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POLISH MIGRANTS IN SWEDEN:
AN OVERVIEW

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ABSTRACT. The current Polish migrant group in Sweden is the largest in Scandinavia, and experienced a significant growth after the enlargement of the European Union in 2004. The present overview is an attempt to give a systematic picture of this group, and is based on a selection of publications from a larger bibliography. The bibliography was compiled by the author in order to survey the knowledge on Polish migrants in Sweden, and is attached to this overview. The overview is primarily confined to the period between 1940 and 1990 because this period is covered by the scholarly literature.

1. INTRODUCTION

From a Swedish cultural historical perspective Sweden has always been a country which has rather received immigrants (Svanberg & Tydén 2005:7), even if the major Swedish emigration 1846-1930 made a significant social, historical and cultural phenomenon. In opposition, Poland has a history of shifting borders and of both voluntary and involuntary migration, and is considered as one of the most important emigration countries in modern times (Iglicka 2001, White 2011, cf. even Okólski 1998). According to Iglicka (2001:13) the Polish mass outbound migration may be divided into five periods. Additionally, the 2004 enlargement of the European Union with the movements of the Polish citizens can be seen as the sixth period, sometimes called the Polish exodus (Rostek & Uffelmann, 2011) (see Fig. 1 for a classification).

Migration period	Time period	Description of migration type
(1)	from the late 19th century to 1939	for the most part economically motivated
(2)	1939-1944	forced population displacements, closely related to wartime developments
(3)	1944-1980	- repatriation of Poles from the USSR - the migration of ethnic Germans from Poland under intergovernmental agreements - migration by people of Jewish origin
(4)	1980s	the migrations of the 1980s
(5)	1990s	the transition period
(6)	after 2004	post-accession Polish migration

(Fig. 1) *Classification of the Polish migration (after Iglicka 2001; Rostek & Uffelmann 2011)*

With respect to Sweden, regular migration from Poland is primarily a post-war phenomenon.[1] The number of scholarly publications on the Polish migrants in Sweden is rather scanty. Publications concerned with the migration after the fall of the Iron Curtain (period 5 in the classification) as well during the post-accession period (after 2004, period 6) are almost non-existent, when compared with publications which deal with other countries, e.g. the UK, Ireland and Germany (e.g. Triandafyllidou 2006, White 2011).

The present overview attempts to give a systematic picture of Polish migration to Sweden and captures primarily the period 1940-1990. The overview excludes the issue of Polish language in Sweden, which is described elsewhere (see Lubińska, in preparation, for a synthesis of research on Polish as an immigrant minority language in Sweden).

The overview is organized as follows; after this introduction, the methodology used in compiling this overview is presented in section 2. In section 3 the formation of the group during the 20th century is described. In section 4 the characteristics of the group are defined. The final section is a concluding one. A bibliography of Polish migrants in Sweden is attached at the end of this article.

[1] Undoubtedly there is an exception to this: the Polish migration to the South of Sweden in the early 1900s. It was fairly large and has attracted attention both from the historical (see under publications of A.N. Uggla in the appendix as well as Svanberg & Tydén 2005:248ff.) and the linguistic side (see Lubińska, in preparation). This migration is called the Galician migration; Galicia is a historical region that now includes Southern Poland and Western Ukraine. During the period 1772-1918, when Poland was partitioned and occupied by Russia, Germany and Austria, Galicia belonged partly to Austria and partly to Russia.

2. METHODOLOGY

The present overview is chiefly based on three sources: (i) scholarly publications from a larger bibliography, (ii) Statistics Sweden (SCB), and (iii) Central Statistical Office in Poland (GUS). I compiled the larger bibliography in order to survey the body of literature on Polish migrants in Sweden. The bibliography along with the methodology for compiling it is presented in the appendix to this article (*A BIBLIOGRAPHY ON POLISH MIGRANTS IN SWEDEN 1900-2011).*

I consulted several scholarly publications i.e. academic books, journal articles, working papers, conference papers, dissertations and degree projects as well as reports from the Swedish National Board of Health and Welfare and biographical lexicons for the overview. The overview is primarily confined to the period between 1940 and 1989 because this period is covered by the aforementioned publications.

3. FORMATION OF THE POLISH MIGRANT GROUP IN SWEDEN

The present Polish migrant group came into being after World War II. During some parts of the post-war era the number of Polish migrants to Sweden increased substantially. This was mainly influenced both by the political situation in Poland and by Sweden's immigration policy (cf. Iglicka 2001). The periodical increase is often refered to as waves of Polish migration (e.g. De Geer 1994:22, Hammar 1997:239). The most common reasons for migration have been humanitarian, political and economic, but family motivations have also played an important role. The causes have often been intertwined, a complexity caught by Józefowicz (1996:3), who states that: "(...) those who emigrated due to political or ethnic ostracism became economic refugees. There were also cases of temporary emigration for professional or educational reasons that later becamed 'politicised' because of the tensions and upheavals at home." Józefowicz (ibid.) underlines that the economic reasons should be principally understood as a quest for better opportunities for self-fulfillment in professional life, rather than as an escape from unemployment or poverty. However, the quotation comes from 1996; the reasons for the Polish migration to Sweden after 2004 (period 6) seem not to have received scholarly attention yet.

3.1 WORLD WAR II

The Polish migration caused by World War II is perceived as the most intensive in Poland's history (Okólski 1998:10). During this period the

relatively small number of Polish migrants began to increase, even in Sweden. These migrants came to Sweden in various ways.

One group was comprised of the crew of three Polish submarines. The crew surrendered to the Swedish authorities after battles against the Germans in the Baltic Sea and was interned in Sweden (Uggla 1997:42). Others came from Eastern Poland via Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia after the Soviet invasion in September 1939 (Uggla 1997:59). At the beginning, the refugees treated Sweden as a transit country on their way to the UK and France where they wanted to join the Polish military forces and to continue to participate in the war (Uggla 1997:37).

Another group of migrants came from concentration camps at the end of the war. The Swedish Red Cross activity in cooperation with Folke Bernadotte resulted in 20,000 people, including about 7000 from Poland, being set free and transported to Sweden (Uggla 1997:174). Approximately another 5000 people came with a transport organized by the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration (UNRRA) (ibid.). Moreover, it is estimated that about 3000 people came on their own, many of them to reunite with their families (Uggla 1993:72; Uggla 1997:173). At the end of the war there were, therefore, about 15,000 people from Poland in Sweden, around 6000-7000 of them of Jewish origin (Uggla 1993: 72).

When Sweden recognized the Polish communist government, which had newly formed in July 1945, it was decided that all the refugees were free to go back to Poland. In cooperation with the Polish government a return trip was organized, and about 5000 people returned to Poland. However, about 8000 people stayed (Uggla 1997:283) as Sweden did not consider the return as compulsory. The reasons behind the stay were largely political. These people were concerned about their safety in a state governed by communists, especially those people who had different views on how Poland should be governed after the war. The people, who were linked to the Polish London government in exile[2] which was independent from the USSR, were also unsure how they would be treated upon their return. Others had heard rumors about a revival of anti-Semitic tendencies (Uggla 1997:206).

3.2 THE POST-WAR PERIOD

After World War II the communist regime in Poland maintained an isolationist emigration policy until almost 1989 (Okólski 1998). Until 1956 the Polish migration to Sweden was nearly non-existent because of the total

[2]After this recognition, the Polish exile government in London was not any longer seen by the Swedish authorities as representing Poland.

isolation of the East from the West (Michalik 1997:186). Therefore, the FIRST WAVE of Polish migrants came to Sweden after the so called POLISH OCTOBER 1956.[3] The Polish October resulted among others in less strict regulations for travelling abroad, which led to an increase of passport applications. Michalik (ibid.) mentions that many people who received their passports went to Sweden on personal invitations, often from relatives, and did not return to Poland after the period of the invitation was ended.

The SECOND WAVE arrived after the political crisis of 1968 (even called MARCH 1968). This wave contained of about 2500 people of Jewish ancestry who came to Sweden during the years 1969-1972 (Uggla 1990:297). The crisis was a result of a chain of events, amongst them internal battles for power within the Communist party. A substantial number of Polish Jews was to be found in the higher ranks of the communist party, and one fraction within the Communist party wanted to purge the party of the political rivals by labeling them Zionists, i.e. pro-Israeli and anti-Soviet (Davies 2005:442). The purges and the battles for power within the Communist party turned into an attack on all Polish citizens of Jewish origin (Davies 2005:243). In the aftermath of this anti-Semitic campaign, many of the Jews who remained in Poland after World War II went abroad. The Polish government deprived them of a Polish passport and instead issued travel documents (Michalik 1997:186, cf. even Ilicki 1988).

After 1970, the political climate became milder and foreign travel regulations were liberalized (cf. Okólski 1998). During the 1970s, Poles defecting to the West was almost a daily occurrence: the Polish migrants came as "false" tourists and applied for asylum in the West (Okólski 1998). Cooperation between the first Palme government (1969-1976) and Poland resulted in removal of the requirement for Polish citizens to have a visa to travel to Sweden. It has been estimated that over 5500 people came to Sweden from Poland between 1970 and 1976 (Uggla, 1997:297).

The declaration of MARTIAL LAW IN DECEMBER1981 triggered a large-scale migration, peaking in 1982 (De Geer 1994:16). During that time it was possible to seek either political or humanitarian asylum in Sweden. The asylum applied to everyone who was in Sweden when martial law was declared (humanitarian asylum) or who decided to leave Poland after release from the internment camps (political asylum). Approximately 600 people (family included) from the latter group left Poland for Sweden in the years 1982-1985 (Michalik 1997:187). Because of the tense political situation and

[3] A political crisis in October 1956 led to a dismantling of the Stalinist system in Poland. The so called Polish road to socialism would be respected by Soviet leaders, provided that the Eastern block as a whole would not be compromised (cf. for example Davies 2005).

of the economic crisis, a total of about 12,500 Polish migrants came to Sweden (Michalik 1997:187).

The fifth and the sixth period, i.e. the transition period of the 1990s and the post-accession Polish migration are not mentioned here because of insufficient scholarly sources.

4. CHARACTERISTICS OF THE POLISH MIGRANT GROUP

The current Polish migrant group in Sweden is the largest in Scandinavia (Michalik 1997:188). The group consists not only of ethnic Poles, but also of Jews and Roma, and possibly also of people from other ethnic groups[4] (Vigerson 1994:105).

4.1 DEMOGRAPHICS

There are currently 72,865 people who were born in Poland residing in Sweden (SCB, 2011) of which 65,981 are aged between 18 and 95 years. Before the 2004 EU enlargement there were 43,472 people born in Poland residing in Sweden (SCB, 2011) The enlargement of the EU saw an almost 70 % growth of Polish migrants in Sweden. The growth can be explained by the fact that from day one, Sweden along with the UK and Ireland opened their labor markets without limitation (Grabowska-Lusińska & Okólski 2008). With respect to individuals born in Sweden, estimates from 2012 showed 20,631 people with at least one parent from Poland (SCB 2012). Accordingly, today there is a total of over 90,000 people in Sweden who have Polish ancestry.

With respect to the permanency of the Polish migration in Sweden, it has usually been seen as permanent until the transition period (Hammar 1997:244, Józefowicz 1996:10, Michalik 1997:187, Vigerson 1997:216). Since 1989 until the EU accession, there has been a constant supply of young people with professional skills which are desirable in Sweden. However, not much is known about these migrants and their plans on settle permanently in Sweden (Chamarczuk 2003). With respect to the post-accession period we know that there has been a significant growth of the Polish migrants in Sweden but again almost nothing is known about these migrants themselves.

With respect to the pattern of settlement, the Polish migrants usually did not settle in clusters (Michalik 1997:188). Most of them have, however, settled in the areas connected to Sweden's three big cities: Stockholm

[4] Sweden has no statistics on ethnic background which makes it difficult to calculate exactly how many people of those who migrated to Sweden belonged to an ethnic and/or national minority in Poland. In Poland there are the following ethnic and national minorities (in alphabetical order): Armenians, Czechs, Belarusians, Germans, Jews, Karaites, Lemkos (Łemkowie), Lithuanians, Roma, Russians, Slovaks, Tatars and Ukrainians.

county/Stockholm, Skåne county/Malmö and Västra Götaland county/Gothenburg (SCB 2010). Some clusters have arisen due to labor shortages in the Swedish industry, particularly in connection with World War II, for example, in Västerås (Klich 1988). Swedish governmental policy in the 1980s also played a role in determining where the Polish migrants settled (Vigerson 1994:107). During the 1980s several small municipal districts signed agreements with the government that those districts could absorb a certain number of migrants; some Polish migrants have therefore settled in a number of smaller towns (Vigerson 1997:219).

A typical feature of the group has long been that the female migrants have outnumbered the male. It has been suggested that the reason behind this was many marriages between Polish women and Swedish citizens (Vigersson 1997:217). It has even been claimed (Chamarczuk 2002:27) that many Polish women actively sought out a Swedish partner in order to improve their lives, and that many of the marriages were arranged as a way of legalizing the women's stay in Sweden. Such information is not verifiable (cf. Grabowska-Lusińska & Okólski 2008; see even Eklund & Håkanson 1987) because to the best of my knowledge, no systematic investigation of this rather complex topic has ever been conducted. The traditional female migration was, however, replaced by mainly male migration in the post-accession period (Grabowska-Lusińska & Okólski 2008). This change seems, however, not to have attracted scholarly attention.

4.2 SOCIO-ECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS

An interview-based study among migrants who moved to Sweden in the 1980s shows that as compared to migrants from Chile, Iran and Turkey, Polish migrants have a higher socioeconomic status (SoS 1999:198). The reasons for this seem not to have been studied.

Almost all social groups in Poland are represented among the Polish migrants in Sweden (Vigerson 1994:105), but during the post-war era there was a large number of people who came to Sweden possessing both a high level of education and professional skills that were in demand (Michalik 1997:191). Two dimensions of the group's level of education are worth emphasizing. Firstly, the members of the group were open to different forms of new education or additional professional training (Michalik 1997:191): people whose qualifications were not directly applicable in Swedish society have been willing to retrain or to supplement the training they had received from Poland (Vigerson 1994:109). Secondly, many people had both education and experience which were almost directly transferable to the Swedish labor

market, e.g. physicians, other health care workers and scientists (Józefowicz 1996:91).

4.3 VITALITY

A classification of the group's vitality was proposed in a sociological study conducted by Chamarczuk (2003): (i) associations, (ii) cultural activities, (iii) participation in the Swedish academic life, (iv) the media, (v) web activities and (vi) involvement in the activities of the Catholic Church in Sweden. The classification is useful as a starting point for further investigations and open for refinement. For example, it does not explicitly cover the Polish Jews in Sweden, a group which seems to have been investigated in only one study that was conducted by Ilicki (1988). Some of the expressions of the vitality have, however, already been a subject of scholarly interest.

The activity of the Polish associations in Sweden during 1945-1995 has mainly been described by Michalik (1997) and Chmarczuk (2003), with a focus largely on two associations: the Polish Congress in Sweden (Polska Kongressen i Sverige) and the National Federation of the Polish Associations in Sweden (Riksförbundet Polska föreningar i Sverige). Both of these organizations act a representative of the Polish population in Sweden in that population's dealings with the Swedish authorities. The reason for the existence of two representative associations seem not to be fully clear from the literature reviewed for the present article.

The Polish migrants' cultural activities are briefly described both by Chamarczuk (2003) and by Uggla (1990), and it seems that this particular manifestation of the Polish group's vitality deserves more directed and deepened scholarly attention. With respect to the participation in the academic life, Nowakowski has published a couple of biographical lexicons (1992, 1996, 1997, 2003, and 2013). In the lexicons, he describes among others many academic careers of the Polish migrants.

Concerning the media and the web activities, the Polish migrants have had their own media in Sweden dealing with local affairs (Michalik 1997:199) before the communicative-technological revolution of the 2000s. For example in the 1980s a Polish section at the international section of the Swedish Radio was active and more or less ephemeral newspapers and magazines always existed. Development of the internet led to a wide and easy access to national Polish media and web pages from Poland. However, in the beginning of the 2000s a group of young enthusiasts of Polish origin in Stockholm established a

web page, PoloniaInfo, which "KEEPS YOU UP TO DATE WITH THE SWEDISH POLONIA".[5]

Finally, the Catholic religious dimension has always been present as a part of many Polish migrants' identity, and a manifestation of the vitality on a group level (cf. Kantor & Rokicki 1992:213). That the Roman Catholic denomination has been dominant is rather understandable given that almost 90% of Poland's population is Catholic (GUS, 2011). The Catholic Church in Sweden has religious activities both in Swedish and in numerous immigrant minority languages, amongst them Polish. The religious dimension has received some scholarly attention (see Chamarczuk 2003, Kurowski 1984, Uggla 1990).

5. CONCLUSION

The present overview shows that the Polish migrant group in Sweden is relatively well described until the transition period 1990, especially from the historical and biographical perspectives. However, some interesting issues, e.g. the Polish female migrants of the 1970s and the history of Polish Jews in Sweden still need to be addressed. The transition period and the post-accession period are not dealt with sufficiently in scholarly writings. This gap needs to be filled, least of all because Sweden, along with the UK and Ireland, became one of the most important destinations for Polish migrants after the 2004 enlargement of the European Union. Based on the data from Statistics Sweden, this wave of migrants has changed the demographic picture of the Polish migrant group. Additionally, it has been claimed that migrants from the sixth migration period have influenced the vitality of the whole group. Thus, the vitality of the group in its different appearances is also in need of further investigations from different scholarly perspectives.

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[5] *Polonia* is a term used in the Polish language denoting Polish people living abroad (cf. for example Dubisz 1990 for a further discussion of the term).

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APPENDIX

A BIBLIOGRAPHY ON POLISH MIGRANTS IN SWEDEN (1900-2012)

The present bibliography is based on scholarly publications which were found through LIBRIS, a national search service within the National Library of Sweden as well as with help from the National Library of Poland. The searches were also done amongst publications from the Swedish institutions conducting research on migration: CEIFO at Stockholm University, MIM/IMER at Malmö University and Tema Etnicitet/REMESO at Linköping University. The bibliography contains 77 titles from the period 1900 - 2012.

While significant efforts have been made this bibliography makes no claim of being comprehensive. Works of fiction, newspapers articles, non-print media, newsletters, and works on Polish language in Sweden have been excluded (see Lubińska, in preparation, for a synthesis of research on Polish as an immigrant minority language in Sweden). The bibliography is arranged alphabetically within sex categories: (I) *Articles, Selections and Working Papers,* (II) *Bibliographical Lexicons*, (III) *Books, Dissertations and Degree Projects*, (IV) *Conference Papers,* (V) *Publications by Andrzej Nils Uggla* and (VI) *SoS Reports* (The National Board of Health and Welfare Reports). Andrzej Nils Ugglas publications are a separate category because Uggla wrote the most significant amount of systematic historical papers on Polish immigration to Sweden, both scholarly and popular. An alphabetical list of cited periodicals and series is included at the end.

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