

Central European Forum
for Migration Research



Środkowoeuropejskie Forum
Badań Migracyjnych

Statistics or Reality? International Migration in Poland

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Plan of the presentation

1. Introduction
2. Data on migration flows
3. Data on population and migrant stocks
4. Data on irregular migration
5. Migration statistics in the social and political context
6. Conclusions and recommendations



1. Introduction

Polish statistics on regular migration are characterised by two major types of bias:

- Migratory events are underreported (*type 1 error*)
- Even if they were, the definitions do not comply with the international standards of the UN (*type 2 error*)
 - Migration in the UN (1998) recommendations =
= change of a usual residence for a year or more
 - Migration in the Polish statistics = change of a permanent residence, i.e. the declaration to come or leave for good



2. Data on migration flows

Various definitions imply over 5x difference between the Polish emigration registered in Poland and elsewhere (2002):

Destination country	Polish data (CSO) (1)	Destination country data (2)	Coverage Ratio (1) / (2)
Germany	17 806	100 968	17.6%
United States	2 676	13 304	20.1%
Canada	1 016	1 076	94.4%
Austria	525	2 514	20.9%
France	339	na	na
Italy	302	3 384	8.9%
Netherlands	290	2 275	12.7%
United Kingdom	254	na	na
Australia	187	na	na
Sweden	174	1 186	14.7%
Spain	166	3 869	4.3%
Belgium	119	2 427	4.9%
Denmark	95	962	9.9%
Switzerland	88	700	12.6%
Greece	75	na	na
Norway	47	702	6.7%
Czech Republic	38	1 679	2.3%
Luxembourg	23	97	23.7%
TOTAL	24 532	est. ~ 141 900	est. ~ 17.3%



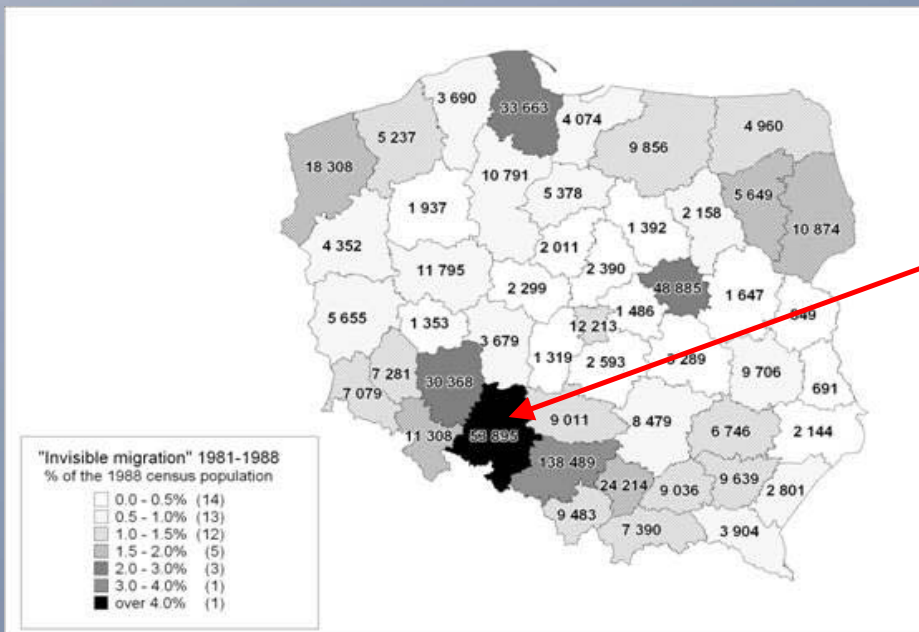
2. Data on migration flows

For immigration, the problem is very similar, although the magnitude cannot be directly estimated:

Origin country	Polish data (CSO) (1)	Origin country data (2)	Coverage Ratio (1) / (2)
Germany	2 335	78 739	3.0%
Ukraine	350	137	255.5%
Italy	251	459	54.7%
France	247	na	na
Canada	230	na	na
Kazakhstan	221	na	na
United Kingdom	208	na	na
Austria	156	1 538	10.1%
Belarus	130	81	160.5%
Russian Federation	86	80	107.5%
Netherlands	83	492	16.9%
Sweden	70	190	36.8%
Spain	63	99	63.6%
Belgium	61	411	14.8%
Greece	60	na	na
Armenia	50	na	na
Switzerland	41	277	14.8%
Lithuania	40	89	44.9%
TOTAL	6 587	na	na

2. Data on migration flows

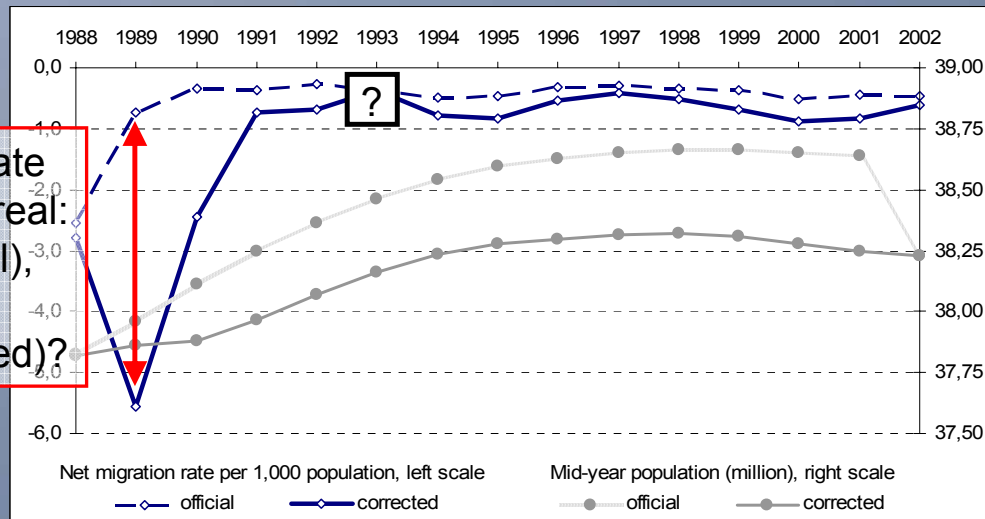
„Invisible” emigration from Poland in 1981–1988:
a net of about **590 700** persons (Sakson 2002)



2. Data on migration flows

Underestimated emigration from Poland in 1988–2002:
type 1 error = ca. 390 300 persons (2002 census), here distributed proportionally to German data on migration from Poland

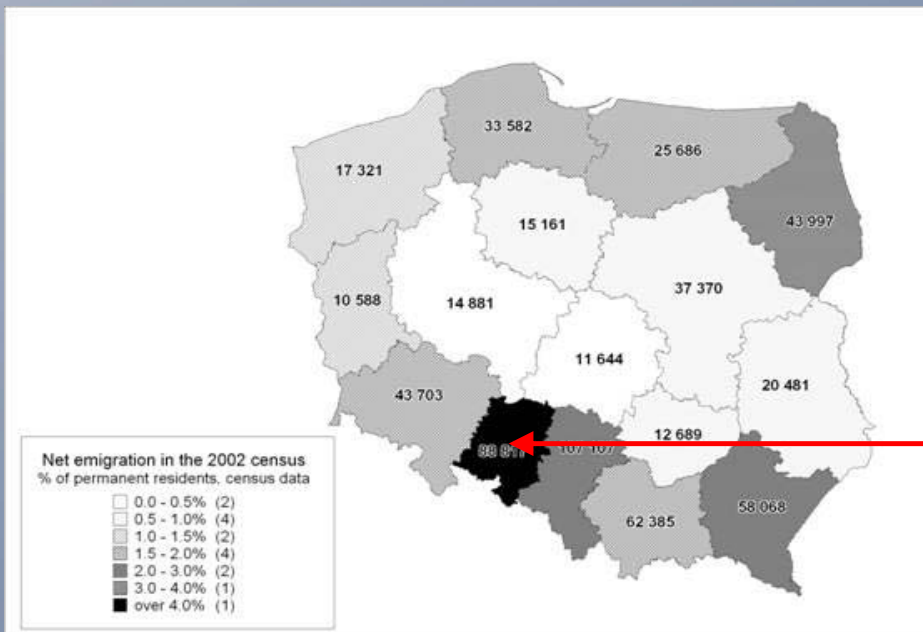
Which net migration rate in Poland in 1989 was real:
-0.7 per 1000 (official),
or
-5.6 per 1000 (estimated)?



3. Data on population and migrant stocks

Official Polish population is overestimated by ca. 1.6% (2002)

Type 2 error \approx 603 500 long-term net emigrants, or 610 000 persons' difference between permanent and usual residents (2002 census data)



Opolskie voivodship:
8.3% of population



3. Data on population and migrant stocks

Data by citizenship / country of birth are hardly useful for migration studies, because:

- They relate to the permanent population and exclude a majority of foreigners resident in Poland
- Most of foreign citizens (91.6%) are also Polish citizens
- The foreign-born are mainly Poles born in Poland before the World War II (counts as Belarus, Ukraine, Lithuania)

Place of birth	Citizenship			TOTAL
	Polish (incl. dual)	Foreign (incl. stateless)	Unknown	
Poland	36 765 038	10 135	96 108	36 871 281
Abroad	741 880	29 748	3 654	775 282
Unknown	22 833	778	559 906	583 517
TOTAL	37 529 751	40 661	659 668	38 230 080



4. Data on irregular migration

- The data are scarce and primarily limited to the Border Guard statistics on apprehensions (5 800 cases in 2004) and deportations (6 200 cases, after Futo & Jandl 2005).
- Interesting figures on border crossings: 98.3 million entries, 97.7 million exits – how to explain the difference?
- Some judgemental estimates: yearly up to 500 000 irregular migrant workers in Poland in the end of the 1990s (Iglicka 2003)
- The problems with the lack of data on irregular migration are not only a Polish specialty.



5. How do migration statistics create Polish reality?

- Inefficient and erroneous official system of collecting data on the international migration, based on the registration and de-registration of a migrant in respective administrative district, provides false picture of the actual scale of migration flows and population parameters.
- Political decisions, taken out of inadequate picture of ongoing processes, may be also erroneous or short-sighted.



6. Conclusions and recommendations

- Polish data on international migration are a statistical artefact rather than reality.
- Non-compliance with the UN (1998) recommendations not only underestimates migration, but also artificially enlarges population size, especially in some regions.
- In consequence, many socio-economic indicators are biased (birth and death rates, GDP per capita, etc.).
- Available data on irregular migration: tip of the iceberg
- Statistics construct certain social and political reality, which in Poland is not based on proper foundations.
- Instant improvement of the system of acquiring and reporting data on international migration is strongly recommended.

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Thank you for your attention.