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SOURCES AND USEFULNESS OF INFORMATION ON MOBILITY IN POLAND

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Abstract

The paper discusses in detail the data on the mobility of population available in Poland over the last 15 years. Based on criteria of mobility applied usually by population statistics (2) not only typical sources of the data, like censuses (3.2) or current registration (3.1.1) are described, but also ex-police register of population (3.1.4) and paper-slip registers run by local administration (3.1.3) are discussed. Also some attention is devoted to temporary migrants (3.1.2) specific to the Polish population statistics. The problem of the inadequacy of the data on international mobility is described in brief (4). Finally the comparability of the data is discussed.

SOURCES AND USEFULNESS OF INFORMATION ON MOBILITY IN POLAND

1. Introduction

The aim of the present paper is to discuss the sources of information on geographical mobility in Poland. In part this is a case study of a typical registration system of mobility of an ex-communist state. The usefulness of the analysis of this type of registration system lies in the fact that all East-European countries have had or have similar systems /Choriev 1978, Ottomansky 1978, Bojkov 1978/. Two limitations have been imposed on this review paper. They refer to the time and the geographical scale at which the data has been assembled. Only the sources of information which became available over the period of the last 15 years are taken into consideration. Scale constrains adopted restrict the discussed sources to those which generate the data for the entire country only. Small scale surveys are not taken into account in this paper.

2.1. Criteria of mobility

An important problem in the process of gathering the data on mobility is the definition of the notions of a migrant and a migration.

Basically three types of criteria could be distinguished. The first is the administrative/legal status of a person. Migrants

who do not undertake certain legal or administrative procedures are not counted. Obviously, existence of this criterion distorts the picture of mobility. The second one is a spatial criterion, for example the minimum distance between origin and destination, or more frequently the requirement to cross an administrative border of certain category. The last criterion refers to the time. Usually a minimum period of time spent by a migrant in a destination is required to make the event count as a migration.

2.1.1. Administrative-legal criterion

In Polish statistics two different administrative-legal criteria are used: the first is based on the legal status of a person and is applied in state and local administration-run current registration and in the surveys of the temporary migrants. The second takes into consideration the actual rather than legal situation and is usually used during censuses. From administrative-legal point of view two categories of residents and in consequence migrants are distinguished: permanent and temporary. A temporary resident (who makes temporary migration) is a person who arrived at a locality for a limited period of time with intention to return to his/her permanent place of residence. All these who move due to studies, temporary employment, medical treatment etc., belong to this category. Usually, but not necessarily, these persons are accommodated in halls of residence, hospitals and similar institutions. A permanent resident is a person who declared that he/she would stay in his/her new place for a long period of time and has

relevant accommodation. Accessibility of the housing resources is important because those who do not own it or do not belong to an owner's family require the owner's permission to be registered for permanent residence. During the Census usually an actual mobility not the change of administrative-legal residential status is the criterion. In 1978 those who had been in the place of enumeration for at least two months were counted as migrants. Consequently both temporary and permanent residents who had moved at least two months before the census were counted as mobile. In addition all these who had not reported their migration to the local authorities were counted as mobile, on the condition that they had been enumerated.

2.1.2. Spatial criterion

In the registration system and in the surveys of temporary migrants, requirement exists that an individual must cross the administrative boundary of a commune/town to be counted. Also during both Censuses described here, the crossing of administrative boundary on "powiat" (county; 1978) or voivodship (1988) level was crucial. The condition to count only these, who crossed administrative boundaries, results in omission of a large fraction of migrants in particular in the largest cities, which frequently include typical urban as well as suburban or even rural sections. The intra-city mobility is missing in the statistics based on this criterion. On the other hand, modification of the record on the card of resident (see 3.1.3) takes part irrespectively from the administrative division and

therefore this source of information is indispensable for those who research into residential mobility.

2.1.3. Temporary criterion

Basically, a minimum period over which migration should take place to be counted is 2 months. This is the case for survey of temporary migrations and Censuses. In the current registration system temporary threshold has not been specified, but it is reasonable to assume that in this case any move is for a period longer, in most cases even much longer, than two months.

3. Sources of the data on mobility

The data on mobility in Poland come from two main sources: 1. from various registers run by the state and local administration and 2. from the National Censuses.

3.1. Non-census data

In this section the data collected by local and/or state administration will be discussed. Basically there are two sources of data collected under the control of Central Statistical Office /CSO/: current registration of permanent migration and periodical surveys of temporary absent and temporary present in a commune/town, giving in fact some rudimentary data on the temporary migrants. Two other sources: cards of residents and computerized system PESEL are run for

administrative purposes and in general are not used by CSO (see 3.1.3. and 3.1.4. for details).

3.1.1. Current registration

The legal framework of current registration was formed by the Bill on Organization of the State Statistics in 1962 with later amendments. According to this law the only institution responsible for collecting and processing population data is the Central Statistical Office and its local (predominantly voivodship) branches.

CSO with the help of local administration registers all permanent migrations. The fact of registration of migration causes automatic modification of the so called card of resident (see 3.3) which is run by the same local administrative units.

According to the Instruction issued by Central Statistical Office /Instrukcja..., 1977/ the events are classified as permanent migrations, when a migrant himself/herself either

1. arrived for permanent residence to a commune/town from another commune/town or
3. changed his/her residential status from temporary to permanent or
3. arrived to a commune/town from abroad or finally
4. left commune/town for a permanent stay abroad.

The form which is filled in the course of administrative

procedure provides with the basic demographic (such as age, sex and family status) and socio-economical (education and occupation) characteristics. Information on the migration itself is limited to the source, destination /exact addresses/ and the reason of migration. The latter information is very general, because only three various reasons have been distinguished.

To assess the usefulness of current registration it might be worthwhile to look at the potential sources of inaccuracies. The main source of inaccuracy originates in the negligence of both migrants who do not report on their migrations for various reasons /Piwko 1988a/ and statistical officers, who might either skip or distort the information received. It also happens, that migrants are not aware of the fact that they are obliged to report the change of place of residence. It refers in particular to these migrants who had already been for some time in a commune/town with the status of temporary resident. Their permanent migration has only formal and administrative rather than actual character, which is often difficult to understand to the migrant.

An indirect numerical assessment of the exactness of current registration may be given. A comparison of the numbers of population obtained in 1987 in selected communes/towns during the testing of the concept of the National Census 1988 with the numbers obtained on the basis of cards of residents has shown, that the difference is on the average equal to 0.9% . In urban areas the difference is larger (1.6%) than in rural areas (0.6%)

/Piwko, 1988/. Obviously these differences are not only due to an inaccurate registration of mobility but also due to errors in registration of mortality and fertility. Nevertheless the numbers quoted give an idea on the order of magnitude of the error.

In the past there were administrative restrictions aimed at the reduction of the inflow of migrants to the biggest cities. It was necessary to get a permit for permanent migration from local administration /Rykiel 1983/. It is doubtless, that a significant fraction of the migrations to these cities has never been reported or has been reported as temporary.

3.1.2. Periodical survey of temporary absent and temporary present in a commune/town

According to law, a person who arrived to a town/commune for a period of two months or longer but without intention to stay there permanently should notify the local administration in his temporary place of residence about the change of his/her address declaring the period and respectively temporary and permanent addresses. This information should be passed on to the local administration of the place of his/her permanent residence.

This procedure creates the framework for statistics of temporary migrants. The entire range of the data is available locally but is only partially used by Statistical Offices. The only

information about this category of migrants come from periodical surveys (the surveys were conducted in 1976, 1978, 1980, 1983, 1985 and 1988; Aleksínska 1990) of temporary present and temporary absent in a commune/town. From these surveys one can learn about the demographic structure of both these groups (i.e. temporary absent and temporary present) in each commune/town, but not about geographical origin of the temporary present, neither the geographical destination to which moved the temporary absent /Kopeć 1982/.

It should be noted, that the data on temporary absent/present in a commune/town are particularly prone on negligence of migrants who do not report their moves. Probably this is the most important source of inaccuracy of this measure of mobility.

3.1.3. Register of residents

Local authorities in each commune/town keep records of its residents called cards of residents. As opposed to the data on temporary migrants and permanent migration, the register of residents is not run for statistical but for administrative purposes. The information recorded on a card, amongst others, give details of all places of residences and dates of moves of a person, including temporary moves. In the case of permanent migration the card is sent to the local authority relevant to the new place of residence. So it is possible to reconstruct migration history of all permanent residents of commune/town from their birth to a given point in time. In geographical terms

cards of residents' give much more information than current registration of migrations. In the former, all changes of addresses are registered, including changes due to short distance residential moves which do not involve the crossing of administrative boundaries. In the latter, according to the instruction quoted earlier, only migrations during which migrants have crossed a boundary of administrative unit count. It is clear, that register of residents is an excellent source of longitudinal data. This kind of data is not easily available in Europe. In fact only some Scandinavian countries collect longitudinal data based on individual records. There are, however, some problems with the accessibility and usage of this data. The first is that the whole set of cards is not computerized, but exists in the form of paper cards. Converting these data into computer-readable form is time and money consuming even for a single administrative unit. The second problem is that there are various information on each card, which are of confidential nature and refer to individuals rather than to statistical aggregates. For privacy reasons it is fairly difficult to get permission to access to these data.

3.1.4. PESEL

Ministry of Internal Affairs runs a computerized registration system called PESEL. This system was put into operation in the late seventies as a tool for total control by the police over the society. As the political situation changes the use of the system evolves. The system keeps track of each adult person,

including subsequent addresses, but at the moment is not used for statistical purposes. Potentially it might be a very useful source of data on mobility because of a wide range of information of socio-economic and demographic nature on each individual stored in it. It is fully computerized and it is possible to derive statistical aggregates instead of giving an access to an individual record, so the problem of the privacy of the data might be easily overcome. In future PESEL will be used by CSO, however the details of this operation have not been publicised yet.

3.2. National Censuses.

All national censuses in Poland have had at least one question that provides data on mobility /Latuch 1970/. From the census in 1970, sections regarding queries on mobility had been extended. In 1970, the questions had been asked on the place of birth, previous place of residence and how long a person had lived in his/her current place of residence.

3.2.1. National Census 1978

The most comprehensive investigation of mobility took place during the Census in 1978 /Narodowy Spis..., 1978/. As a part of this Census a migrational survey on 10% sample has been conducted. In addition to the basic Census form, selected respondents were asked to fill in an additional form on mobility. It was the widest survey of this type ever done in Poland. The

survey form had the following questions: 1. Place of birth (defined as a place of permanent residence of mother at the time of birth).

2. How long a person has lived in the community/town where enumerated.

3. Place of previous residence (if any).

4. Reason of migration (one of 21 various reasons had to be chosen).

5. Had the migrant belonged to a peasant family in his previous place of residence.

6. Are there any plans to migrate over the next 5 years.

The next part of the questionnaire (5 questions) was devoted to the commuting issue and will not be discussed here. Also basic demographic and social data had been collected (further 3 questions). During computerized processing of the data this form had been linked to the basic enumeration form of the Census, so in fact the thematic scope of the data received had been extended on the data on housing conditions, employment or other sources of income and household structure.

The only criterion for a person to be counted as a migrant was the actual change of the place of residence for a period of minimum two months irrespective from the legal-administrative status. This realistic approach created a good basis for estimating the size and structure of mobility for planning purposes.

In fact this survey provides an enormous wealth of data on

mobility in Poland. Its results have been published /Migracje ludnosci... 1981/ and raw data have been available on magnetic tapes.

3.2.2. National Census 1988

In comparison to the Census in 1978 the last Polish National Census in 1988 had limited scope of questions concerning mobility. The latter of them aimed at deriving the actual number of population in basic administrative units. Due to the fact that the information gathered could be easily used to calculate some marginal values of migration matrix it will be discussed in more detail. The question asked was about the actual status of a person enumerated (permanent versus temporary resident). Temporary residents were asked about the period of stay and the reason of migration. In the case of permanent residents the next question was about his/her presence/absence in the permanent place of residence on the day of the Census, and in the case of absence about the period (less than two months as opposed to more than two months) of the absence. Finally, the reason of temporary presence/absence had been recorded. All persons with the status of temporary absent were recorded. This complicated set of questions allowed for precise enumeration of all permanent residents who were not in their places of residence during the census and establishing the period (two categories only) and the reason of the absence. Each person in this category has been enumerated twice - in the place of his/her permanent residence as "temporary absent" and then in the place of his/her temporary

residence. Those who have been abroad have been enumerated only once and marked as temporary living abroad /Piwko 1988b/.

Another question was asked about how long a person had been living in the place of enumeration and for those, who arrived there after 1978, about the voivodship and type of localities from which they had arrived, the sources of income and involvement in agriculture in previous place of residence. This set of questions was very unfortunate, because data obtained were very general from geographical point of view (49 voivodships) and analysis of mobility in finer scales was impossible.

4. International migration

The measurement of the international migration became in the more and more united Europe the crucial issue. Unfortunately, Polish statistics are extremely inefficient in this respect. Inflow of migrants from abroad was in the past captured on a regular basis by current registration. It has changed recently due to the intense inflow of illegal migrants from the USSR and Romania as well as from various countries of the Third World. Some of these migrants try to get a job on the black market, creating, unknown in Poland up to now, category of illegal gastarbeiters.

Outflow from Poland has never been measured properly. Before the fall of communist rules outmigration had been treated as "antipatriotic" and "anticommunistic" or "antisocialistic" behaviour. A condition for international migration to be

registered was that a migrant had received a permit for the migration prior to living the country. Issuing applicants with the permit has been an unsure and long lasting process. It has happened, that the applicant has been persecuted in various ways. As a result, the vast majority of migrants have not applied for the permit (and therefore have not been recorded by the current registration) but used their tourist passports to cross the border and then have stayed in foreign countries often without proper visas. The difference between the registered and the actual outflow abroad is difficult or even impossible to be estimated.

This pattern of behaviour has been petrified, despite the fact that political obstacles vanished. It is therefore difficult to assess the size of international emigration from Poland and immigration to Poland because the majority of this category of mobility is, from a legal point of view, in "grey" or "black" zones.

Till the Autumn 1989 SERP - subsystem of earlier mentioned PESEL registration system - recorded all crossings of the state borders. The usefulness of this data are limited, first because there were no distinction between short and long term mobility, second because they are secret.

5. Permanent migrants, temporary migration and Censuses: what information we get?

The sources of information mentioned in the above sections are supplementary each to other and simultaneously incomparable. The nature of information obtained varies very much. Let us examine what is measured and then what categories of mobility are covered in all cases. There is a well known distinction between the measurement of the number of migrants and the number of migration /Courgeau 1973, Rees 1977/. The former enumerate the number of persons who migrate over certain period of time, but multiple migrations of these persons do not count. The latter gives the number of facts of migration, that is the number of events.

The data from the current registration describe each particular migration and give basic characteristics of the migrant involved in this migration. Multiple migration could be easily registered with high accuracy, but their sequence by one person cannot be identified. Finally, the registration is run non-stop which means that all events, irrespective of the time of their occurrence are registered. Fertility and mortality of migrants do not influence to much the exactness of the data collected.

Censuses have entirely different character. The data collected reflect the number of migrants /individuals/ and recovery of the residential history is impossible. It is important that criteria of mobility adopted during both Censuses aimed at assessing actual mobility, irrespective the administrative status. This is a fundamental difference between the census data and administration-born data. In a sense, the Censuses combined the scope of mobility investigation covered usually by the current

registration and the surveys. For planning purposes this is the basic information. It is also important from the point of view of research.

Another important difference between the two sources of information lies in the treatment of temporary migrations. In the current registration the requirement of permanence of residence exists. This requirement excludes ex definitione broad category of migrations, namely these which are due to acquiring education on secondary and tertiary level, first employment, in particular if it is linked with inhabiting in employer-run hostel-type accommodation etc. The latter was very popular in large industrial agglomerations, suffering from the lack of labour till the late eighties.

All the migrants who have moved for a period over two months but due to temporary character of their mobility are not covered by current registration fall into the category of temporary absent/present in a commune/town. With this observation we arrive to a fundamental question: to what extend the system of acquisition of the data on mobility mirrors the geographical and social processes of mobility. The distinction between permanent and temporary mobility is probably one of the most unfortunate because it is an artificial one. It may happen and happens that the period of stay of permanent residents is shorter than period of stay of temporary residents. Within the category of temporary migrants falls a part of the "true" temporary migrants, also all these who spend years in their destination. For university

students it is typically 5 years. Workers, in particular employed by big building and construction companies spend long periods in hostels also enjoying the status of temporary migrant. On the other hand the change of legal status from "temporary resident" to "permanently resident" counts as a migration but do not involve actual geographical mobility. One can expect, that part of migrations, in particular to large urban agglomerations, occurred solely due to administrative changes in the legal status of residents. The structural difference between permanent and temporary mobility is remarkable /Kupiszewski 1987/.

Periodical survey of temporary absent and temporary present gives us in fact the data on the number of migrants /individuals/ which are temporary absent and temporary present in each and every of primary administrative units (communes/towns) on the day of the survey. It is a kind of instant picture of the structure and distribution of this category of mobile population. All migrants, whose migration fit entirely into the inter-survey gap (usually two-three years) are not counted. Also mortality influences the numbers obtained. All these, who had died before the survey took place are not counted. We know nothing on the destinations to which went migrants absent from a commune/town neither on the source from which arrived temporary present in a commune/town. These data are however recorded on the cards of residents. Some basic and aggregate demographic characteristics of the both subpopulations (temporary absent/present) in each commune are available.

6. Conclusions

It is clear, that there is an abundance of sources of information on mobility in Poland. The most important should be the current registration. Its usefulness for research is doubtless, but for planning purposes, which is crucial, this data are not of the top quality. The future of the current registration is unclear. It has been created as a tool of a totalitarian state allowing for the control of the mobility of its citizens. Register's usefulness for research hardly legitimizes its existence in particular in the light of expenses paid by the state budget for running the entire system. As it has been discussed earlier there are other sources complementary to the current registration. The usefulness of all these sources is limited because of various methodologies applied and therefore total incompatibility of the data obtained. Despite the possible argument that the information based on the various methodological approaches gives a better picture of the mobility, the point which must be noted is that this picture is unclear and the figures obtained are error prone and difficult to check. The recommended way of transformation of the system is to get rid of duality of permanent-temporary mobility and to gather data either on migrants or on migrations. If the current registration exists in future, its outcome should be comparable to the results of Censuses, which means that the focus of interest of statisticians should lie in the capturing data on actual mobility, not limited by legal conditions. This is a sensible requirement also from

planners' point of view.

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