow-countrymen in Germany or France will probably treat their stay in Poland as a 'stop-over'. Thus in a 'friendly environment' and in 'an atmosphere of tolerance', they can save up money and wait for Polish citizenship to enter easily another western European country. This again means stabilization or a slow decrease in numbers. Thirdly, along with the further thriving of Polish economy there is also a possibility of an increase in the number of Vietnamese permanently residing in Poland which gradually will lead to their integration.

#### **4. Conclusions**

This paper touches upon a spectrum of complex problems and phenomena that should be considered from at least three points of view. Firstly they should be considered from the Polish perspective. Secondly they should be examined from the point of view of

migratory movements in CEE region and finally they should be considered from the point of view of the East-West European mobility in the context of the forthcoming EU enlargement. One can not discuss the East-West mobility without discussing the emigration of Poles. One should also not analyse the recent immigration into Poland from the East without considering some implications of this phenomenon both for Poland and for the West.

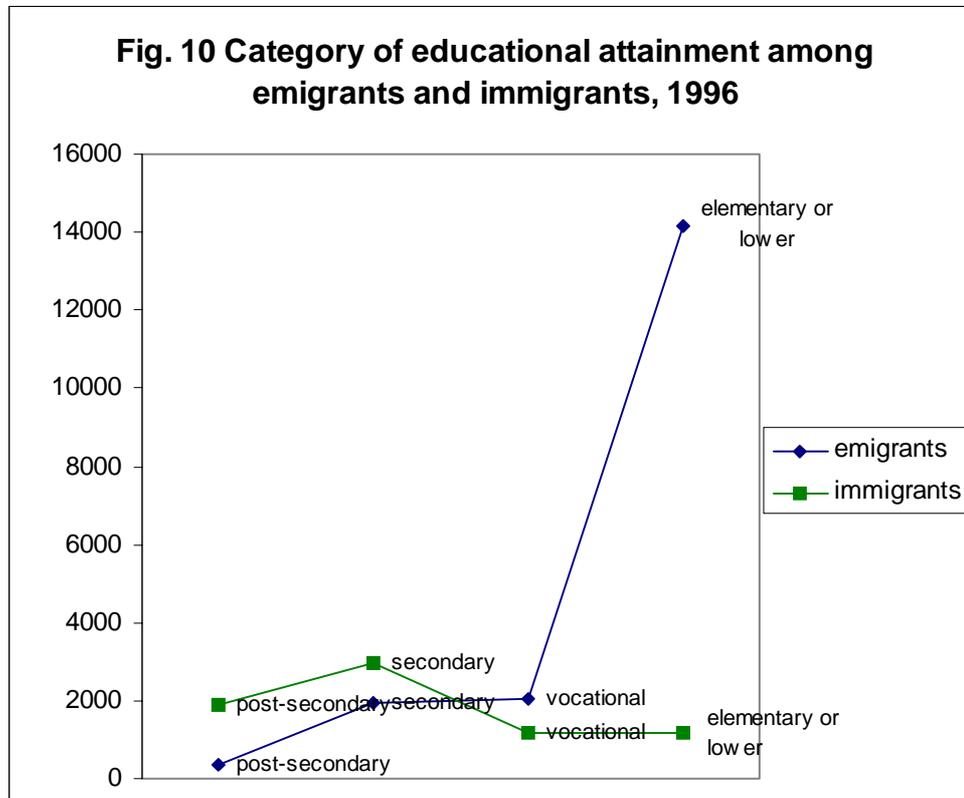
In summing up the phenomenon of emigration of Poles before and during the transition period, the most important seems to be a fact that (contrary to what was expected) political factor did not play an important role in changes in population mobility. Collapse of the system and the liberalisation of migration policy did not cause massive emigration from Poland. Neither a restricted migration policy of Federal Republic of Germany reduced the official outflow. Emigration from Poland declined in the 1990s mainly because of the social and economic changes and new opportunities for the young and very young urban middle class, i.e. group that was very mobile before the transition period.

Assuming that the official statistical data reflects some general trends of Polish emigration, the following characteristics can be given. The very important fact is that the geography of migration continues whereas demographic and social characteristics of migrants have been changed during the transition period. Migration maintained to be a domain of persons from highly developed, urban and industrialised regions of Poland. The most important destinations of Polish settlement i.e. Germany, USA and Canada remain also the same. These countries absorb almost 90% of all emigrants (in 1998 – 70%, 11% and 7% respectively). However, the emigrants' average age grew steadily and men started to prevail over women quite visibly in the second half of 1990s. A pattern of illegal males' migration followed by legal migration of females has been broken. The most important change however, was the decline of well-educated emigrants and a rapid increase of poor-educated ones i.e. those who could not adapt to the market requirements (Iglicka, forthcoming a).

As far as migratory potential of Poles is concerned both an economic and a demographic prognosis are not conducive to an increase in emigration. The biggest wave of emigration may be caused in the future by outflows to Germany on the basis of the family reunification. However, such phenomena as a return migration from Germany to Poland and a decline of interests in belonging to German minority organisations that have been observed recently incline me to the assumption that the scale of this movement depends mainly on the economic situation in Poland. It also depends on the different forms of the assistance that the Federal German authorities offer German minority in Poland. When the German authorities limit privileges for Germans living abroad especially the right to work in Germany it may be assumed that in a short period the numbers of the German minority counting today around 300.000 will decrease to five-number figures (Kurcz, forthcoming). This would significantly reduce a future migratory potential on the basis of family reunion claims.

The collapse of the Soviet Union and an introduction of a restricted western European migration policy towards mobility from the former USSR were among the most important factors causing the slow transformation of Poland from a country of emigration into a country of transit and destination as well. The mass presence of foreigners in Poland (primarily foreigners from countries that used to be a part of the Soviet Union) in the context of the EU enlargement has created both a dilemma and challenge for European and Polish migration policies. This is also a dilemma for the Polish economy and the entire Polish society (Iglicka, forthcoming b). It seems however, that there are more positive than negative aspects of the influx from the East. Contrary to Polish

emigrants foreigners applying for a permanent residence permit in Poland are quite highly educated. Each year the majority had either a secondary education (41 per cent) or university education (31.7 per cent). The percentage of persons with only a primary education or with a (non-secondary) vocational education oscillated around 11 per cent (Glabicka et al. 1997).



The young age of immigrants, their high level of education and possession of a trade or occupation mean that they have great potential which, should be regarded as an advantage by local markets. Migrants coming in shuttle movements also foster Polish economic growth.

As far as inflows to Poland are concerned, another important phenomenon is a revival of multiculturalism and a process of ethnic groups' formation that have recently occurred. A dynamic process of migration transforms the temporary entry of Armenians, Ukrainians and Vietnamese into settlement. All three groups aim at integration within Polish society.

As yet it is hard to draw any broad conclusions for prospects of ethnic groups being in the process of formation. Will they encounter an economic and social marginalization? Will there be a tension between them and local population causing the imperative for the state to react to growing ethnic diversity? It is not possible to answer all these questions today. This is only the beginning of the process.

The future of East-West migration depends on the stability of the central and eastern European economies, social and political changes in the countries of the former Soviet Union but all above it depends on the Polish (European Union) migration policy. Brussels and Berlin have already made it clear that strengthening control on Poland's eastern border – the future border of the Union – should be a priority task in Polish preparations for the accession (Stola, forthcoming). On the other hand however, one should not forget that firstly the process of globalization of the European migration will

inevitable increase a movement from the East and secondly that the process of globalization of market economy will bring dualization of central European labor markets thereby increasing the mobility of people and circulation of capital and goods (Iglicka, forthcoming c). A case of German, French, Dutch, and other western economies of the 1970s happens now in CEE region. Although the western European labor market is becoming increasingly constrained by restrictive immigration policies one should not forget that central European labor markets might need foreign labor.

New and exotic for this part of Europe diasporas of Vietnamese, Chinese and Armenians are rapidly formatting. In the future they might create 'global tribes', with their own ethnic and cultural identity which will not disappear despite the spatial distance from their homelands. These tribes are groups which, are based on classical cosmopolitanism. Their arrival in various spots on the globe has resulted in the advancement of new technologies, industry and culture (Kotkin 1993). Their departure has always resulted in the withering of these spheres. Their arrival has been the harbinger of technological, economic and intellectual advancement and has contributed to the development of the global market place.

The key to the future East-West European migration lies undoubtedly in the East, more specifically it lies in the newly arisen countries of the former Soviet Union. The pressure from there and the demographic potential of the mobile eastern human factor along with the restricted migration policy of Western Europe were both conducive to the formation of the Central European buffer zone. Poland is probably the best example of a buffer zone country. From the Western perspective it is also the most important country since the future of East-West migration depends on the extension of the visa regime by Poland. The introduction of the visa-rule list for the former USSR countries and an improvement in the border control may undoubtedly reduce the number of illegal entries and as a consequence it may also reduce a number of refugee claims but some other results of this endeavour may be surprising. It will probably increase the pressure on other channels such as: 1) official labour exchange regulated by work-permit visa movement; 2) application for a permanent residence permit; 3) marriage to a Polish citizen or/and a family reunification; 4) studying; 5) repatriation of ethnic Poles from the former USSR or/and a family reunification.

After the collapse of the communism growing trends in all these five channels have been observed and there are no premises to incline me that they will be stabilised or diverted in the nearest future. During the last ten years there was a strong penetration of Polish trade and labour markets by people from the former Soviet Union. Some networks and institutions channelling the East inflows have been already established. Also the dynamic process of migration has already converted a temporary entry of many seasonal workers, petty traders or asylum seekers into settlement. Even if the economic situation in Poland deteriorates and a social and economic situation in the former Soviet Union improves (what seems highly impossible today) these five mentioned above channels are also to some extent the 'gates to the West'. It is rather natural that after so many years of isolation people from the former Soviet Union will search the opportunities for better live elsewhere. However, in my opinion the scale and character of the mobility on the East-West axis will depend mainly not on the constant formation of new hurdles but on whether these opportunities can be found or not.

The less acknowledged fact is that the key to the future East-West European migration lies also in the West. Since the predicted by many at the beginning of 1990s exodus of the people from the former Soviet Union did not happen there is no need to put economic considerations into the background. Therefore we may assume that the future East-West movement will be an outcome of certain economic factors, in particular the

need for specific types of labour in receiving societies (George 1966). After all the history of the post-war European migration proves that the economic migration takes place when demographic pressures in one country are met by a corresponding readiness to receive population in another.

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