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## Migration attractiveness of small towns in the Małopolska province

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### MIGRATION ATTRACTIVENESS OF SMALL TOWNS IN THE MAŁOPOLSKA PROVINCE

**ABSTRACT.** The article presents changes in the average migration rate for 43 small towns of Malopolska from the time 1986-1988 before the economic transition period in Poland, 1995-1997 and 2002-2004. The problem of migration has been connected to the issue of housing, together with the development of the labour market. Other important factors influencing the migration attractiveness are geographical location in terms of the distance to the big urban Cracow agglomeration, effectiveness of local authorities and also the efficiency of the road network together with the development of infrastructure. Apart from the average migration rate for towns, the role of external migrations has been shown and the share of internal migration directions both in immigration and emigration has been presented.

**KEY WORDS:** small towns, migration, Malopolska Province, population growth.

The settlement system of Małopolska Province consists of 55 cities. Cracow with the population of 757.4 thousand inhabitants dominates this network. The second big city – Tarnów, with the population of 120 thousand, is six times smaller, and the next one, Nowy Sącz, belongs to the medium size cities. This disproportion in the magnitude of cities influences the level of economic growth of small towns in the province, which develop somehow in the shadow of Cracow. It has already been confirmed by the author's research published in the book „Small towns of the Małopolska Province....” (2004) that the migration attractiveness of small towns is one of the symptoms of the domination mentioned above. Geographical location of small towns especially in terms of the distance to the big urban Cracow agglomeration, rather than their natural site, is clearly a direct factor influencing the migration attractiveness. Indirect factors nowadays are housing, effectiveness of local authorities and also the efficiency of the road network together with the development of infrastructure.

Small towns with the number of inhabitants lower than 20 thousand clearly dominate the differentiated collection of all cities in the Małopolska Province

(Rajman, 2000-2001). They make over 78% of all towns and cities, which is by 4% more than the country's average, and are inhabited by more than the country's average of urban population. It can be said that the development chances for the Province will be strongly influenced by the condition of small towns.

All 43 small towns of the Małopolska Province due to the three years average migration rate from the time 1986-1988 before the economic transition period in Poland, 1995-1997 and 2002-2004 were examined (Tab.1). The average migration rate from the first period for all towns was 1.75‰. The highest level was characteristic of the medium sized cities. Among the group of small towns, however, it was rather low and it was 0.49‰. For 22 towns it was decreasing, but for 5 towns it exceeded a 10‰ growth (including towns of the former Bielsko-Bialskie Voivodeship such as Wadowice, Kęty, but also Brzesko and Dobczyce, where the housing was developed).

Table 1. Migration rate in small towns of the Małopolska Province

POSITIVE (ABOVE 0) AVERAGE MIGRATION RATE IN 2002-2004			NEGATIVE (BELOW 0) AVERAGE MIGRATION RATE IN 2002-2004		
positive in every period	negative in 1986-88	positive in 1986-88	negative in 1986-88	positive in 1986-88	negative in every period
	positive in 1995-97	positive in 1995-97	positive in 1995-97	negative in 1995-97	
Alwernia	Nowy Wiśnicz	Biecz	Bukowno	Brzesko	Brzeszcze
Dobczyce	Skała	Dąbrowa Tarnowska	Chełmek	Grybów	Rabka-Zdrój
Jordanów	Słomniki		Kalwaria Zebrzydowska	Kęty	Sucha Beskidzka
Mszana Dolna	Tuchów		Krzeszowice	Krynica-Zdrój	Trzebinia
Niepołomice	Wieliczka		Maków Podhalański	Libiąż	
	Zator		Muszyna	Limanowa	
Ciężkowice*			Piwniczna	Miechów	
Czchów*			Proszowice	Myślenice	
Ryglice*			Stary Sącz	Wadowice	
Świątyni Górne*			Sułkowice	Wolbrom	
			Szczawnica		
			Żabno		

Source: author's based on GUS Statistical Yearbooks from different years and Bank Danych Regionalnych, GUS, Warszawa.

The next period of 1995-1997 gave the decrease in the average migration rate in all of the cities of the Province (to 1.53‰, and more precisely to 0.88‰ without Krzeszowice where the administration changes were wrongly included in the statistic) on one hand, but on the other the average migration rate for small towns was higher than in the previous period (2.4‰ and 1.60‰ without

the mentioned Krzeszowice) what can be explained by some economic revival in the beginning of the 1990s, which was seen in some of the small towns when many individual economic units were established, which on its own could have influenced the decrease in economically based emigration.

The last examined period gave a farther decrease in the average migration rate for cities of the Małopolska Province to the value of -1.45%. The lowest value was characteristic for medium sized cities (they all have the negative rate) and for Tarnów. For 43 small towns the average migration rate from the period 2002-2004 is also negative and equals -0.8%. The most important emigration town is Krynica-Zdrój with the migration rate of -8.1%, and the negative trend has been seen there from the beginning of the 1990s. The main reason for the emigration from Krynica is the difficult situation of the Carpathian Spas and the lack of perspectives for jobs for young people. Part of the emigration from the towns has a tendency towards the rural communal area, because of the legal regulations and the limits associated with the housing, but also because of the high prices of land. The average migration rate for the rural part of the commune (gmina) is positive but in the last year it was negative. The similar situation is also characteristic for other spa towns (Szczawnica, Piwniczna, Rabka, and Muzyna). Polish Carpathian Spas are wrestling with many problems associated with collapsing of the labour market and unemployment, decapitalization of property, the need to modernize and develop the infrastructure, processes of privatisation and re-privatisation, all of which make the town growth unstable (Kwiatk-Sołtys, 2005). The positive signal for Szczawnica is the re-privatisation of the health resort, which has been taking years and is now successfully completed.

Another important problem, which is not included in the statistics, is the emigration abroad of young people from the examined areas. Fieldwork carried out in Krynica-Zdrój confirmed that such emigration associated with job searching is frequent and the most popular destination countries are France and Great Britain.

Other emigration areas are industrial towns located in the area of the former Katowice Voivodeship (the case of Trzebinia), Bielsko-Biała Voivodeship (e.g. Chełmek) or even Tarnów Voivodeship (e.g. Brzesko). Despite the stable growth of many of them e.g. Libiąż or Brzesko, those industrial towns thanks to their industrial historical development are still not an attractive place for settling down (Fig. 1).

15 from the 43 examined small towns were characterised by a positive migration rate (the average in 2002-2004). The highest is seen for Wieliczka and Niepołomice, towns neighbouring Krakow. The area of Wieliczka directly borders Cracow and in this part of the town many detached houses are being built. The positive migration rate is characteristic for not only other service towns (for example Mszana Dolna and Zator) but also for all new towns. Settlements which received their city rights or were given them back again in the last ten years

(Nowy Wiśnicz, Świątyniki Górne, Ciężkowice, Czchów, Ryglice) all have the positive migration rate nowadays. It can be assumed than, among other reasons, gaining the city rights has appeared to be an important factor of their mobilising.

The problem of migration can also be connected to the issue of housing. The scale of dependencies is of course not so clear as it used to be e.g. in the 1980s, when many blocks of flats were erected also in small towns and they were a very clear factor of immigration. It was present mainly in towns where at the same time the labour market developed. Nowadays, despite individual housing, which is strongly correlated to migration, only in 12 towns housing association buildings were built together with flats to be sold. The highest number of them per one thousand of inhabitants has been seen in Wieliczka, where the migration rate is also the highest, and by what it distances other towns. Also the average of new flats per inhabitants is the highest. Niepołomice is placed on the second position and is the second as far as the migration rate is concerned. The lowest number of flats was built in the unattractive Krynica Zdrój, in terms of migration, (0.4 flats per 1,000 inhabitants built during the period 2002-2004, which means only 14 flats at the time).

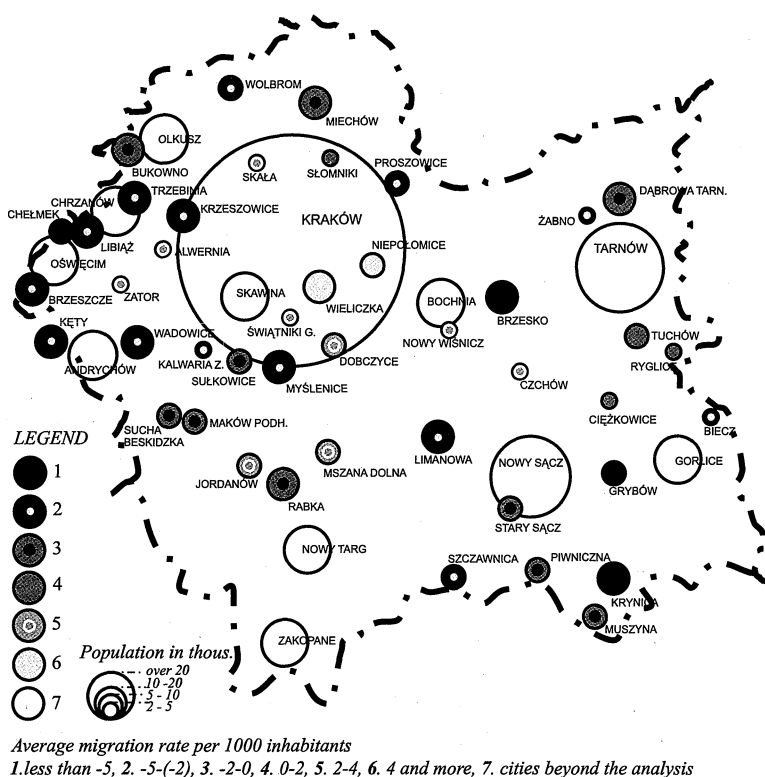


Fig. 1. Migration rate in small towns of the Małopolska Province between 2002-2004

The description showing the migration attractiveness of small towns of the Province is still very dynamic when a long period from 1986 till nowadays is taken under consideration. Some stabilisation, however, was already seen in the last period 2002-2004, already in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The most problematic situation seems to appear in the towns where in all periods under consideration emigration has been present. The situation of towns is here similar to the mentioned above. The emigration in at least two periods is characteristic for industrial towns of the western part of the Province (e.g. Brzeszcze and Trzebinia) and small towns in the southern part of the region (e.g. spa towns). A stable and positive situation is observed in small towns placed in the neighbourhood of Cracow (e.g. Niepołomice or Dobczyce).

Internal migrations have a decisive effect on the situation of small towns in terms of the overall migration. Immigration abroad is not of the statistical importance. The average external migration rate for all of the cities and for small towns is nowadays 0‰ and it varies for small towns between +0.6‰ (Ciężkowice) to -0.7‰ (Proszowice). If the percentage of external migration in immigration and emigration would be taken under consideration, some differentiation both in size of groups and among small towns could be seen. The share of external migration in immigration to small towns has grown from 0.3% in the 1980s to 2.5% and 2.1% nowadays and these shares are slightly smaller than for the whole group of cities. Between 2002 and 2004 this share was oscillating between 0% (for three towns) to 8.6% for Tuchów. The high percentage, other 5%, could be additionally seen in towns of the former Tarnów Voivodeship (Żabno and Dąbrowa Tarnowska). The differentiation of towns when external migrations in emigration are taken under consideration is even bigger but the average shares are on the similar level around 2% and vary between 0% for 11 towns to 11.1% for the already mentioned Dąbrowa Tarnowska and almost 7% for Żabno.

The share of internal migration directions both in immigration and emigration is becoming equal. In 1988 similarly to 1997 and 2000 the immigration from villages is predominant in all towns (it is 56.5% and 48.6%) in the emigration the situation has however changed. In 1988 on average the emigration to towns dominated (60%), but in 1997 and 2000 the higher value reached the emigration to the villages (54.7% and 50.1% respectively). It can be expected that the process of emigration to the rural areas also from small towns will be growing and growing which will probably be associated with the farther change in the economic situation of the country.

The analysis of the population growth in the periods under consideration shows that the main factor causing population growth, stagnation or even depopulation can be still associated with the birth rate, which makes the towns more differentiated, but similarly to the country's situation that birth rate is also de-

creasing (Długosz, 2004). It should be stressed here that even the differentiation of towns in varied types according to Webb is still clear; the towns are more and more similar to one another due to the decrease in values of both migrations and birth rates. Points, which represent individual towns, are closer and closer to the centre (to 0). This is a typical tendency, which is characteristic not only for small towns of Małopolska Province but also typical for all Polish cities (Szymańska, 2002).

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