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Poland:

**Between Geopolitical Shifts and
Emerging Migratory Patterns**

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Poland: Between Geopolitical Shifts and Emerging Migratory Patterns

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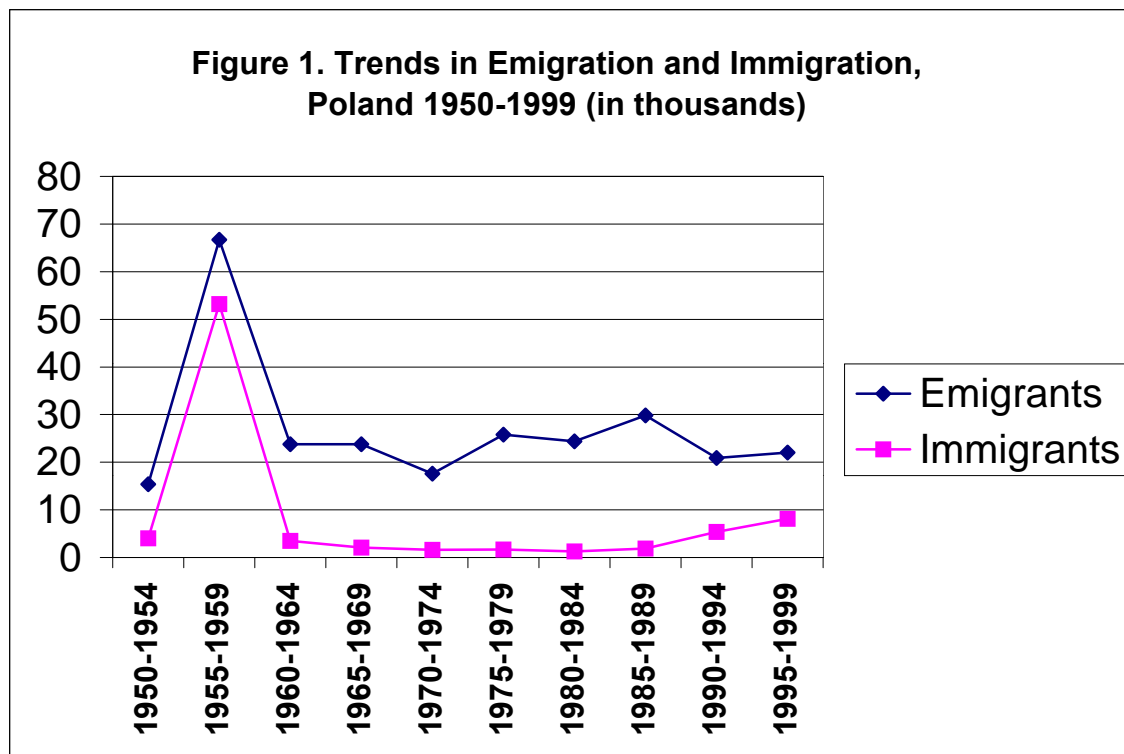
ABSTRACT

This paper describes trends and mechanisms in population mobility in Poland that gradually transform this one of major sending countries in the Central and Eastern European region into a country of net-immigration and transit. An emphasis is put on migration into Poland from the former USSR countries since 1989 in the context of the recent geopolitical shifts in the CEE region: collapse of the communism rule and forthcoming European Union enlargement. Although the stress has been put on ongoing changes in migratory patterns and mechanisms that started after the collapse of the political regime, it is also emphasised here that one should not analyse trends that occurred after 1989 without understanding the history and mechanism of migration prior to that date. Therefore, trends and mechanisms of migration into Poland observed during the transition period are examined from the perspective of the migration system approach which, in the opinion of the author seems to be the most appropriate.

1. INTRODUCTION

For more than 30 years, immigration has been one of the most advantageous factors and a power behind economic restructuring throughout the world. Western Europe has ceased to be a sending area for overseas destinations and most of its countries have turned into immigrant-receiving areas. 'By the 1980s, even traditional sending countries in southern Europe such as Italy, Spain, and Portugal began to import workers from Africa, Asia and the Middle East. Most of the world's developed countries have become diverse, multiethnic societies, and those that have not reached this stage are moving decisively in that direction' (Massey et al., 1993: 443).

At the end of the 1980s, the transformation of the political and economic structure of the Central and Eastern European region disturbed what had been stable migration trends. Poland is probably the most striking example of a Central European country that is gradually shifting from a major sending area in the region into a country of net-immigration and transit. Although Poland is still a country whose net migration outflow is higher than its influx the gap between emigration and immigration flows is narrowing and new quantitative and qualitative changes such as an increase in the number of foreigners granted residency, the growth of labour migration, the formation of immigrant communities, and the creation of immigrant niches on labour markets – processes that inevitably accompany increased immigration – has led some policy makers and academics to state that Poland is slowly becoming a net-immigration and transit country (Korcelli, 1991; Salt, 1996; Iglicka and Sword, 1999; Kozłowski, 1999; Hamilton and Iglicka, 2000; Iglicka, 2000) (see figure 1).



Source: Roczniki Statystyczne (Statistical Yearbooks), various years, Warsaw: Central Statistical Office

Official demographic prognoses confirm this presumption. In all such forecasts Poland will be converted into a country of net-immigration by the year 2006 (Podstawowe informacje o rozwoju demograficznym Polski, 1999).

Since 1989, along with the social, political and economic transformation and the collapse of the Soviet Empire, factors conducive not only to the decline in the human outflow but also to the increase in the inflow into Poland have occurred. Economic globalisation has brought about a dualisation of central European labour markets dividing them into primary and secondary sectors, thereby contributing to the increase in the circulation of people, capital and goods. Both primary and secondary sectors of labour markets are strongly correlated with immigrants in the modern market economies. Whereas however, primary sector is related with the phenomenon of the brain drain in the sending countries, secondary sector depends to a large extent on workers – immigrants who accept the lowest wages and a lack of upward mobility opportunities on the ladder of a social hierarchy. Since the beginning of the 1990s immigrants have been quite visible in both sectors of labour markets in Poland. Thus, as it was already said, Poland, a central European latecomer to the global stage, has slowly begun to convert from being a major sending

country into a country of net-immigration and transit. The conversion is following the patterns that have already been established in other European countries. An inflow from the East and Polish migrants returning from western countries were mainly responsible for this transition (see table 1).

Table 1. Immigrants* to Poland, by country or continent of origin, 1988-1999 (selected years) (per cent)

Country/continent	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1998	1999
Europe	48.7	42.4	50.3	48.0	49.3	62.7	64.6
-Austria	2.6	1.3	2.2	3.1	3.0	2.6	2.6
-Bulgaria	3.6	2.4	1.9	2.4	1.7	-	-
-France	4.8	3.9	4.2	3.4	4.3	4.5	4.6
-Germany**	12.7	15.0	22.2	22.2	22.0	26.3	33.1
-Italy	(a)	(a)	(a)	2.2	2.0	2.2	3.0
-Sweden	(a)	(a)	(a)	2.4	2.4	1.5	1.4
-United Kingdom	6.2	4.9	3.7	3.6	4.4	2.7	3.6
-Other	18.8	14.9	15.7	8.7	9.6	5.5	1.2
USSR (b)	12.5	11.0	13.9	18.0	16.7	17.4	8.1
Africa	3.1	2.9	3.3	3.2	2.6	1.9	2.0
North America	27.3	21.8	21.4	19.5	21.8	19.7	22.6
-Canada	3.1	3.2	4.3	3.7	4.7	4.7	6.0
-United States	22.9	16.6	15.0	14.1	15.8	14.3	15.7
-Other	1.3	1.9	2.2	1.6	1.3	0.8	0.9
Asia	4.4	6.8	7.7	8.0	6.4	9.2	4.5
Australia	4.0	3.0	3.3	3.5	3.1	2.1	2.2
Unknown	-	0.2	-	-	-	0.1	-
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

*According to the legal definition in Poland by immigrants are acknowledged those who, after being granted 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 acquire Polish citizenship.

**Mainly Polish returnees who in the past gave up their permanent residence status and therefore according to the legal definition (see above) are acknowledged in statistics as immigrants.

(a) Included in 'Europe', other

(b) and successor states respectively

Source: Roczniki Statystyczne (Statistical Yearbooks), various years, Warsaw: Central Statistical Office

‘The foreign’ movement into Poland is predominantly from the East, more specifically from the former USSR countries and Ukraine particularly.

Similarly to the example set by Southern European countries that changed from mass emigration areas into mass immigration regions in the 1980s (King and Rybaczuk, 1993), important factors in Poland have been as follows:

- the ease of entry into Poland by people from the former Soviet Union;
- the geographical, cultural and linguistic proximity between Poland and many of the newly independent countries of the former Soviet Union;
- divergent standards of living between Central Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) and differences in exchange rates and price relations;
- economic restructuring and a dualisation of labour markets with a consequent large grey market for cheap, flexible immigrant labour on the one hand and a need for highly skilled professionals on the other.

Some recent trends in population mobility in the CEE and Poland particularly may be very well explained in my opinion by past trends and migratory dynamics in this region. Therefore an approach to the study of international migration based on the concept of a migration system constituted by a group of countries (located in the same region) that exchange relatively large numbers of migrants among each other seems to be very appropriate here.

Indeed, a statement by Kritz and Zlotnik (1992: 4) that ‘(...) in studying international migration systems, one has to consider not only the spatial dimension that demarcated all countries in a system, but a time dimension is also essential to capture flow and counter-flow dynamics. Thus, a historical perspective is required (...)’ is very true in the case of Poland. Let me therefore consider here briefly recent population movements on the basis of migration systems’ approach.

2. POLAND FROM THE MIGRATION SYSTEM'S PERSPECTIVE

Migration systems can be defined in various ways. The most popular in the literature is a regional approach, a strategy effective inasmuch as geographical proximity is highly correlated with similar cultural and historical backgrounds. Flows of people between the countries belonging to one migratory system occur 'within a national context whose policy, economic, technological, and social dimensions are constantly changing, partly in response to the feedback and adjustments that stem from the migration itself. Population exchanges within the system involve not only permanent migrants, labour migration and/or refugees, but also students, military personnel, businesspeople and even tourists since such short-term movements frequently set the conditions for subsequent long-term ones' (Kritz and Zlotnik, 1992: 3). A widely adopted typology of migration system in Europe lists three systems on the continent only. They are as follows:

- the Western European migration system that comprises Switzerland, the small states of Andorra, Liechtenstein, Monaco and San Marino, and all countries of the current European Union with the exception of the United Kingdom and Ireland;
- the United Kingdom and Ireland migration system with its stronger migration ties with countries of the British Commonwealth and Pakistan than with other countries of continental Europe and;
- the Nordic migration system, including such countries as Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden (Kritz and Zlotnik, 1992: 37-38).

Any attempt to analyse the trends and mechanisms of migration taking place in a wider European setting and referring to a systems approach had, by necessity, to omit the CEE region. Due to restrictive migration policy pursued until 1989 by the states of Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) that shaped both migratory phenomena and knowledge thereof, countries of this region were excluded from the above-mentioned system approach to migration theory-testing. Nevertheless, the Eastern European migration system did exist in practise.

Poland's geographic and political location predestined it to the struggle and interplay between the West and the East, in both historical and cultural perspectives and economic and social contexts. As to relations with the West that shaped Poland's population mobility, German colonisation and hegemony over some part of ethnically or historically Polish territory spanning

many decades obviously had a bearing on ties and relations between the ethnic populations in the region.

From the point of view of post-1945 population outflows, Poland gravitated undoubtedly to the Western European migration system, but it was largely excluded from this system because of the one-way direction of movements. On the other hand, political circumstances pushed Poland into the Eastern European migration system, since flows between the former communist block countries, albeit relatively moderate were mutual and quite diversified. This encompassed tourism, student exchanges, the mobility of migrant workers within the COMECON framework, repatriation processes of selected minorities, military movements, etc. (Okolski, 1997).

Irrespective of the new political regime imposed on Poland in 1945 by the Soviet Union, strong historical and cultural ties between Poland and the “East” indisputably bound (for good and bad) populations in this region. It is enough to mention that in the last pre-war census (1931), there were around 6.5 million people of ‘eastern’ descent, such as Belarussians, Ukrainians, Lithuanians, Russians, Armenians, Tartars or Karaites of Poland's then-total population of 32 million (Rocznik Statystyczny, 1932). Therefore, Poland's belonging to the Eastern European migration system was not something absolutely unfitting or unfounded.

In contemporary, post Second World War Poland, the Ukrainian ethnic group has been estimated at around 250,000 making it the second (after the German) largest ethnic group. One has however, to remember that the number of Ukrainians right after the Second World War fell dramatically from over five millions in 1931 to mentioned above 250,000 mainly because of the changes to the frontiers. Furthermore in 1947, Polish security forces, unable to destroy the Ukrainian National Guerrilla Movement (UPA) operating since 1943 in south-eastern Poland, dislocated approximately 150,000 Ukrainians and Lemkos to the northern and western territories (formerly part of Germany). This operation was named Akcja Wisła (Vistula Action).

Other ‘eastern’ ethnic groups in Poland are Belarussians (230,000), Lemkos (60,000), Lithuanians (20,000), Russians (15,000), Armenians (3,000), Tartars (4,000) and Karaites (fewer than 1000) (Kwilecki, 1988). The presence of the Ukrainian group was, in my opinion, a catalyst to the recent wave of settlement or long-term migration from Ukraine to Poland. Therefore it is not surprising that a map of the territorial distribution of Orthodox and Greek Catholic church (a traditional worship of Ukrainians) in the northern and western territories of Poland covers spatial

distribution of 'new' Ukrainians proving that the network between 'old' and 'new' groups plays an important role in the spatial formation of the latter (Jerczynski, 1999).

Another conducive factor to this immigration is the rather peaceful coexistence of Poles and Ukrainians in post-communist Poland. Therefore, despite an acrimonious history, there were no big hurdles based on the ethnic prejudice towards the 'new' immigration from Ukraine into Poland that has been underway since 1989 (Iglicka, 2001a; Iglicka, 2001b).

In the late 1980s and early 1990s, the opening of CEE borders and the disintegration of the former Soviet Union and Yugoslavia fundamentally changed the pattern of migration in the region. When the Berlin Wall came down in November 1989 there was considerable concern in the West about the prospect of an upsurge in east-west migration. As is now well known, the predicted mass migration westwards did not take place. Nonetheless, approximately 2.5 million people did emigrate to the West from the CEECs and the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) during the first half of the 1990s. Some of the migratory movements that have occurred in the CEECs during the 1990s are familiar to the international community. Other migratory flows are new to this region such as the flows of transit migrants and the movement of some immigrants on both East-West and West-East axis – a trend, which no one would have expected a decade ago (Migration in Central and Eastern Europe, 1999: 31).

As mentioned earlier, after the collapse of the communist regime in 1989, Poland, along with other Central European countries, unexpectedly encountered a number of previously unknown (or seldom experienced) population phenomena. Among these were the massive spatial mobility of citizens of the former USSR, labour migration, from both the East and the West, permanent immigration (mainly from the East), formation of new immigrant communities and the return migration of former émigrés.

The number of persons migrating from the CEE region to the West has fallen substantially since the beginning of the 1990s. Some CEECs have themselves become target countries for an increasing number of economic migrants mainly from their eastern neighbours. However, the full extent of this trend is not recorded by official statistics, given that many of the migrants concerned are engaged in trading and working in the informal economy (Migration in Central and Eastern Europe, 1999: 33).

Migratory pressure exerted by newly-mobile Eastern Europeans, its further demographic potentiality and Western Europe's restrictive migration policies¹ were all conducive to the formation of a migration buffer zone in post-communist Central Europe in the 1990s. However, along with forthcoming in the nearest future European enlargement some of the countries of the Central European buffer zone (and Poland among them) will soon be integrated into the Western European migration system. Therefore the zone may represent the beginning of the end for the old, joint Central and Eastern European migration system.

3. MIGRATION FLOWS INTO POLAND FROM THE FORMER USSR – CHALLENGES, DILLEMAS AND GOVERNANCE

In the 1990s two walls, which had divided Europe for several decades after the Second World War ceased to exist. One of those was the boundary between the socialist bloc and the Western Europe. The other, far less often mentioned, was the strictly guarded border between the USSR and Moscow's satellite countries (The Door Ajar: the Eastern Border of the Enlarged EU, 2001). As a result of these changes the most important inflow into post-communist Poland was the brief, mass international movement of citizens of the former Soviet Union. This movement was already termed in the literature as *primitive mobility* (Iglicka, 2001c). By *primitive mobility* I understand a new social phenomenon of people being systematically 'on the move' who often gave up their jobs or positions because shuttling between borders had turned out to be much more profitable for them. This kind of shuttle mobility stemmed largely from differentials in exchange rates and prices between Poland and post-Soviet countries compounded and magnified by a shortage of basic goods in the latter.

However, the new and widespread spatial mobility of citizens of the former Soviet Union was not only a social and demographic blip but, a harbinger of real immigration. At first, Central Europeans, whose countries had become destinations for masses of Eastern Europeans, perceived the *primitive mobility* mainly as a threat. Eventually, that mobility revealed more positive aspects than negative ones. The enormous circulation of visitors from the former Soviet Union who came to Poland to buy products for export and re-export brought such benefits as: an inflow of foreign

¹ As a result of the understanding reached by the European Union member countries in 1995, all of the countries of the former Soviet Union (unlike the other non-Soviet former countries of the communist bloc) were put on the 'visa-rule list' (Iglicka, 2001).

currency, partial mitigation of a chronically negative official balance of payments, local economic development in a number of regions, an increase in job opportunities in those regions, enhanced competition on labour markets, etc. (Iglicka, 2001c).

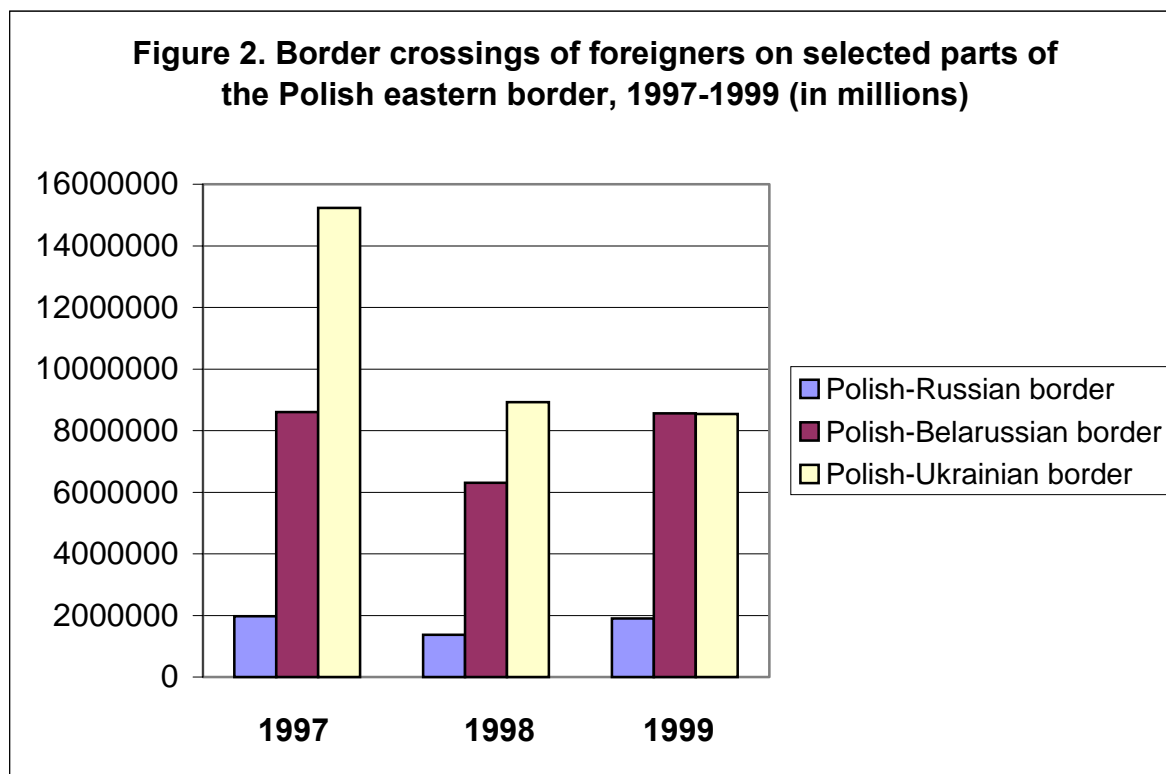
Recently, after a decade of penetration of Polish merchandise and labour markets by petty-traders and seasonal workers from the East, one can observe that many of those people, having come to terms with the restrictions in Western Europe against mobility from the 'East', have started contemplating long-term or permanent residence in Poland. This is especially true for workers and traders who have already established networks in Poland. Migrant networks undoubtedly play a very important role in this.

However, one should also realise that, so far, Polish migration policy has been an important determinant behind the increased mobility and immigration from the East. For example, citizens of the majority of former Soviet Union countries did not need visas to enter Poland until the autumn of the year 2000. A January 1998 attempt to introduce stricter regulations towards movement from the East (mainly to gradually adapt domestic immigration policy to the EU standards in the pre-accession period) caused a heavy lobbying of Polish manufacturers and traders and had to be modified quickly.

It should be recalled at this moment that in January 1998 Polish authorities, complying with commitments arising from the forthcoming EU enlargement, changed the Alien Law (a comprehensive set of laws that regulates, *inter alia*, various activities of the state with relation to migration and entry, exit and residence of foreign nationals in Poland) and, documents for entry to Poland. This immediately affected movement from the major source countries of the former USSR: Belarus, Russia and Ukraine (see figure 2).

Movement from Belarus and Russia (up till 90 days) was based on tourists' vouchers and invitations. Until 1998 these could be bought for a few dollars at kiosks on the eastern border. The stricter policy meant that the Border Guard started to check that the required documents were not false and whether tourists hold the required minimum amount of money. New regulations did not pertain to the movement from Ukraine since it was already based on non-visa agreement signed in June 1996 (Iglicka, 2001a). Therefore the Russian economic crisis in July 1998 and a decrease of ruble parity that had dramatic consequences on Ukrainian economy can explain a rapid decline in arrivals from Ukraine (visible in figure 2) firstly. It may also be explained by the

fear of strict and unable to pass border control, which embraced all citizens of the former Soviet Union at that time.



Source: Border Guard data

Nevertheless, the slow conversion of some part of the mass international mobility into immigration has been triggered by both strict Western European migration policy towards movements from the former USSR and a Polish attempt to introduce stricter migration policy in 1998. There are a variety of ways whereby this phenomenon has been channelled. The most obvious are by legal procedures leading to permanent residence (see table 2), temporary residence with the permission to work or study (see table 3) or becoming acknowledged as a lawful resident of Poland by marrying a Polish citizen (see table 4) or by becoming a repatriated person.

Table 2. Foreigners granted the permanent residence permit (PRP) in Poland according to the most numerous nationalities, 1993-1997* (per cent).

Country	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997
Ukraine	15	21	19	22	23
Russia	11	12	11	10	8
Belarus	7	6	7	7	8
Germany	5	5	6	5	4
Vietnam	4	4	7	9	8
Kazakhstan**	1	2	8	8	15
Lithuania	3	3	2	3	2
Armenia	1	2	2	2	2
Total (absolute numbers)	1,964	2,457	3,051	2,844	4,056

*Since 1 January 1998, the former category 'permanent residence permit' has been replaced by two categories: 'permission for settlement' and 'fixed-time residence permit' (for detailed statistics see table 3).

**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's 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'. 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, Warsaw: Office for Migration and Refugees.

Table 3. Foreigners granted the permanent residence permit (PRP) in Poland according to the most numerous nationalities, 1998-1999 (per cent).

Country	1998				1999			
	Permission for Settlement		Permission for fixed-time residence		Permission for Settlement		Permission for fixed-time residence	
	Appli-cations	Granted*	Appli-cations	Granted	Appli-Cations	Granted	Appli-cations	Granted
Ukraine	16	19	16	18	16	15	16	13
Russia	12	9	8	8	15	16	6	6
Belarus	5	6	5	5	6	6	4	4
Germany	3	3	3	4	3	0.2	5	4.5
Vietnam	10	8	16	15	10.4	9	8	9
Kazakhstan**	8	-	2	1	-	-	2	2
Lithuania	2	2	0.1	1	0.8	0.1	1	1.2
Armenia	4	2	8	9	7	5	4	4
Total (absolute numbers)	756	290	9,032	4,849	587	495	16,049	16,709

* The number of permission granted in a given year may exceed the number of applications submitted in that year because the former also pertains to the applications submitted in previous year.

** Since 1998 ethnic Poles arriving on the basis on repatriation resolution do not need to apply for a PRP. They apply for a repatriation visa only and after arrival to Poland are granted citizenship automatically.

Source: Department for Migration and Refugee Affairs' statistics, 2000, Warsaw: Ministry of Interior and Administration

Table 4. Mixed marriages, 1990-1998 (selected years).

Foreign Wife	1990	1995	1996	1997	1998	Foreign Husband	1990	1995	1996	1997	1998
Ukraine	-	331	340	456	537	Ukraine	-	89	108	106	119
Russia	-	119	151	127	142	Russia	-	51	38	38	46
Belarus	-	95	104	122	124	Belarus	-	18	21	26	35
Lithuania	-	41	40	33	41	Lithuania	-	8	15	15	15
Armenia	-	27	28	42	53	Armenia	-	44	64	75	140
Latvia	-	6	10	9	10	Latvia	-	-	-	-	-
Kazakhstan	-	13	11	10	23	Kazakhstan	-	-	-	-	-
USSR	255	-	-	-	-	USSR	210	-	-	-	-
Germany	370	61	63	53	74	Germany	1494	748	698	649	632
Vietnam	-	15	42	110	310	Vietnam	-	45	79	152	251
USA	88	46	33	39	22	USA	263	185	138	126	99
United Kingdom	14	-	-	-	-	United Kingdom	44	100	92	98	124
Canada	-	17	15	7	15	Canada	0	46	43	30	46
Others	184	149	140			Others*	1318	986	881	891	921
Total	911	920	977	1166	1541	Total	3329	2320	2177	2206	2428

*Mainly Western European countries

Source: Roczniki Statystyczne (Statistical Yearbooks), various years, Warsaw: Central Statistical Office

All data from placed above tables, shows indisputably that legal migration from Poland is mainly from the former Soviet Union countries, with Ukraine on the first place.

As it is seen from the figure 1 until 1989, the number of immigrants who officially reported the establishment of their permanent residence in Poland oscillated between roughly 1,000 and 1,500 annually. At the end of 1990s that number reached nearly 10,000 and there were no fewer than 40,000 legal resident aliens believed to be living in Poland by the end of 1999 (Ministry of the Interior and Administration data, 2000).

People from the former Soviet Union countries, mainly Ukraine, Russia, Belarus and Armenia constitute about 40 per cent of this number. A very interesting trend pertains to immigrants from Armenia. It is the only nationality among other nationalities of the former USSR where men predominate over women among both permanent resident permits' holders and temporary residents as well. The flow from Armenia is a result of a war and unstable political and ethnic situation in the Caucasus. Armenians arrive into Poland mainly as political refugees. Some others however, try to enter Poland illegally. On the total number of decisions on expulsion of

foreigners amounting to 31,781 in the period 1994-1999 the number of Armenians - 3,090 - constituted the third largest group of expelled foreigners (after Ukrainians - 7,140 and Romanians - 4,697). To protect itself against the massive and unexpected flux from Armenia Poland introduced visas for this country as early as in 1994.

On the other hand, irregular migrants are here in even greater numbers. According to the estimates by the Polish Ministry of Labour and Social Policy each year 100,000 to 150,000 foreigners, majority of which from the former USSR, undertake illegal jobs in Poland. As yet the numbers are not large relative to the size of local population; however, in my opinion, this is the beginning of an inevitable process and rapidly increasing trends are the best indicators of forthcoming changes in population movements (Iglicka, 2001b).

The EU accession of central European states such as Poland, Hungary or Slovakia incurs the disappearance of *the area of free flow of people*. EU candidate countries are required to adopt the Schengen *acquis*, which involves, among others, the enforcement of visas for citizens of Eastern European countries.

The enlargement of the EU, which is to take place during the years to come, will contribute to the formation of a new border in the eastern part of the continent, that between the united Europe and the states which remain outside of it. The eastern frontier of the united Europe will be shifted several hundreds kilometres to the East, to the River Bug. In the future it will remain one of the few points at which it will be possible to control human spatial mobility on the east-west axis. For decades to follow, the border is likely to remain unchanged. It should be of high priority for the United Europe to convert a border on the Bug River into a frontier on St Lawrence River, that is into a frontier between the two co-operating, equal regions and economies rather than into a European border on Rio Grande².

The process of implementation of the Schengen system has already begun. All of the EU candidate countries declare the adoption of the Schengen *acquis*. For Central European countries, EU accession is a priority case, and hence they are loath to further complicate the complex negotiations by positing conditions in this area. The Czech Republic and Slovakia have already introduced visas for citizens of the Ukraine and Russia. Poland introduced visas for Azerbaijan, Georgia, Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Kazakhstan, and Moldova in Autumn 2000

² St. Lawrence River is a border river between the USA and Canada whereas Rio Grande River divides rich, successful North American world from Mexican poverty.

and plans to introduce visas for Russia and Belarus by the mid-2002. Having acknowledged Ukraine as a strategic and most important country in Polish foreign-eastern policy Polish government decided to introduce visas for Ukrainians on the very last possible date before Poland's EU accession (*The Door Ajar: the Eastern Border of the Enlarged EU*, 2001). One should however, remember that contrary to the popular point of view, the enforcement of visas will not create any barriers for organised crime, but it has potential of becoming an insurmountable barrier for thousands of ordinary citizens.

Furthermore, although border controls and restrictive policies obviously reduce the flow of immigrants to less than what it would otherwise be, one should remember that all borders remain permeable to some extent. Undocumented migrants are trafficked or arrive independently and get work in grey economic spheres; other migrants enter through legal exceptions made to otherwise restrictive policies for humanitarian reasons (family reunification, political asylum, natural disasters, temporary refuge, etc). Still others extend their stay, either legally or illegally. In all cases, the size of the actual inflow exceeds that specified by migration policy or that considered necessary by officials and for the public (Arango, 1998).

In some ways, this state of affairs is highly functional and even adaptive: demand for labour is met by undocumented migrants, 'temporary' workers, and legal immigrants able to overcome the barriers, thereby keeping employers happy, while the government is not perceived as encouraging or promoting immigration, thus avoiding a political backlash. Whether the contemporary nature of immigration is functional or not, the key point is that the dialectics are not so much between the forces of push and pull as between the push and 'the intervening factors' as described by Lee (1966) (Arango, 1998: 14).

The introduction of the visa regime for former USSR countries by candidates countries, and an improvement in border control will reduce the number of illegal entries and as a consequence, may also reduce the number of refugee claims (Iglicka, 2001a). However, we shall not forget that the processes of globalisation of migration and globalisation of central European labour markets have already begun and there is no reason to believe that migratory trends into Poland will be stabilised or diverted in the near future. The history of world migratory movements strikingly proves that when an immigration stream begins it displays a strong tendency to continue and it can not be simply restrain by 'visas' wall'.

4. CONCLUSIONS

The dynamic relationship between the geopolitical shift and emerging migratory patterns and processes proved to be of extreme importance in post-Second World War Poland. Its geographic and political situation predestined this country to struggle literally between the West and the East. Due to the massive westward outflow (and to Germany in particular), Poland undoubtedly gravitated towards the Western European migration system. However, the unidirectional nature of this movement precluded its membership therein. On the other hand, political situation after 1945 forced Poland into the Eastern European migration system. Within this system, moderate but mutual and quite diverse population flows were entirely regulated by state apparatuses. Since 1989, along with the social, political and economic transformation and the collapse of the Soviet Empire, factors conducive not only to the decline in the human outflow but also to the increase in the inflow into Poland both from the West and from the East have occurred. Additionally, economic globalisation and the introduction of a market economy and of capital-intensive production and technologies into the Central and Eastern European region after the collapse of European communism disrupted existing social and economic trends and brought about a widespread human movement. This international human traffic has brought two fundamental changes:

- the slow transformation of Poland from one of the biggest sending countries in the CEE region into a country of net-immigration and transit;
- the slow conversion of Poland from a country belonging to the Central and Eastern European migration system into a country that soon may belong simultaneously to two systems: Western European and Central and Eastern European.

Furthermore, forthcoming EU enlargement and more specifically signing by Poland Schengen agreement will probably cause a third change, namely:

- erosion of the Central and Eastern European migration system, possibly leading to its future disintegration.

Indeed, further analysis of population trends in this part of Europe is an alluring prospect for researchers.

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