

Q: How and why has the nature of migration within Europe changed over the period 1989-2006?

Kai Jiao

Migration as according to International Passenger Survey (IPS quoted in Hatton 2004, 3) can be defined as those of people who are entering (or leaving) of a country for an intended period of time (at least longer a month). This essay is therefore set out to examine the changing nature of migration within Europe over the period of 1989 and 2006 and try to provide an answer for it. By doing so, I shall divide it into two groups: Eastern Europe and Western Europe and select one or two countries from each group for the purpose of case study. The countries I chose to represent were, Eastern Europe, Poland, Western Europe, UK and Spain. My conclusion will be based on my findings from each case. Let's start with Poland

Case Study Poland

Part I A General Trend of Migration in Poland

Over the past 200 years, many scholars (e.g Fihel, Iglicka etc) are seeing Poland as a country mainly for emigration. This was largely due to its unique location with poor history. Geographically speaking, Poland is located in the central Europe, east of Germany, north of Czech Republic and Slovakia and west of countries that have been traditionally viewed as Russian exclave. Thus Poland is a country that is surrounded by the great powers of West and East and therefore it has got involved in almost all the major European inter-conflicts in the past. Poland was widely believed to be a strong country in the 16th century, but series of political disorders had weakened the nation. (CIA Factbook 2007) In 1795, Poland had been partitioned by its neighbouring countries. Re-drawing the state borders caused the first significant waves of emigration followed by second and third waves during the two World Wars in the 20th century. (Iglicka 2000, 61) For the Second World War alone, it estimated by Pilch (quoted in Iglicka 2000, 62) that there were over five million people in Poland that had moved cross the countries.

However, during the communist era (1945-1989), the movement of people in Poland was largely restricted by the government and limited only within the boundaries of Eastern communist states such as Czechoslovakia with only exception for the period of 1956 and 1958 in which as many as 232,000 of ethnic Germans who lived in Poland after the Second World War had been permitted by the Polish authority to leave the country and granted citizenship of FRG (Federal Republic of Germany). (Fihel et al 2006, 19) According to the official statistics, over the forty years (1945-1989), the average annual emigration in Poland was ranged from 15,000 to 35,000 and immigration from other Eastern bloc were from 1,500 to 3,000. Therefore during this period of time, there were in total over 1 million people had moved out of the country with around 300,000 moved in. (Okolski quoted in Iglicka 2000, 62) But unofficially, it was believed that this number was much higher. According to Okolski (quoted in Fihel et al 2006, 19), that between 1980 and 1989, it estimated that FRG alone had received over 1 million long term Polish immigrants, many of them were illegal and un-registered. The socio-economic crisis in the East and labour shortage in the West could be the main reason behind this movement.

Surprisingly the collapse of the Communist regime in the late 1980s associated with the opening of the state boundaries between West and East at the beginning of 1990 did not accompany by the mass permanent emigration from Poland. During the most of 1990s, the actual figure told us that the numbers of outflow in Poland were in fact falling. For example, Okolski's (quoted in Iglicka 2000, 64) data indicated that between 1990 and 1997, the average annual emigration was actually 40 per cent below the same period of the 80s. Among them, there was a predominance of young and middle aged group of people (age ranged 15-44) and half of them were from the most industrialized regions such as Warsaw and most had little or low education background. In addition, we also noticed that there was a change in term of emigration behaviour in comparison with the 1980s. In 1980s, most of emigrants were leaving the country on the long term basis and many of them were actually seeking foreign citizenship (e.g the citizenship of FRG). However during the 1990s, we observed a sharp increase in the short term migration. (Iglicka 2000, 70) Many of them went abroad for only few months then returned to their home country. Lastly, Germany remained as a main destination for the Polish migrants followed by the USA with Canada in the third place. (Iglicka 2000, 65)

At the same time, the numbers of foreigners who were arriving in Poland had also risen. According to the official statistics, that between 1989 and 1999, there was a total of 88.6 million people visited Poland, most of them were from Germany and former Soviet Union countries. Amongst them, we have found, not surprisingly that most visitors from Germany were on the short term holiday basis while many of people who came from former Soviet Union countries were on the purpose of searching for the new life and used Poland as a transit country to the West. (Iglicka 2001, 7-8) Thus we could regard these people as migrants. But overall, within the same period of time, the number of immigrants were still far less than the number of emigrants. (Iglicka 2001, 63)

However, since 1998, according to various sources, we have witnessed a steady increase in the number of emigrants from Poland. (Fihel et al 2006, 37-40) The actual number was hard to tell since the available data sources have all got some sort of 'serious shortcomings.' (Fihel et al 2006, 39) But according to one of the sources (Labour Force Survey quoted in Fihel et al 2006, 38) that this number has reached to its peak in 2004, the year when Poland formally joint EU. In that year alone, there were approximately 280,000 Poles emigrated; this compares with 110,000 in 1998, the number was almost three times higher. Among them, there were 250,000 who went abroad on the purpose of searching for work, this compares to 1998, the number was also almost three times higher. Then in 2005, as it shows by the data, there was a slightly decrease in the numbers of emigrants to around 260,000, among them, the labour migrants had also reduced to approximately 230,000. We believed that this number would continue to fall in 2006, but the actual figure still remains much higher than what it used to be in the 90s. Overall, based on the figures we presented above, we discovered that majority of Polish migrants since 1998 was the labour based migrants who went abroad for the purpose of searching for work. It also indicated by the same source that more than half of those migrants were on the short term basis in comparison with just over 40% back in 1997. (Fihel et al 2006, 40) Among them, there was also a significant increase in term of the educational level in comparison with 1990s, for example, according to Fihel (et al 2006, 41) that the proportion of

Polish migrants who possess a scientific degree since 2000 had doubled. In term of destinations, Germany still accounts for the largest receiving country with gradual decrease in proportion. UK has replaced USA to become the second largest receiving country followed by Ireland replacing Canada (Fihel et al 2006, 38)

Since 1998, we also observed a decrease in the numbers of people who were coming to Poland. This was largely due to the introduction of new Aliens Law by the Polish authority in complying with the requirements made by the EU enlargement. (Iglicka 2001, 7) As a result, the number of citizens from the former Soviet Union countries has dropped and this number continues to fall since the year 2000 due to a more strict regulation imposed by the government.

Overall, we could conclude that Poland has always been a country for emigration rather than immigration. Since 1989, we have seen a steady increase in the numbers of short term migration. However, the actual numbers of emigration between 1989 and 1997 had fallen in comparison with the 1980s, but it picked up again after 1998 and reached its peak in 2004, the year Poland formally joined EU then we believe that this number had dropped again in the following two years. But it is still much higher than what it is used to be back in 90s.

Part II the Theoretical Explanations

As we have already seen above that Poland is a country with a long standing tradition of emigration. To understand why, we have to look at the theories on migration. This is the purpose of this section.

For any theoretical explanations, they must contain two main factors: push and pull factors. Push factors on the one hand explained the reason why people want to move and on the other hand, pull factors explained the reason why people have chosen to move to a particular destination.

The main push factor for Poland has changed significantly before the Second World War and after it. Before the war, this was largely due to the political reasons (re-drawing of Polish state borders caused the mass movement of people); after the war, particularly since 1989, this has been gradually but totally changed to the economic reasons. The figures we presented above shows that on an average, 80% of Polish migrants went abroad after 1989 on the purpose of searching for work. There are two main explanations for this point; both originated from the neo-classical economic theory. This theory (quoted in Fihel et al 2006, 4) assumed that each person acted as an independent variable and behaved in a rational way, therefore he or she would always trying to seek for the best location possible in order to maximum his or her utility and optimal usage of human capital that he or she possessed (in terms of pay for the levels of skills he or she has got). Therefore the differences between each country in terms of GDP per capital (here I refer to the wage rates) are the first main motivation for people to move abroad. We could confirm this by comparing and contrasting the GDP per capital between Poland and other major Western European countries for example UK. (See the table 1 below)

Table 1 The GDP per capital between Poland and UK 1996-2004 (GDP PPP, estimated)

	1996	2000	2004
UK	109.0	112.5	116.2
Poland	42.1	46.8	48.8

Source: EUROSTAT (quoted in Fihel et al 2006, 48)

From the above table (table 1), we could see that there is a large gap between Poland and UK in terms of GDP PPP, Poland is well behind UK. This means that UK workers are earning much higher wage rates than those of Polish workers. As a result, it makes UK an attractive place for the Polish migrants. Therefore, the potential for earning a higher salary in the real term becomes one of two push factors.

The second push factor is closely linked to the trends in the domestic job market as well as the job market abroad. Many sources (e.g Fihel et al 2006, 51) suggested that Poland had experienced a steadily decrease in the unemployment rates from early 1990s upon 1997, and this trend was then reversed. By 2004, the year we saw a biggest outflows from Poland to other countries, the unemployment rate reached its highest level to an estimate of 19% in whole country (see table 2), in some regions it was estimated could be as high as 30%. Then economy started to grow again in the following year. (Poland, CIA Factbook 2007) As a result, the unemployment rate had fallen to an estimated of 13.8% in 2006 (see table 2). Among those who unemployed, young and middle age with low education and had no or a little experience were suffered the most. (Youth Unemployment in Hungary and Poland, International Labour Organization) This explained why this group of people has always been the dominated force in migrating.

Another important factor is the pull factor; Pull factor decides where people want to move to. In case of Poland and anywhere where the economic reason is the main reason behind the movement of people, it is strongly related to the job market situation in the receiving countries. Here we use UK as a good example again in contrasting to Poland. In the recent years, UK (as our data showed above) has replaced USA to become the second largest receiving country for the Polish migrants. This was mainly because the economy in the UK is doing well in the last ten years. As table 1 above and 2 below shows that UK is enjoying a relatively high GDP PPP and at the same times a low unemployment rate. However, as we can see from the table 2 that in the past three years, there was a trend of increasing in the numbers of unemployed people in the UK while this number in Poland was dropping.

Table 2 the Unemployment Rate between Poland and UK between 2004 and 2006 (%)

	2004	2005	2006
UK	4.7	4.8	5.3
Poland	19.0	17.7	13.8

Source: OECD

An explanation for this could be on the one hand the economy in Poland was picking up, this has created more job opportunities (Poland, CIA Factbook 2007), and on the other hand, as more people are reported could not find a job in the UK, this has discouraged Polish people to move to UK. This explained to some extent a falling numbers of Polish migrants we recorded between 2004 and 2006 in the data above. Overall, we could conclude that the employment trends in Poland as well as in the receiving countries over the years were largely correspondent to its migration trends.

Finally, we need to explain why there is a trend of short term migration rather than long term in the case of Poland. The new economics of labour migration theory (quoted in Fihel et al 2006, 9) explained why. This theory argues that the society is made up by individuals; therefore everyone has acted within this social context. When a person wants to migrate, he or she is not only taking into account of the prospects in finding a job with good salary, but also would taking into account of the costs for migrating, here this theory refers to the social network, because everyone is living in an environment surrounded by the family and friends. Thus when a person who has got a strong social network, he or she would less likely to migrate permanently than those of who have not. As the result, in a situation when people have freedom to move around, we would find that people tend to stay where their social networks are since it takes long time to set up such network. This explains why we have seen a steady increase in the short term of Polish migration rather than long term since 1989.

Poland represents one aspect of migration in Europe. We are now going to exam another aspect of migration in Europe by using UK and Spain as our case study.

Case study UK & Spain

UK is so much different to what we have seen in Poland. Over the last two decades, according to various sources (e.g Hatton 2004 etc), UK has become a country mainly for receiving migrants. The statistics (quoted in Hatton 2004, 1) shows that since 1989 there was a steady increase in the numbers of net immigration from other countries by an estimate of more than 100 thousand per annum. The countries which on the top list for exporting of migrants to UK by numbers are located in the South Asia followed by Eastern Europe for example India and Poland. India, Bangladesh, Pakistan and Sri Lanka all together accounts for more than half of the total number of migrants.

Among them, most of the migrants could count as long term migrants with intention of staying for more than a year; many of them came to UK on a purpose of re-union with families. (ISP quoted in Hatton 2004, 4-6) This comparing with Polish migrants we have talked about earlier on is an interesting finding.

We could use the economics of labor migration theory which we used above to explain why. Between 1950s to early 1970s during the reconstruction period, UK had imported a large number of migrants from those countries mentioned above, mainly due to its domestic labor shortage. (Stalker 2002, 153) Most of these labor migrants were young single males at that time. Over the years, many of them were doing well. This has encouraged them to settle down in the UK permanently and as a result there was a strong need to bring in their own families which still remained at their home countries to the UK or to set up a new family by marrying to a girl back home and then bring over.

Apart from family re-unions, within the same period, we have also seen an increasing numbers of asylum seekers, illegal migrants and students. Many of them we could classify as economic migrants, and thereby we could use neo-classical economic theory to explain why (as same as case of Poland). Some of others were motivated by political, religious or educational reasons such as ethnic cleansing, political persecution etc.

The pull factors to attract those migrants to the UK are therefore UK's relatively stable political environment, good social protection system and education system etc.

Finally it is interesting to note that since 1989, we have recorded increasing numbers of British citizens who have moved abroad, the most popular destination in 1990s were USA, Canada or Australia. But with rising of the budget airlines in the late 90s, this trend has shifted to the countries within Europe, notably Spain. According to Tremlett (2006), over the last six years, Spain became the No.1 country in receiving the British migrants. In 2005 alone, there were 47,000 Britons immigrated to Spain (Tremlett 2006).

The push factors here could be Britain's poor weather condition and high living costs. In contrast, Spain has got a better climate with relatively lower living costs and high standard of living. Thus it makes Spain an attractive place for British migrants who were looking a better quality of life.

Conclusion

In conclusion, based on above case studies, we could divide the nature of migration within Europe between 1989 and 2006 into two groups: from East to West and from the West to East.

Firstly migrants from East to West were mainly due to the economic reasons: lower wage rates with higher unemployment rates in the East and higher Wage rates with lower unemployment rate in the West. Most of those migrants were short term based due to the freedom of movement and social network factors. We have proven this by looking into the case of Polish migrants to UK.

Secondly migrants from West to East were partly due to the economic reasons: lower living costs and partly due to other reasons: such as climate. We have confirmed this point by examining the migration trends from UK to Spain.

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