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**The revival of ethnic  
consciousness: a case  
of Poland**

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# **The revival of ethnic consciousness: a case of Poland**

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## **Abstract**

This paper examines the political and social situation of selected ethnic minorities such as Jews, Germans, Ukrainians and Armenians in Poland before and during the transition period. It also analyses the process of formation of new ethnic groups of immigrants from Armenia, Ukraine and Vietnam. It addresses problems associated with the revival of the ethnic consciousness and multiculturalism in the context of the forthcoming European enlargement and integration of Poland within EU structures.

## **1. Introduction**

This paper is devoted to issues relating to established minorities and to new immigrant groups now forming in Poland. The aim here is not to provide a detailed description of the demographic and social characteristics of all the minorities, but rather to address problems associated with the revival of the ethnic consciousness and multiculturalism in the Central European country – Poland – in the context of the European enlargement.

This paper examines the political and social situation of selected ‘old’ minorities such as Germans, Ukrainians, Jews and Armenians before and during the transition period. It also analyses the phenomenon of the new arrivals from Ukraine, Armenia and Vietnam.

Since 1945, virtually all highly-developed countries in the Western World have experienced relatively large-scale immigration. In comparing these countries Castles and Miller (1993) found the following common characteristics: (1) a dynamic process of migration, which transforms the temporary entry of workers and refugees into permanent settlers who form distinct ethnic groups; (2) economic and social marginalization of the immigrants; (3) community formation among immigrants; (4) increasing interaction between immigrant groups and the local population; and (5) the imperative for the state to react to immigration and ethnic diversity (Castles 1995: 293). Of course these represent only the key structural similarities but they made it possible to establish some common patterns despite differences in detail.

Although isolated from these experience for much of the post-World War II period, the Central European countries are now in the preliminary stage of the inflow of foreigners. As yet, it is hard to draw any broad conclusions for this region regarding either the feature of immigration or the reactions of government and local communities to this phenomenon. I think, however, that the process of migration globalization will soon involve the Central and East European countries in ways, which make appropriate the model suggested by Castles in the near future. The arrival of foreigners into Poland takes all forms of inflow - from illegal, through temporary stay, arranged marriages, to setting up a business and permanent settlement. This is the beginning of processes of a

'new' ethnic diversity and also the creation of new ethnic consciousness. Therefore these issues are highly topical and should not be missed at this moment in time (Hamilton, Iglicka, forthcoming).

As far as the problem of ethnicity is concerned one can observe two different trends from the global, European perspective. Europe is becoming more and more involved in ethnic issues, but is going in two opposite directions: first, there is the process of integration of nations within the EU structure and its future enlargement while, second, there is the process of the disintegration of multinational states (post-communist). The social and political transformations initiated in 1989 have proved that ethnic issues in Central and Eastern Europe had not been permanently solved and that they were certainly not silenced in the decades of the social experience of real socialism. On the contrary, they became doubly significant and erupted equally both from subdued xenophobia and nationalism, as well as delay in processes of civil society creation in this part of Europe (Nolte 1995; Kurcz 1997: 8).

The ethnic minorities living in Poland today are there for different reasons. The Jews came here of their own free will. Ukrainians, Lithuanians, Belarussians, and Armenians are relicts of the multinational Polish republic. Germans maintain their idea of origin from the outside in a different way: in many situations, they stress they are in their own country, only the borders were changed (Kurcz 1997).

The other important problem relating to population structure is that since the beginning of the 1990s Poland has transformed slowly from a country that traditionally had been producing migrants to a country of destination and transit for migrants from other countries, especially from East Europe and Asia. Completely new and exotic for this region diasporas of Vietnamese and Chinese for instance are rapidly forming. The mass presence of foreigners (primarily foreigners from countries that used to be a part of the Soviet Union) in the context of the expansion of NATO and the European Union has created both a dilemma and challenge for European and Polish migration policies (Iglicka and Sword 1999).

National differences occur not only in this part of Europe. Ethnic questions have always been a significant issue for Western democracies, what means that incoming EU enlargement will result in the situation that the issue of minorities and immigrants living in Poland will not be only a local but rather an European question.

## **2. Policy towards minorities before and during the transition period**

After 1945 Poland has ceased to be a multinational country it used to be before the Second World War. The deep changes in the ethnic structure resulted from many factors but mainly from territorial changes, extermination of entire groups (particularly Jews and Gypsies) by the Nazis and forced relocation of population (Germans, Ukrainians) during and after the war (Kersten 1974; Piesowicz 1987).

**Table 1:** Changes in population of national minorities in Poland 1931-1997 (in thousands)

Ethnic minority	1931		1946		1961	1988	1991
	census	estimation	census	estimation	estimation	estimation	estimation
<b>Bellorussian</b>	990	1955-1965		200	148	300	200-230
<b>“Local People”</b>	770						
<b>Ukrainian and Lemko/Ruthenian</b>	3215 1227	4985-5025	506	520-570	162	300	200-250
<b>Lemko/Ruthenian (in number of Ukrainian minority)*</b>	in number of Ruthenian	120-130		120-130		80	50-60
<b>German</b>	741	780-785	2300	3200-3500	200	600	350-400
<b>Jewish</b>	2733	3115-3135		40-120	70	10-15	15
Ethnic minority	1931		1946		1961	1988	1991
	census	estimation	census	estimation	estimation	estimation	estimation
<b>Lithuanian</b>	83.1	186-200		10	9	30	20
<b>Roma/Gypsy</b>		30-50		10-15	12	30	25
<b>Russian, in this Old believers</b>	138.7	139-140 30-35			17	15	10-15 2.5-3
<b>Slovak</b>		0.8-0.9			19	25	20-23
<b>Czech</b>	38.1	39			2		2-3
<b>Armenian</b>		5.2				15	8
<b>Tatar</b>		5.5				4-5	3-4
<b>Karaim</b>		1-1.5				0.2	0.2
<b>Greek and Macedonian</b>					9	5	5
Total population	32100		23400		29800	38640	

\*Some of the Lemkos (all over the world) consider themselves to be a part of the Ukrainian minority, some others do not. Because of that they are calculated twice: separately and within the numbers of the Ukrainian ethnic group.

Sources: Olszewicz 1989: 112; Statistical Yearbooks, various years; Kwilecki 1963: 87-88; Tomaszewski 1991; Sakson 1991; Holuszko 1993.

The processes of social and economic transformation accomplished from 1950 –mainly industrialization, urbanization, as well as development of mass culture in the Polish language – were also influential in achieving post-war ethnic homogenization of Polish society. Under these conditions, only education in mother-tongue languages and local cultural activities (mainly in the

form of 'rural' folklore) became channels by which ethnic minorities could preserve their ethnic identity (Lodzinski, forthcoming).

The first post-war population census held in 1946 included a question about ethnic origin. However, the data from this census are not credible as the census was held in rather unstable, political, social and demographic situation. Since other national censuses (held in 1950, 1960, 1978 and 1988) did not contain any direct questions about ethnicity or ethnic language one has to resort to various estimations.

All but one ethnic groups from table 1 have remained on Polish soil for several, even very many generations. The exception is the Greeks and Macedonians group, which is of immigrant origin of the period 1949-1954. Beside these two minority societies, there are also very small groups of Hungarians, French, Serbs, Bulgarians, Georgians, Palestinians, Kurds who constitute small societies of hundreds up to 2,000 persons. Thus the total population of ethnic minorities in Poland ranges between 1.0 to 1.5 million persons or just 2-5 per cent of the total population. Therefore, it is still an ethnically homogeneous country.

The issues surrounding minorities living in Poland were treated in post 1945 policy in Poland as being difficult and 'sensitive'. There was no uniform policy between 1945 and 1989, and attitudes to particular ethnic minorities varied. Until the end of the 1940s, policy aimed at assimilation. In the 1950s and 1960s it underwent gradual liberalization and minorities gained new opportunities to teach or learn their mother-tongue languages and create their own organizations. However, all ethnic associations and organizations were controlled and financed by the Ministry of Internal Affairs. The principle "one minority – one organization" was adopted. Ostensibly these organizations were officially aimed at cultivating cultural traditions of the ethnic minorities, but in reality, they functioned as an instrument of control over minorities by the central state administration. Moreover, minorities had limited access to social, cultural and political activities. Certainly representatives of ethnic minorities were present in both administrative and party structures (local and central) and in the Parliament; but they were not there as the representatives of their own ethnic groups but as members of political parties (Lodzinski, forthcoming).

After the collapse of the communism in 1989 the issue of ethnic minorities became crucial for several reasons. Firstly, democratic changes after 1989 meant ethnic minorities were given an opportunity to involve themselves in local and national policy. Their activity rapidly increased. Initially, this was a great surprise both to the authorities and to most of the public who had previously regarded minorities as a remnant of Poland's multinational history or as a monument of "rural" folklore. Secondly, adaptation to integrate with West European structures required positive relations with neighbors and an avoidance of ethnic conflict. Thirdly, the geopolitical structure and nature of Poland's international relations have been changed. All Poland's neighbors have been changed and the new ones were keen to protect the interests of their ethnic kin in Poland and, in turn

Poland was interested in the protection of rights of Poles living in these countries (Lodzinski, forthcoming).

Shortly after the accession of the new, “Solidarity” government, minority affairs were removed from the jurisdiction of the Interior Ministry and placed under the control of a new office in the Ministry of Culture. The state became a sponsor rather than a supervisor.

The Sejm (lower chamber of the Parliament) Committee on National and Ethnic Minorities has initiated work on the regulation of the legal status of national minorities at the beginning of 1990s. The result of its work – included in a new Constitution (1997) – is an article dealing with the protection of national and ethnic minorities (Konstytucja 1997, art. 35). This article contains a positive commitment of the state to ensure minorities rights to maintain and develop their own culture (language, traditions, customs). It also grants them the right to establish organizations of various character. The Constitution restricts the protection of minority rights to persons possessing Polish citizenship, at the same time providing separate protection of the rights of foreigners (article 56). Such a “citizen’s clause” is in conformity with the standards of minority protection established within the European framework (OSCE; The Council of Europe) (Lodzinski, forthcoming).

Poland’s obligations to ensure the protection of persons belonging to ethnic minorities within its territory have also been guaranteed in bilateral treaties concluded by Poland with all its neighbors and other Central and East European countries in the years 1990-1994. By including appropriate minority clauses in these treaties, Poland has played a significant role in establishing the principles for the protection of minority rights in Central Europe. Reference to the international standards in formulating bilateral treaties was, to a certain degree, an innovation. Instead of attempts to find special ways of protecting particular minorities and ensuring their more favorable position, the solutions applied were based on the document adopted within the framework of CSCE (Barcz 1996; Lodzinski, forthcoming).

Besides international commitments stemming from its bilateral treaties, Poland has undertaken numerous obligations resulting from ratified conventions dealing with protection of human rights and rights of minorities elaborated within the framework of the UN and the Council of Europe. Poland is also active in the work of the CSCE (OSCE). It also signed (in April 1995) an Instrument of Central European Protection of Minority Rights within the framework of the Central European Initiative.

Generally, political, social and the legal situation of ethnic minorities improved after 1989 however, it is far from ideal. The important thing is that the ‘political context’ of the minority issues has been eliminated. Poland treats minorities as an equal part of its society and respects their rights to preserve their own ethnic and cultural identity, as well as their social and political aspirations. On the plus side is the fact that the authorities have taken several steps to improve situation of ethnic minorities as far as their political, cultural and social activities are concerned. On the minus side,



state funding for minorities as a result of tight budgetary constraints are very low and this can exacerbate political tensions.

The change in the state policy toward minorities was accompanied by appropriate changes in attitudes of the minorities themselves, who nowadays feel more secure and actively defend their interests. The nature of contacts with authorities has also changed. At present, both sides refer to concrete problems and do not perceive themselves as a threat.

In my opinion the most urgent issue to be implemented in legal acts is a guarantee of the protections of rights for persons belonging to ethnic minorities who have no Polish citizenship. From the point of view of a revival of “multiculturalism” and forming new diasporas of immigrants the issue of protection of their rights will become important very soon (Michalska 1997).

### **3. Ethnic consciousness among selected ‘old’ and ‘new’ minorities**

#### **3.1. Germans**

For centuries, German colonization and the changing German state hegemony over Polish lands, influenced relations among the populations in the region. A further aspect that helps to understand the question of the German minority in today’s Poland relates to the events of the Second World War. At that time, the German authorities introduced a German nationals’ list (Volksliste) into which the people of Upper Silesia and Gdansk Pomerania (the Corridor) were forcibly entered, and the populations of other conquered territories were recruited with promises of better life. Several hundred thousand Germans from eastern and southern Europe were also resettled onto Polish territory in accordance with the operation “Heim ins Reich” (Home in the Reich). These categories of citizens, i.e. Volksdeutsche and their descendants, German settlers from the east, but primarily a considerable part of the native population of Upper Silesia, Warmia and Masuria - constitute the German minority in contemporary Poland (Kurcz, forthcoming).

The Germans that remained in Poland after the expulsion period of 1946-1950 when more than 2.000.000 of them were expelled, experienced a relatively positive attitude of the Polish authorities (Ociepka 1994; Kurcz 1997). In 1950, schooling in the German language was inaugurated, Germans were enabled to pursue their own cultural activities, and they were granted citizenship rights. It should also be noted that, throughout the entire post-war period, the German Protestant enjoyed freedom of worship, which was overseen by German clergy (Kurcz, forthcoming).

The years 1956-57 known as the “October thaw” because in October 1956 there were several attempts by the new authorities to democratize the system, meant in case of German minority a right for emigration. It caused a wave of departures to Germany. 217.000 persons who claimed to be German emigrated – that is, almost all the Germans living in Poland. As a consequence, the cultural activities of German societies ceased (Kurcz, forthcoming).

The social reality proved to be more complicated yet since with the passage of time, applications for permission to leave for the German Federal Republic came in their thousands, motivated by the wishes of families to reunite. This process accelerated rapidly when Poland-FRG treaty of 1970 permitted 179.000 people to leave for West Germany. One should also remember the fact that emigration (mainly illegal) 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 the opportunity to live better and people just simply took it. Therefore between 1980 and 1989 according to the official statistics around 271.000 persons emigrated legally whereas the estimated number (Okolski 1994) for this period was 1.1-1.3 million (majority of them to Germany). The outflow to Germany accelerated especially in 1989 and in 1990 when restrictions in German migration policy were expected (Iglicka, forthcoming a).

What made the numbers of those who claimed to be ethnic Germans so rapidly growing? The changes in national self-identity are particularly noticeable among the native population of Silesia and the problem of their ethnic malleability lies in the mixed ethnic structure of the region. According to some researchers (Kurcz 1997; Rogalla 1992) native population of Silesia through the centuries has been formed both by Poles and by arrivals from Germany and their long-term co-existence and interaction has created a distinctive culture and the emergence of a new community. Undoubtedly this community perceived Germaness as something very attractive (but as we know such perception of Germany occurred among native Poles as well) as it was associated with progress in civilization and better living conditions. And, with that Poland, through its tragic history, economic backwardness and greater social inequalities, could not compete. Secondly the tragic period of ethnic verification conducted by communist during which many who felt Poles were verified as Germans was conducive to perceive Germaness as something against authorities. The third reason for pro-German self-identity of the native populations lies in the alien character of the Polish population repatriated from the eastern territories of Poland (taken after the war by the USSR) to this region. The sources of the alienation of the native population from the new arrivals lied in everything: from culture to ill-will. Fourthly, the pro-German orientation of the native population was also shaped by the front which steam-rolled over westwards in 1945. The Silesian and Mazurian populations had not experience real war earlier as their territories lay beyond the reach of Allied aircraft from the west. The population of these areas came face to face with the tragedy of the war only upon the arrival of the Polish and Soviet forces. That is why many older Silesians used to proclaim a strange to Poles notion that '1945 was no liberation; only then did war visit us' (Kurcz, forthcoming).

However, for some researcher the economic factor in shaping pro-German identity seems to be the most important. The German author, Thomas Urban (1993: 142) in his study of the German minority in Poland, recalls the well-known Silesian saying 'the fatherland is where the sausages

hang!' The influence of economic factors on ethnic identification is also 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 as well as those of other origins, who previously claimed to be German in anticipation of gaining material benefits from West German society (Heffner 1999).

The German minority still numbers about 300.000, although these are maximum estimates (Kurcz, forthcoming). In 1992, it was organized in almost fifty associations, with 299.580 members (Kurcz 1997: 43).

What are the prospects for this minority? In the light of the knowledge about this community gathered to date, it all depends on economic situation in Poland and also on the different forms of assistance that the Federal German authorities offer this group. If the differences in Polish and German living standards stop increasing, and 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 will decrease to five-figure numbers. However, those who remain within the ranks of the minority will of course be people tied with German traditions, culture and language, and they will perceive their "being German" as an intrinsic value. If however, the differences in living standards between Poland and Germany continue to increase, and the German authorities in various ways continue to support those who admit to being German, the German minority could even double (Kurcz, forthcoming).

### **3.2. Jews**

After the extermination during the Second World War Jews – the biggest minority till 1939 started to represent a negligible group in Poland. Estimates of the number of Jewish survivors living within Poland's 1945 borders made right after the war ranged from 50.000 – 80.000. Within the framework of the repatriation of Polish citizens from the USSR, some 240.000 Jews returned in 1944-46. So, the numbers of Jewish community increased at the beginning of 1950s yet to be diminished years after.

Since before and during the war, the Polish left, especially the Communists, fought anti-Semitism decisively in the second half of 1940s, the Jewish minority was the only one to be accepted by the new communist authorities. Thus, in a country where opposition groups and the Catholic Church regarded the Jews *a priori* and by definition as the Communists' allies, and hence enemies, the Communists could thus count on Jewish support (Kersten 1992).

Despite the political and social uncertainty, Jewish political and cultural life revived in the second half of 1940s in almost all its pre-war aspects. There existed a broad spectrum of Jewish

political parties operating legally, including Zionists party (Adelson 1993). However, when the USSR in 1948 withdrew its support for the nascent state of Israel the open Polish state's policy towards Jewish parties changed violently. From that moment onwards, "Zionist" became a term of abuse in the vocabulary of party propaganda (Datner and Melchior, forthcoming).

The year 1948 was a watershed in the social and political life of the Jews, as it was for Polish society. Poland was entering the Stalinist phase, with the destruction of all vestiges of pluralism. For the Jewish community, that year represented the end of a relatively autonomous social, cultural and political existence. By 1949 all Jewish political parties had been dissolved, Hebrew and the religious schools had been abolished and most of the newspapers had been closed down. The Jewish-language schools were nationalized. The activities of the Religious Congregation were completely marginalized. In 1950, one all-Jewish organization was called into being, The Socio-Cultural Society of Jews in Poland (Towarzystwo Społeczno-Kulturalne Żydów w Polsce – TSKZ). Of a rich range of press publications, only two titles managed to survive, the Yiddish "Folk Sztyme" and the literary review "Literary Bleter" (Datner and Melchior, forthcoming).

The October thaw of 1956 revived anti-Semitic tendencies suppressed during the Stalinism era. The party's grass roots sought to settle scores with Stalinism with the help of slogans like "Jewish-communists" (Machcewicz 1993). Migratory trends among Jewish community increased. They revived significantly when the last group of Polish citizens (which included Polish Jews) returned from the USSR. These of Jewish origin who arrived from the east to Poland emigrated almost immediately. In total, in the 1957-60 period, about 30.000 Jews emigrated (Kwilecki 1963). At the beginning of the 1960s, the administrative offices registered about 30.000 Jews in Poland. However, contrary to political life, which did not revive after Stalinism, Jewish culture did emerge to some extent during the thaw (Datner and Melchior, forthcoming).

The propaganda campaign of March 1968, in which there was an attempt to derail the bid for freedom through the students' revolt with the Jewish "crowbar" had tragic consequences for the remnants of Polish Jewry (Eisler 1991). What happened then had all the hallmarks of expulsion: people were thrown out of work, birth certificates were checked for racial origins, the press wrote despicable nonsense. March '68 was the real end (at least that's what it seemed like at the time), of the Jewish community in Poland: in the 1968-71 period, about 20 000 people of Jewish origin, many of whom were completely assimilated, left Poland. Jewish institutions in the 1970s were desolate places and in fact did not function. In practice, Jewish public institutional life ceased to exist (Datner and Melchior, forthcoming).

The Solidarity period of 1980-81, a time of social hope, broke the silence about the Jews, and publications – on the topic of the presence of Jews in Polish history and culture, Polish-Jewish relations, wartime experiences – began to appear in ever-increasing numbers.

The change of the system in 1989, which brought freedom, caused fundamental transformations in the Jewish community. First of all Jewish institutions such as the Ronald Lauder Foundation representation in Poland, Children of the Holocaust Association, Union of Jewish Religious Communes and Polish-American-Jewish Foundation 'Shalom' (to mention only the most numerous ones) started to flourish. Apart from creation of official structures there is also an observable process of the discovery of Jewish origins by very young and young people. And this discovery is treated as something important and relevant. Interestingly enough the language (almost forgotten till to date ) and a Jewish culture, seem to also play a certain role in the identification of younger generation Jews. This culture is in practice unknown to these young people, but significantly some of them are learning Yiddish (though more are learning Hebrew) (Rosenson 1995).

The rediscovery of Jewish roots has many positive aspects (Rosenson 1995). At the bottom of today's rediscovered identity with Jewry lies the conviction that "I want to, but don't have to, be a Jew"; there are also motives such as: curiosity, interest in otherness, regard for the multi-faceted nature of the world. In effect, it may be asserted that the seemingly extinct Jewish community in Poland is resurrecting itself. As a result of the process of disassimilation, its numbers are increasing, with the middle and older generations affirming their Jewishness with ever-increasing fervor. For the last few years one can observe another phenomenon unseen in Poland for many decades namely a return to Jewishness through religion. This surprisingly concerns young people, usually from totally assimilated families, and frequently from mixed marriages.

### **3.3 'Old' Ukrainians**

It may be surprising that this is not the Polish-German but the Polish-Ukrainian relationships that is most burdened with mutual resentments and stereotypes reaching as far back as to the 19<sup>th</sup> century (Jedlicki 1999: 228). The most tragic story began in 1943 when Ukrainian national guerilla movement (UPA) started ethnic cleansing in Volhynia and eastern Galicia. Reciprocal slaughters and burning of whole villages were perpetrated (Jedlicki 1999). The final chapter of the tragic Polish-Ukrainians relations happened in 1947. At that time Polish security forces unable to destroy UPA dislocated approximately 150.000 Ukrainians and Lemkos from southeastern Poland (an area which was ethnically Ukrainian) to the northern and western territories (formerly part of Germany). This operation was named *Akcja Wisła*. The events of the Second World War and the period of forced migration after the war has had a significant impact on the situation of the Ukrainian minorities in Poland during the past 50 years (Babinski, forthcoming).

As far as the social status of Ukrainians in post-war Poland is concerned the majority lived in the countryside and worked in agriculture. There was an upper middle class and lower middle class

(though they are proportionately fewer number compared with the Poles) and a working class as well. The social structure had been effected by political emigration after the war, which was relatively greater among the higher echelons of society (Babinski, forthcoming).

The Ukrainians who were compulsorily resettled as a result of the *Akcja Wisła* (1947) were virtually all relocated to agricultural areas both on vacant individual farms and on the state farms. Over the next decade they found themselves under individual house arrest without any rights either to return to their homeland or to travel outside the area in which they lived. This meant they were unable to get an education, a better job or improve their social status.

In the years between 1945 and 1947 literally all forms of organized life among the Ukrainians in Poland were wiped out. This concerned not only formal institutions and organizations such as the Church, political parties, military organizations and cultural groups but even informal neighborhood societies and circles, and individual and collective forms of ownership. Only after 1956 (Pudlo 1993) was it possible for them to create cultural and educational organizations. Government policies tended to be restrictive (with certain fluctuations) and all forms of organized ethnic activity and culture were strictly controlled (Babinski, forthcoming).

The Ukrainians obtained the same rights as Poles only after 1956, and though there were many hurdles to be overcome, they did get permission to return to their homeland (Ukraine). They could also move about, relatively freely, both spatially and socially.

The main changes as far as the social and political situation of Ukrainians is concerned happened after 1989. Firstly, the institutions started to flourish. A Ukrainian Socio-Cultural Society (UTSK) which was founded in 1956 and, until 1990, was the only recognized Ukrainian organization in Poland was dissolved and, replaced by the Union of Ukrainians in Poland (ZUP) (Czarnecki 1991). Within the structure of the ZUP, the following organizations are currently active: the Ukrainian Union, the Ukrainian Society of Teachers in Poland, Ukrainian Society of Doctors, the Lawyers Club founded, the Association of Businessmen, the Ukrainian Youth Organization 'Piaśt'. There are also independent organizations such as: the Union of Ukrainians in Podlasie and the Independent Union of Ukrainian Youth.

After 1989 the legal status of the Greek-Catholic Church was subject to very profound changes. Some churches and other church properties taken over by the Roman Catholic Church after the Second World War started to return to the Greek Church. Irrespective of some local conflicts and resentments there is no doubt that there has been a real renaissance of this church in Poland (Babinski, forthcoming).

One can also observe a revival of Ukrainian schooling in the 1990s. The number of pupils in Ukrainian schools that systematically declined in the 1970s and 1980s during the last 5 years increased in both the number of schools and pupils (Pudlo 1993).

Poles and Ukrainians are living together and are generally mixed both spatially and socially without any serious conflicts or tensions. This is evident, above all, in the number of mixed ethnic marriages. However, deep under the surface the events of 1939-1947 are still indelibly imprinted in reciprocal attitudes. Generally it can be said that the majority of Ukrainians in Poland feel that the Poles are waiting for them to become assimilated. It is indeed their opinion that even in the best of cases, Ukrainian culture is only tolerated since it is perceived by the dominant group as being incomplete and traditionally steeped in folklore.

Luckily, the mutual resentments present no direct political threat today. Their potential is limited to noisy battles for and against symbolic values, since there is a political will to co-operate on both sides (Jedlicki 1999:29).

### **3.4. 'New' Ukrainians**

The fall of the communist system has generated a phenomenon of the new spatial mobility of people of the former Soviet bloc countries. In 1989 fewer than 3 million citizens of the former USSR 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. After Russians Ukrainians constituted the second largest national group.

Citizens of the former Soviet Union come to Poland to search economic opportunities. Hundreds of thousands of them have been taking merchandise across frontiers, trying to make a profit from the difference in prices and exchange rates. They also work in Poland, often illegally, engaging in agriculture, building and in services. Shuttle mobility is beneficial for people in solving their vital material problems and it has become an important factor in the survival strategy of many households in the region (Iglicka 1999; Iglicka, forthcoming c). According to opinion polls, regular trips abroad to earn a living have become a source of profit for five per cent of the economically active population in Ukraine, that is for more than one million people. Twenty per cent of people of working age resort to these trips occasionally (Khomra 1994:13)

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 the labor market, etc. However, one of the negative aspects of this flow is particularly visible. This is crime and here Ukrainians are particularly associated with it. 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 (Iglicka, forthcoming b).

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 networks

and connections in Poland, having realized restrictions in West European policy towards mobility from the 'East', consider possibility of long-term or permanent emigration to Poland. It is particularly true in the case of Ukrainians.

This phenomenon is confirmed by both research findings and official statistics. This means that in the second half of 1990s ephemeral and typical for transition period primitive mobility of petty-traders converts into typical migration in Central European buffer zone (Iglićka, forthcoming c).

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 position.

**Table 2.** Visas with work permit granted in 1994-1998 by most numerous nationalities (in percents).

<b>Country</b>	<b>1994</b>	<b>1995</b>	<b>1996</b>	<b>1997</b>	<b>1998</b>
<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
Total (absolute numbers)	8690	9057	7019	8978	10505

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

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

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
Total (absolute numbers)	1964	2457	3051	2844	3973	1567

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

In the study on spatial distribution of the most numerous foreign born population of Poland in 1991 i.e. Ukrainians (understood as foreigners who remain in the country on the basis of PRP) Jerczynski (1999) suggested that they were situated in four locations: 1) large urban areas, 2) towns where Soviet garrisons were located, 3) areas along the eastern border (ethnically Ukrainian) and 4) former German territories in the north and west Poland. It was these territories where Ukrainians and Lemkos were resettled in 1947 during *Akcja Wisła*. He also implied that a map of territorial distribution of Orthodox and Greek catholic church covers spatial distribution of ‘new’ Ukrainians. It proves that networks between ‘old’ and ‘new’ group play an important role in the spatial formation of the latter.

The other interesting phenomenon as far as ‘new’ Ukrainians are concerned 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 to marry Poles.

**Table 4.** 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: Statistical Yearbooks, 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, people that 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 and an increase of seasonal workers. Secondly, 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 associate with the negative stereotype of being *Ruski* (typical for Poles negative term of all people from the former Soviet Union). 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.

As yet, it is hard to draw any broad conclusions for this group regarding either the process of a new community formation or their future in the context of the reactions of government and local communities to this phenomenon. This is only the beginning of the process.

### **3.5. 'Old' and 'New' Armenians**

There were two migratory waves of Armenians in Poland. First, when the Armenians settled in Poland's eastern marshlands in the late Middle Ages and second after the Second World War when about 99 per cent of those from the Polish eastern territories taken by the USSR were repatriated. Armenians' existence in Poland frequently comes as a surprise to foreign academics. Repatriated or forcibly resettled from their old places in Ukraine, and dispersed throughout Poland after the Second World War, they settled in groups of a dozen families (and sometimes much fewer) in one place. Now they are almost totally assimilated. Religion (and sometimes merely faith) is currently the only factor distinguishing Poles from Armenians, since they represent the remnants of close historical links with the Orient. Some of them are also Unites (Marciniak, forthcoming).

A traditional, long-settled Armenian community descended from the ancient Armenians and numbering to about 15.000 people has began to be strengthened in the 1990s by a new immigrant component which may be half that number, and growing. There are some common features between these two groups but the differences are bigger.

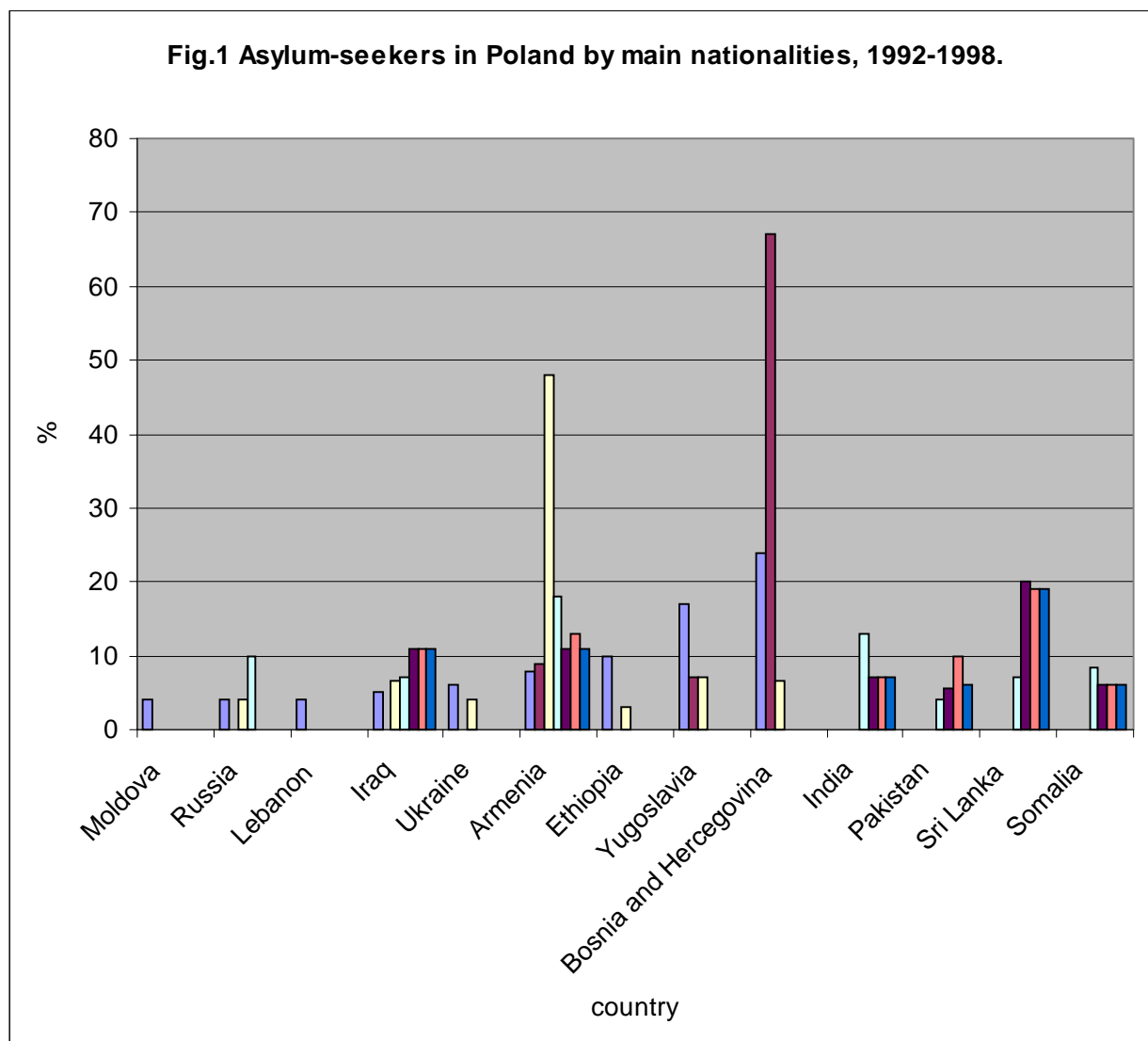
"Old" Polish Armenians renounced their own language in the 16th century; but they did not create any dialect which would be a mixture of languages of two neighboring cultural groups and within centuries assimilated the languages of the dominant group. Also the third wave of Armenians in Poland is learning Polish rapidly (Kesicka 1996).

'Old' Armenians are religious whereas the new immigrants, if they show any ties with the Church, they are only incidental. The third wave seems to be displaying the post-Soviet indifference in matters of faith.

"Old" Armenians and their direct descendants stopped cultivate many of their customs, among them cuisine. Contrary to this the expansion of the "new" Armenian ethnicity is strongly noticeable in the gastronomy. Armenian restaurants are growing, in some others Armenian dishes are served. The activities of the Armenian Cultural Society (Ormianskie Towarzystwo Kulturalne – OTK) are aimed at making Armenian native traditions more familiar again (Marciniak, forthcoming).

Who are the 'new' Armenians in Poland? First of all their arrival is a result of the drama in the Caucasus. Contrary to the other asylum seekers in Poland Armenians do not treat Poland mainly 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. According to the Border Guard Statistics Armenians were also among the seven most numerous nationalities who were stopped for crimes (illegal border crossing, false documents, etc) at the frontiers (Poland – Statistical data on migration 1999; Border Guard Statistics 1996).



For part of them the road to achieve the Polish residence seems to be through application for permanent residence permit (see table 3), for others through marriage with Polish citizens (see table 4). Majority of them seems to prefer irregular status (i.e. extended visas) treating their prolonged stay in Poland as still temporary. Some of them stay also illegally.

Trade, for many centuries, has been the domain of Armenians and was the cause of the emergence of the first migratory wave of this ethnic group. The activities of the third wave in this field is notably true to type (Kesicka 1996). This area of activity may cause collisions with the law

especially when it is conducted without legal permits. The exaggerated common picture of the third Armenian wave shaped by the mass media associates them mainly with illegal street market trade and crime (Marciniak, forthcoming).

New Armenians create their own micro-communities in Northern and Eastern Poland. It would seem, they choose small towns, allowing them to set up communes (characterized by solidarity) (Cieslinska 1997; Lukowski 1997). Besides those of them who are involved in trading in the local markets their number includes teachers, academics and doctors. Researchers have noted that among new arrivals are mostly educated people. Rarely, however, do they find employment commensurate with their knowledge and skills (Marciniak, forthcoming).

As far as the social activities of this group are concerned they are relatively smaller in comparison to the activities of other ethnic minorities. Strengthened by new arrivals the Armenian Cultural Society in Cracow bulletin has started to appear on average twice a year since 1993. In turn, the Armenian Culture Circle (Kolo Zaintersowan Kultura Ormian) attached to the Polish Ethnographic Society (Polskie Towarzystwo Ludoznawstwa) has concentrated its activities on publishing compact publications. The last positions in this series of over twenty eight publications to date concentrate on history and tradition (Marciniak, forthcoming). All of them are published in Polish. They aim at the revival of ethnic consciousness among members of the 'old' group.

### **3.6. Vietnamese**

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 African and Asian countries, particularly 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.

Until the end of 1980s, Poland and Vietnam complied with the mandatory doctrine of the brotherhood of socialist states. After 1989 they found themselves located in different political systems. Irrespective of being still communist country Vietnam started to pursue more migration policy that caused inflows to Poland, not only 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 in Poland has seen a sharp increase, and has resulted in rise in the number of Vietnamese legally coming on to Polish soil. For several years now Vietnamese are the second largest group (after Ukrainians) as far as the number of visas with work permit granted (see table 2). Moreover, the growing presence of a 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 (see table 3 and 4). 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 3). According to estimates there are around 30.000 Vietnamese living in Poland (Halik, forthcoming)

Vietnamese have become one of the main group 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. They try to assimilate with traditional Polish norms; they send their children to Polish schools, try to learn the Polish language, read Polish papers and watch Polish TV. They also establish contacts with Polish families. This is the natural behavior of a people who see Poland as a country in which they intend to live for a longer period of time, maybe forever (Halik, forthcoming).

One should however, remember that “the Vietnamese form a fairly close-knit society which externally adopt and adapt themselves 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). And, what is more, they cultivate this individuality (Condominas and Pottier 1983; Khoa 1983).

There is much to indicate that they feel ‘at home’. They carry on a lively economic activity and not only in the field of small trade and gastronomy. The Association of Vietnamese Businessmen in Warsaw has been legally registered. Vietnamese trade firms and enterprises are present in more than half of the voivodeships of the country. The Vietnamese themselves 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. The Socio-cultural Association of Vietnamese publishes its own periodical ‘Van viet’ (Vietnamese culture), holds meetings for its members and admirers, and organises the cultural life of the Vietnamese in many cities (Halik, forthcoming).

Analyzing official data on Vietnamese society and examining the results of research on the cultural awareness of the Vietnamese in Poland (Halik 1995) four 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 it 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. Thirdly, there is also a possibility of stabilization or even a small increase in the number of Vietnamese permanently residing in Poland coinciding with the tendency to become isolated from Polish society. In this scenario one may assume that the language barrier (Polish is considered to be one of the most difficult languages) will effectively prevent them from using elements of Polish culture. This would strengthen the inner social life of immigrants leading to social isolation. A decline of the inter-ethnic marriages occurs in this scenario also. Finally, another possibility is that the Vietnamese could become gradually assimilated into Polish society. The number of Vietnamese children born or brought up in Poland could be large enough to fulfil the role of an intermediary between their parents and the Polish environment. The lives of the younger generation Vietnamese would be closely bound to Poland and assuming the spread of Polish language, internal ties among the Vietnamese community would become less close. These are only some of the possible variants and they do not necessarily follow a uniform course. Most probably the future will be a mixed model (Halik, forthcoming).

#### **4. Summary**

After the Second World War Poland ceased to be a multinational country. Ethnic minorities today comprise between 2.0-2.5 per cent of the total population. State policy after 1945 was not conducive towards maintaining an ethnic consciousness among those who survived holocaust, expulsion or resettlement. However, a sudden revival of ethnic consciousness occurred after the collapse of the system. Two factors caused it. Firstly, political, social and legal situation of ethnic groups improved after 1989 substantially. Secondly, minorities themselves started actively defend their interests. The revival of ethnic consciousness is particularly visible among Jews and Ukrainians. As far as German minority is concerned, we observe a slow decline of interest in being a member of this group. The process of return migration of those who in the past claimed German ethnicity has already began.

The other interesting phenomenon is a revival of the ethnic consciousness among Armenians, who were small and almost totally assimilated group. It happens under the influence of the new immigrants from Armenia who being political refugees try to keep up their own ethnic identity.

It is not a case of other group from the former Soviet Union – Ukrainians – who do not seem so 'ethnically oriented'. It may be an influence of more successful in Ukraine than Armenia Soviet propaganda or it may be a fact that contrary to Armenians Ukrainians arrive to Poland on their own free will. A dynamic process of migration transforms their temporary entry into settlement.

The other interesting case is Vietnamese. This group maintains their own individuality in the ethnic and cultural sense. All three groups aim at integration with Polish society.

As yet it is hard to draw any broad conclusions for prospects of ethnic groups being in the process of formation in Poland. 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 questions stemming from model proposed by Castles (1995) today. This is only the beginning of the process.



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