



Narodowe Centrum
Badań i Rozwoju



BACKGROUND REPORT WP 1

POLAND – PAST AND CURRENT MIGRATION OUTFLOWS

WITH THE SPECIAL EMPHASIS ON NORWAY

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FOR INTERNATIONAL
RELATIONS

1. Norway – brief historical context of migratory flows and the policy

As far as any statistics on migration to Norway are concerned it is worth to remember at the further stages of TRANSFAM research that there are at least two definitions the Norwegians refer to, both in terms of statistics and more general in terms of studies on migration. The first definition is related with the term *immigrants*. Immigrants are persons born abroad with two foreign-born parents. The second term used in Norway is *Norwegian-born persons with immigrant parents*. They are persons born in Norway with two immigrant parents (Statistics Norway).

Period 1945-1989

Till the 1970 Norway was rather a country of emigration (primarily to the US), however, in the mid-1950s, due to the economic boom experienced after WW2, Norway opened up for labour migration and decided on a free movement of labour, and a common labour market within the Nordic states. Similarly to other European countries, in 1975 Norway applied a more restrictive policy towards immigrants however, they did not refer to the recruitment of specialist with specific skills and expertise in the petroleum sector. They were also not aimed at asylum seekers and family reunion.

Period 1990-2009. The Immigration Act of May 2008

In the 1990 a quota program for seasonal workers in agricultural sector was introduced. Seasonal Workers originated from Eastern Europe, primarily Poland. Expanding free movement of workforce and a common employment market to the EEA did not have much effect on the migration patterns to Norway till the year 2004. In the year 2004 Norway decided to enforce “transitional measures” for labour migrants originating from the new EU Member states. EU-8 citizens got access to the labour market on the basis of an offer of a full-time position for one year. Wage and working conditions were required to be similar to ones provided for a Norwegian worker. The transition period was continued to May 2009. Measures implemented in this period aimed at limiting social dumping, but they applied only to individual labour migrants working in Norwegian based companies or to workers hired out from a subcontracting company based in Norway. The law did not refer to “service providers”. Therefore employees working for subcontracting companies, temporary

work agencies based in Poland, and workers who worked as independent contractors, as service providers, were not covered by generally applicable in Norway collective agreement on wages. Companies using the services of subcontractors could pay their workers less and even could not honour the regulations of the health, safety and working environment act (Baba and Dahl-Jørgensen 2010).

The most recent Immigration Act of 15 May 2008 (with some not significant later changes), together with the corresponding Immigration Regulation entered into force on 1 January 2010. The Act regulates the entry of foreigners into Norway and their right to residence and work. It refers to four main categories of immigrants from third countries:

- Labour migrants, i.e. persons who have received a concrete job offer
- Persons with close family ties to somebody residing in Norway
- Students, trainees, au pairs and participants in exchange programs
- Refugees and persons who qualify for residence permit on humanitarian grounds (International Migration 2011-2012 – IMO report for Norway).

2. Poland – brief historical context of migratory flows and the policy

Period 1945-1989

From 1945 until late 1980s the population movements to and from Poland were rigidly controlled by the state, and the individual freedom of travelling abroad was severely restrained in the case of citizens/residents of Poland.

Between 1945 and 1947, some 3,885,000 persons (mostly ethnic Germans but also ethnic Ukrainians and ethnic Jews) emigrated from Poland or were displaced (deported, repatriated), while approx. 3,693,000 persons (mostly ethnic Poles but also Jews) immigrated or were repatriated to Poland (Kersten 1974).

In the period 1951-1955 the international movements were effectively stopped. In turn, the following years, till 1959, saw an enormous increase in migration, though one more time it was limited solely to the 'exchange' of ethnic groups. Ethnic Poles and ethnic Jews of Polish origin were repatriated from the USSR to Poland, and ethnic Germans from Poland to Germany (also ethnic Jews from Poland to Israel and a few other countries).(Frejka, Okólski

& Sword 1998, Iglicka 1998).

Since the late 1950s until 1990 the documented flows, in which - in contrast to earlier periods - ethnic Poles took a major part, displayed an astonishingly stable pattern.

Annual outflow figures usually ranged from around 20,000 to around 35,000 and inflow figures from around 1,500 to around 3,000. Family reasons (marriage, reunion with close relatives, return to Poland after retirement) constituted the main cause of those flows.

The 1970s marked the beginning of gradual liberalisation of passport regulations in Poland which led to the multiplication of the number of Poles travelling to other countries. It was precisely in the 1970 when the phenomenon of mass overstaying in the West by Polish tourists started. The number of emigrant-turned overstaying Poles in the whole decade is estimated at some 75,000.

Although the scale of documented outflows did not change dramatically in the 1980s, hundreds of thousand Polish travellers effectively became immigrants in the West. A great proportion among those undocumented migrants constituted the persons recognised and accepted by the Federal Republic of Germany as ethnic Germans.

In addition, the 1980s were a decade of a rapid increase in the migration of labour from Poland. In the peak year, 1989, as many as 148,000 Polish workers were employed abroad (though predominantly in non-western countries) on the basis of various bilateral inter-government agreements or state-sponsored contracts. Around two-third of them worked in other Soviet-bloc countries (GDR, Czechoslovakia and USSR), many in keeping with big infrastructural projects (e.g. pipelines). Last but not least, a mass circular mobility of false tourists was observed, i.e. the tourists whose major activity in a foreign country were petty trade or odd jobs.

Period 1989-2004

In the 1990s, after the fall of communism, nearly all travel restrictions were lifted and, in addition, entry into many Western countries became easier – albeit only for people travelling as tourists or for other recreational purposes. Paradoxically, however, emigration decreased and a large majority of migrants engaged in short-term circular movements.

A commonality shared by those two decades was that Polish migrants encountered significant difficulties in gaining access to the official labour market in destination countries. Since a large majority of them sought employment, they were pushed to the least attractive jobs, the secondary segment of the market, and to the shadow economy.

3. The context of the Polish migration to Norway – former research and statistics’ brief overview

Why Norway?

First Polish political refugees arrived to Norway in the 1980s and seasonal workers have started to arrive to Norway in the 1990s on the basis of bilateral agreements on temporary work in agriculture. After the accession to the EU the outflow, especially of temporary migrants, accelerated. Between the end of 2004 and 2007 the stock of resident of Poland who lived in a foreign country on a temporary basis (i.e. longer than two months) increased from 1 million to 2.3 million, which represented 6 per cent of the total resident population of Poland. According to Poland’s Central Statistical Office (GUS 2012), the number of such migrants (since 2007 the minimal length of stay outside Poland has been set at three months) declined in 2008-2010 to reach 2.0 million, and started to grow again in 2011. Norway constitutes the fifth major destination country for Polish post-accession migrants (after the UK, Germany, Ireland and the Netherlands).

The most visible incentive is the average gross hourly wage, which is several times higher than the Polish one. Although wages and working conditions offered to migrants are below those of native residents, still the conditions stay attractive in terms of absolute earnings, especially when money are sent back to families remaining in Poland. Furthermore, unemployment level even during the financial crises faced by Europe, in Norway has sustained below 3 percent. The final factor is related to social and structural changes observed within the Norwegian labour market. They increased the demand and reduced the supply for jobs that were expected to be redundant in the modern economy. These changes refer to five sectors that appeared to be the most important for Polish migrant workers, namely: construction, temporary staffing, domestic services, shipyards and agriculture. The jobs

offered to Poles belong to the category of boring physical labour at low rates and under flexible conditions (Friberg 2013).

As former research has shown, Polish post-accession migration to Norway has been related to restructuring of labour intensive sectors such as constructions, and increasing informalisation and casualisation of labour relations that have traditionally been strongly regulated in Norway. A strict separation between standard and atypical forms of employment is characteristic for Norwegian labour market. Polish workers find employment mainly in two niche sectors – constructing and cleaning (Friberg 2013).

Apart from labour migration there is also a growing trend observed of family migration. Numbers of Poles pointing family reasons for their first time stay in Norway are growing each year (with the exception of 2009), although economic reasons are still prevailing. In recent years, Polish nationals have overcome other nationals in category of family immigration. It is also important that according to statistics on Norwegian-born to immigrant parents, Norwegian-born to Polish parents were the sixth largest group with almost 6000 (just to compare those with Pakistani parents made up the biggest group of all Norwegian-born to immigrant parents, with 15 200). These data indicate a trend towards more long term settlement. Especially, when combined with data on duration of residence in Norway. At the beginning of the year 2011 only 5 000 Polish citizens were residing in Norway for more than 5 and less than 9 years. The number of Polish citizens belonging to the same category one year later reached 10 300. Those residing in Norway less than 4 years reached 46 797 at the beginning of 2011 and 51 585 at the beginning of 2012 (Statistics Norway). Furthermore, proportion of females among Polish migrants in Norway is getting higher each year.

4. Integration of Polish migrants – challenges for TRANSFAM research

Polish immigrants are not included in immigration policies since their movement and access to Norwegian labour market is regulated by EU/EEA supranational principles. Thus, the existence of Polish migrants in Norway is regulated by labour laws. They are not included in any integration programs, such as language learning programs, that are offered to non-Europeans. Their adaptation and migration decisions are therefore related heavily to their position at the labour market – their access to jobs and financial security. Since a demand for flexible workers in labour demanding sectors, such as construction, industrial manufacturing

and cleaning is quite permanent, migrants were offered new temporary assignments. Some of them prolonged their stays in Norway since they still could not reach their target earnings. Simultaneously, due to the growing informal network more jobs are available to newly arriving Polish women. That particular situation of Poles in Norway, led Jon Horgen Friberg (2012a) to analyse adaptation of Polish migrants in terms of different stages in the migratory process rather than in terms of different categories of migrants.

Although, Poles, as EU citizens, within national policy are not included in any integration programs, there are cases when municipal public agencies are seeking ways to integrate them. One of the examples is recalled by Baba and Dahl-Jørgensen (2010) - the municipal government established Norwegian language courses to help unemployed Polish construction workers to learn Norwegian and to find new jobs locally outside the construction sector. For the authors it illustrates that local public agency has acknowledged the presence of “permanent” Polish residents and has sought to integrate them although this practice contradicts national policy.

At this point it is also worth to recall findings from a research conducted in Rogaland (Ryndyk 2013). They contradict the widely spread assumption that the high cost of language training in Norway impedes Polish migrants from learning Norwegian language. An obstacle should be rather defined in terms of tough working conditions that leave no time for language learning. The above mentioned study, although not representative in terms of statistics or national scope, put some light on socio-economic integration of Polish migrant workers and the living conditions of Polish families, which are related to the work in “Polish” niches. Since jobs available for majority of post-accession Polish migrants do not provide earnings and conditions comparable with those available for natives, an average Polish migrant worker cannot afford renting proper accommodation, many live in small flats located in basements or attics. Such conditions affect many aspects of private life among Polish migrant families. They may have implications for the school performance of the migrants’ children. In short, current situation if prolonged can put into question values related to “equality” that are said to be a pillar of the Norwegian society.

The issue is serious since the labour market seems “to be unwilling to accept the Polish workers entry into the labour force other than as unskilled workers (...) Major actors in the labour market seem to share this attitude. A study for example shows that the Norwegian

Confederation of Employers (NHO) is positive to labour migration, but under the conditions that they return back to their home country once they are not needed” (Baba and Dahl-Jørgensen 2010).

The conclusions of Norwegian studies recalled by us point that former expectations related to free movement of people within EEA can, at least, partially be questioned. More and more Poles decide on more permanent settlement instead of circulation between Norway and Poland. It is a challenge not only for them but for the Norwegian society and policy, in particular. Although the state, as one can see, has a limited power to control flows of people within EEA, it is exposed to the consequences of migrants presence, especially, their maladaptation and growing inequalities in Norwegian society.

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