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FOREIGNERS IN THE ZGORZELEC-GÖRLITZ BORDER URBAN COMPLEX

OBCOKRAJOWCY W PRZYGRANICZNYM ZESPOLE MIEJSKIM ZGORZELEC-GÖRLITZ

ABSTRACT: The article seeks to characterise changes in the number and structure of foreigners in the split border towns of Zgorzelec and Görlitz by the criterion of country of origin in the years 1993–2014 on the basis of statistical data obtained from the Town Offices, although for Zgorzelec the analysis only concerns the year 2014 because of the lack of data. The towns differ in the number and structure of foreigners, which is primarily due to changes in the permeability of the state borders and integration processes occurring in Europe, as well as the ever more intensive migration movement. Görlitz has a much higher proportion of foreigners in its population (5.4%) than Zgorzelec (0.5%), and they come here from more countries (in Görlitz foreigners come from 55 states, and in Zgorzelec from 20 states). The group predominating among foreigners is that of Poles (69.0% of the total). It seems that the present inflow of migrants from the Near East and Northern Africa will diversify the structure of foreigners by country of origin even more, and will change the proportions between the native German population and the number of foreigners living in the town.

KEY WORDS: number of foreigners, structure of foreigners, Polish-German borderland, Zgorzelec, Görlitz

Introduction

Located in the Polish-German borderland, Zgorzelec (31.5 thousand inhabitants in 2014) and Görlitz (54.2 thousand inhabitants in 2014) are examples of towns in which the proportion of foreigners in the population has been changing over time since the end of the Second World War, i.e., since the splitting of Görlitz by the state border into two independent urban organisms: Görlitz (Germany) and Zgorzelec (Poland). The shift of the state border westward in 1945 caused, among other things, a violent mass resettlement of the population in this border area. On 1 November 1945, there were still 2,300 Germans and 2,199 Poles in Zgorzelec, but from 1 July 1946 the number of inhabitants of German origin started to decline rapidly and in 1949 there were only 17

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Germans left there (Bena, 2005). The resettlement of Germans from areas incorporated into Poland, which began with the end of the war led to a steep rise in the number of population in Görlitz. In the years 1945–1950 it grew from 73,583 to 100,147, i.e., by 26,564 (or 36.1%). Such a great increase in the population forced the town authorities to direct the returning Germans to nearby localities in order to avoid the threat of famine. The effects did not take long to appear: from the early 1950s the population of the town started to decline systematically (Haslinger et al., 2010).

In Zgorzelec, in turn, at the end of April 1947, 56% of the inhabitants came from the Polish Eastern Lands, from the former voivodeships of Tarnopol, Vilnius, Lvov, Stanisławów and Volhynia, and the remaining 44% of its population were the former military and people moving from central and southern voivodeships. It is also worth mentioning that in the post-war years the town's population had a multinational structure, including Jews as well as Czechs, Romanians, Ruthenians and Hungarians. From 1949 there also appeared refugees from Greece and Macedonia here. According to various sources, their number ranged from 7 to 14 thousand (Dobrzyński, Fokt, 2003; Bena, 2005; Pfeiffer, Opilowska, 2005). In memory of those events, the revitalised street running along the Lusatian Nysa (Nisse) river has been renamed the Greek Boulevard (cf. Photo 1). At the start of the 1950s some inhabitants, mainly Greeks and Macedonians, began to emigrate, which caused a drop in the population number. Over the years 1950–1955 the town's population declined from 13,562 to 8,851. Some improvement



Photo 1. The Greek Boulevard in Zgorzelec

Source: Kulczyńska (2010).

was brought about by the repatriation of Poles from the USSR in 1957, but especially by the development in the years 1958–1960 of the Turoszów Industrial District, with Zgorzelec assuming the function of its housing, shopping and cultural backup. The large inflow of immigrants to Zgorzelec boosted its population from 15,880 in 1960 to 30,431 in 1975. It is also worth mentioning that in 1970 the two towns had the highest number of inhabitants, 116,047, but this figure meant 75.4% of the total population living on the German side and the remaining 24.6% on the Polish side. With time the distribution of the population on both sides of the Lusatian Nysa shifted in such a way that in 1990 Görlitz had twice as many inhabitants as Zgorzelec (66.7% and 33.3%, respectively).

The goal of this article is to characterise the number and structure of foreigners in the border towns of Zgorzelec and Görlitz as well as their pattern of change, mostly caused by migration. The information about the number and structure of foreigners by country of origin was obtained from the respective Town Offices. The figures concerning foreigners living in Görlitz refer to the years 1993–2014, and in the case of Zgorzelec, only to the year 2014. The absence of data for Zgorzelec for the last decade of the 20th century and the first one of the 21st one in its Town Office, in the statistical offices in Jelenia Góra and Wrocław, and in the Ministry of Digitisation, made it impossible to present changes in this field.

The peripherally located towns of Zgorzelec and Görlitz are like two dissimilar sisters (Gundlach, Matzke, 2014). They differ not only in the population number or area, but also in the level of socio-economic development. The economies of the two towns largely rest on services, especially on retail trade. When in the early 1990s the first large-lot shops were opened in Görlitz, in Zgorzelec, there appeared – especially popular in borderland towns – marketplaces that were the chief destinations of consumers from Germany. To this day this shopping tourism continues because of differences in the prices of products and services on the Polish and the German side. An important role in the development of Görlitz is also played by industry, which offers one-fourth of all jobs. In Zgorzelec, the establishment of a subzone in the Kamienna Góra Special Economic Zone has not improved its economic situation. In general, one can observe that the labour market in Görlitz is much more attractive and the economic situation more stable than in the neighbouring town of Zgorzelec.

In the Zgorzelec-Görlitz urban complex, the population dropped from 108,340 in 1990 to 85,955 in 2014. In that period the proportions of the inhabitants of the two towns differed. In 1990, the number of Zgorzelec inhabitants amounted to 36,103, which accounted for 33.3% of the total population of the urban complex, while Görlitz had 72,237 people (66.7%). By 2014 those proportions changed to 36.7% living in Zgorzelec (31,532 inhabitants) and 63.3% in Görlitz (54,423 inhabitants). Until 1994 the Zgorzelec population showed an upward tendency (its number having grown by 633 persons), and then it kept declining until 2009. In 2010, there was a slight increase in comparison with the previous year and then a drop again until 2014. In Görlitz the number of inhabitants kept falling until 2013, except in the years 1994, 1999 and 2014, when it grew slightly in relation to the previous year. Thus, both towns showed a decline

in the population over the study period, but in Görlitz the loss amounted to as many as 17,067 people (24.7%), while Zgorzelec had lost 3,825 (12.75%) (cf. Fig. 1).

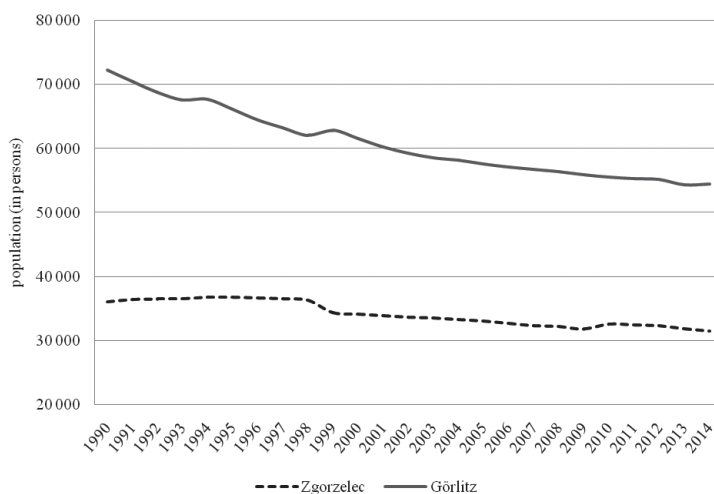


Fig. 1. Changes in the population number in the Zgorzelec-Görlitz border urban complex in the years 1990–2014

Source: Own compilation.

Such a great outflow of the population from Görlitz (and other East-German towns) was largely caused by mass emigration to the old *Länder*, especially after the unification of Germany in 1990, and by the breakdown of the economic structure of the former GDR, the result of which was a dramatic de-industrialisation process leading to high unemployment. With time the drop in the number of inhabitants caused the appearance of empty flats. In 1998, such flats constituted 32.9% in pre-1918 buildings, while on large-panel housing estates built in great numbers in the period of feasible socialism only 8.4% of the housing resources were vacant. Generally, the greatest proportion of vacant flats appeared in Saxony – as much as 16.8% (Pfeiffer et al., 2000: 18). With time, several programmes were implemented that intended to ‘rebuild’ towns in the eastern *Länder*, e.g., by reducing the excess of flats, or tearing down empty housing and revitalising a town’s entire districts, including housing areas. In this way Görlitz has now housing reserves that can be potential places of residence for immigrants.

2. Theoretical conceptions of the migration mechanism and the migration policy

The newly forming ethnographic map of Europe is an effect of the ever more massive and frequent movements of the population. In the opinion of Schlögel (2005: 123),

the goals of world-wide migration movements are not disputable, and the 'promised land' is in Europe and America. Today international migrations are largely motivated economically (migration for financial purposes), but can also be enforced, usually by an unstable political situation or a war in the country of origin. As Schlögel notes (2005: 103), "war is the mother of the great shifts of nations". The intensity of migration flows depends on the resultant of two groups of factors connected with the socio-economic situation (incomes, employment), viz. (a) push factors, or those pushing emigrants from their country of origin (e.g., famine, overpopulation, lack of work, intolerance, war, ecological and natural disasters), and (b) pull factors, or those pulling them to the country of destination (e.g., the possibility of finding work, better housing conditions, higher wages, the right for families to unite, safety of living, or the observance of human rights). Equally important factors determining migration flows are intervening obstacles, e.g., those following from cultural differences or distance in the geographical sense, which in some cases can be a slight obstacle easy to overcome, and in other cases can make people give up the idea of leaving the country (Lee, 1966; Sakson, 2008; Russell, 2012; Nowakowska, 2015).

Usually migration flows go from a country with a lower level of living to one with a higher one, and the EU countries are certainly regarded as the target area of immigration (Nakonieczna, 2007). On the basis of studies of the Migration Research Centre (Szulecka, Kaczmarczyk, 2015: 2), seven chief migration routes to the EU can be distinguished: (1) the Murmansk one (via Russia to Norway), (2) the East-European one (across the EU eastern border, e.g., via Poland), (3) the west-Balkan one (via the Balkans to Croatia, Slovenia and Hungary), (4) the East-Mediterranean one (by sea to the Greek islands, e.g., Lesbos), (5) the mid-Mediterranean one (by sea to Italy), (6) the west-Mediterranean (to the Spanish enclaves in Morocco, i.e., Ceuta and Melilla, or by sea to the European part of Spain), and (7) the west-African one (by sea to the Canary Islands). Because of the current unprecedented inflow of illegal immigrants, mainly from Syria, Afghanistan, Iraq and Pakistan, but also from European countries unaligned with the EU, like Kosovo, Albania, Serbia or Ukraine, the external EU borders are being tightened. Apart from legal solutions (the Treaty on European Union, the Dublin Convention, the Agreement with Turkey on migration), other tools to limit illegal immigration include an ever better equipped customs service as well as spatial barriers in the form of barbed-wire border fences, like the one on the Hungarian-Serbian border that started to be built in 2015. But as Schlögel observes (2005: 128), "even if it wanted to, Europe cannot make itself separated from global migration. Even the best of border-control systems will not be able to cope with the pressure and intelligence of the nomads." This author also notes that with time immigration can lead to the alleviation of problems facing Europe, like the ageing of societies, a shortage of experts, or the financing of social and pension systems.

Apart from migrations between the EU and the rest of the world, there are also migrations inside the EU, including those between its old and new members. The eastward enlargement of the EU, first in 2004, then in 2007 and 2013, has greatly increased the

scale of migration and diversified its directions. Undoubtedly, among the 28 Union countries it is Germany that has for years been one of the largest immigration destinations, not only in Europe, but also in the world, hence its society shows wide differences in terms of nationality (Szaniawska-Szwabe, 2009; Kwiecień, 2015; Nowakowska, 2015). Economists account for the attraction of Germany by the favourable balance between pull factors connected with the destination area and push factors connected with the area of origin (Bergfeld et al., 2015; Kościelniak, Matykowski, 2015). In turn, Poland, after its accession to the EU in 2004 and the Schengen zone in 2007, and after the gradual opening of the labour market by the EU states, is now experiencing an intensive outflow of workers abroad, mainly to Great Britain, Germany and Ireland, but also an inflow from the east, primarily from Ukraine (Nakonieczna, 2007). Poland had had to wait as long as seven years for a complete opening of the European labour markets, and the last countries to do so in 2011, prolonging the transition period to its maximum, were Germany and Austria as well as Switzerland, the last not belonging to the EU. The result was an increase in the emigration not only of qualified workers (e.g., construction workers, plumbers), but also those highly skilled in other branches (e.g., physicians) and university graduates. Hence filling the gap in the Polish labour market should take place via the immigration of workers from abroad, and most of those come from Ukraine.

An important question is also the cultural integration of immigrants and their integration into social security systems (Szaniawska-Szwabe, 2009). There are three approaches for immigrants to be admitted to the local community: (a) assimilation, or incorporation into society as a result of one-sided adaptation by giving up their linguistic, cultural and social distinctness, (b) integration, or a slower and gentler form of assimilation, and (c) a multi-cultural approach, or the ability to participate on an equal footing in all the domains of social life, with no need to give up their different cultures, religions and languages, but with respect for certain local key values (Castels, Miller, 2011). All those approaches have proved problematic. Therefore at the start of the 21st century we can observe a general 'integration crisis', manifesting itself, on the one hand, in unequal opportunities in access to social, educational or health-care systems, and on the other one – sometimes in no will to get assimilated to the extent that the receiving country might wish (Szaniawska-Szwabe, 2009).

Number and structure of foreigners by country of origin in Zgorzelec

The Zgorzelec population is practically homogeneous, because a mere 0.5% of them (154 persons) are of a different nationality. Foreigners living in the town come from three continents, mostly from Europe – 77.9% (cf. Fig. 2).

In 2014, foreigners living in Zgorzelec formed a heterogeneous group and came from 20 states. Ukrainians predominated, at 36.4% (56 persons), followed by Germans – 19.5% (30 persons) and Russians – 8.4% (13 persons). Together they accounted for

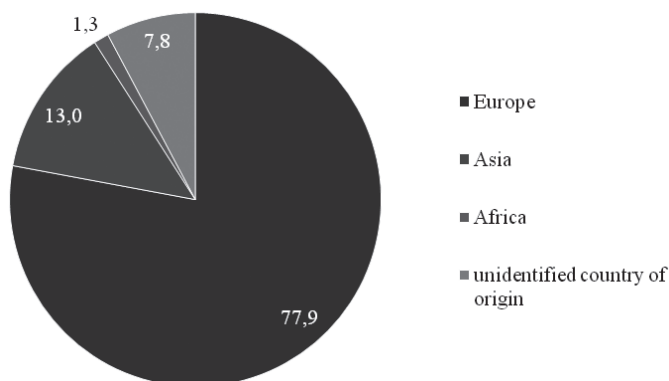


Fig. 2. Origin of foreigners in Zgorzelec in 2014 by continent (in %)

Source: Own compilation on the basis of data from the Zgorzelec Town Office.

64.3% of foreigners living in Zgorzelec in 2014. There were also some Armenians – 5.2% (8 persons), Japanese – 4.5% (7 persons), Greeks – 3.9% (6 persons), and Bulgarians – 2.6% (4 persons). The fewest foreigners came from such countries as China, the Czech Republic, Egypt, Slovakia, Vietnam, etc. (cf. Fig. 3).

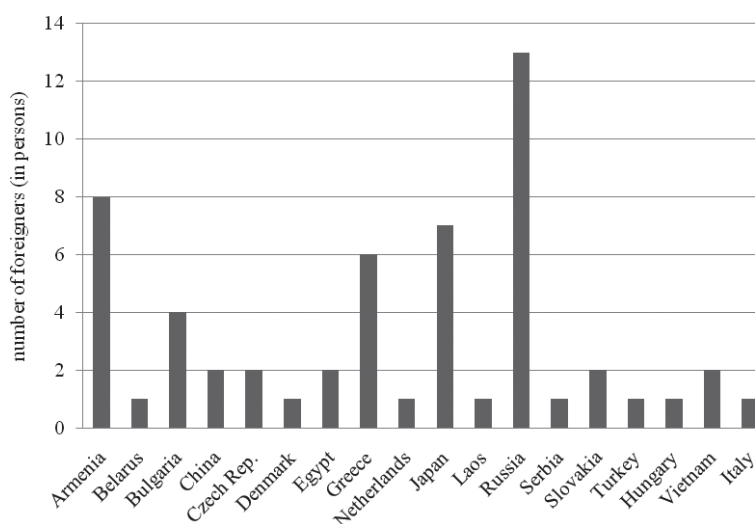


Fig. 3. Foreigners in Zgorzelec by country of origin in 2014 (without Ukraine and Germany)

Source: Own compilation on the basis of data from the Zgorzelec Town Office.

Of the foreigners living in Zgorzelec, as many as 104 (67.5% of their total number) came from countries neighbouring on Poland, with the exception of Lithuania (Fig. 4). Ukrainians were the largest group, accounting for more than a half of them (53.8%).

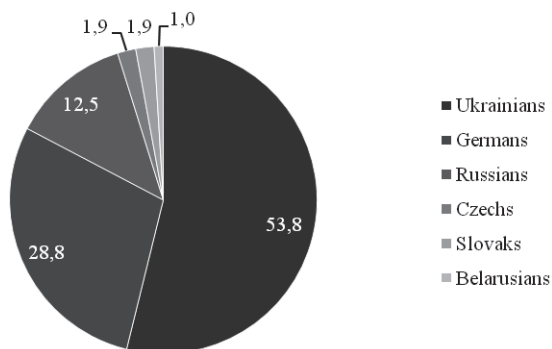


Fig. 4. Foreigners living in Zgorzelec in 2014 and coming from countries neighbouring on Poland (in %)

Source: Own compilation on the basis of data from the Zgorzelec Town Office.

Number and structure of foreigners by country of origin in Görlitz

The number of foreigners living in Görlitz in the years 1993–2014 changed: their proportion in the town's population grew from 0.9% (599 persons) in 1993 to 5.4% (2,927) in 2014 (Fig. 5). Although the number of foreigners increased from year to year, the general tendency of population change in the town was unfavourable: the number of Görlitz

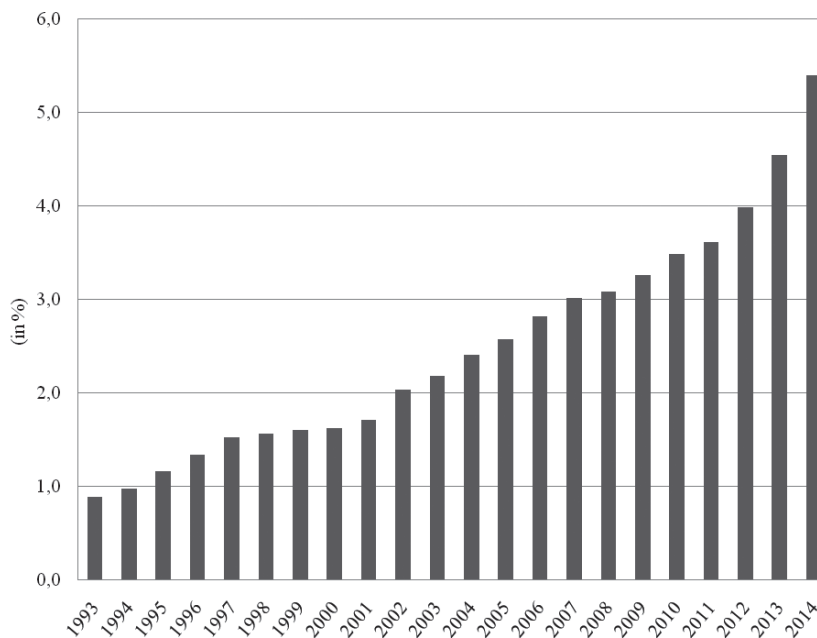


Fig. 5. Changes in the proportion of foreigners in the population of Görlitz in the years 1993–2014

Source: Own compilation on the basis of data from the Görlitz Town Office.

inhabitants declined from 67,647 in 1999 to 54,193 in 2014. Such a significant drop was mainly caused by the change in the political system in the German Democratic Republic (GDR; the election of 18 March 1990) and by political changes in Europe, primarily the unification of Germany on 3 October 1990 (Matykowski, Schaefer, 1996). After the unification, a substantial number of the town's inhabitants emigrated to western lands, an especially great outflow taking place in the 1990s. This allows stating that the rising proportion of foreigners in the town's population is the resultant of both, a decline in the number of the German population and an increase in that of foreigners.

The structure of foreigners in Görlitz by country of origin is highly diversified. In 1993, they came from 25 states, the largest group among them being Poles, who made up 39.7% of all foreigners, followed by Bulgarians, 10.9%, and Vietnamese, 9.7%. The share of the other groups ranged from 5.5% (Romanians) to 0.5% (Afghans, Albanians, Iranians, Japanese, Ukrainians, Belarusians, and stateless people). In 2014, the structure of foreigners by country of origin was even more diversified, with foreigners living in Görlitz coming from as many as 55 states. As in 1993, also in 2014, the largest group included Poles, whose number was decidedly higher than that of citizens of other states. Citizens of Polish origin accounted for 69.0% of all foreigners, and the share of the other groups varied from 2.6% (Russians and Syrians) to 0.1% (Algerians, Australians, Belgians, Danes, Iranians, Israelis, Cubans, Lithuanians, Moldavians, and persons of an unknown country of origin). As both the 1993 and 2014 studies show, the largest group of citizens was those of Polish origin. Their number showed an upward tendency in the examined period (Fig. 6).

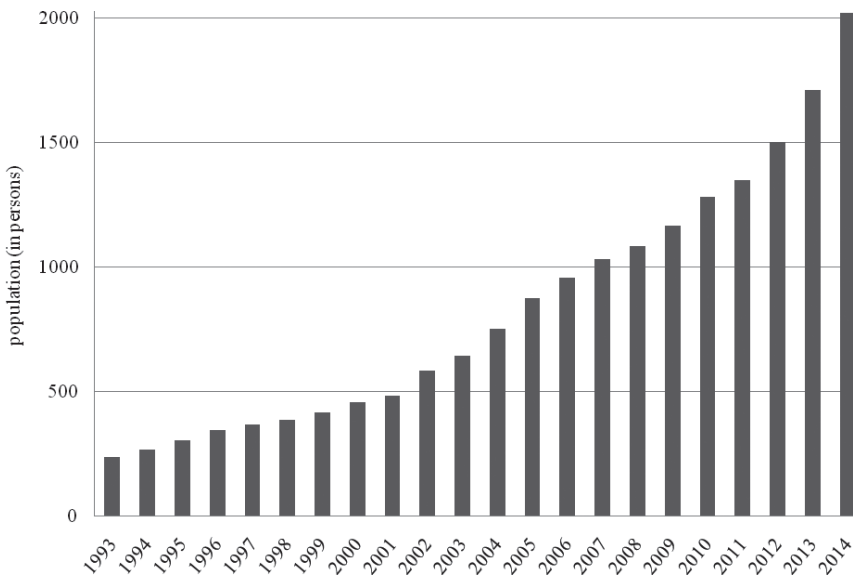


Fig. 6. Poles living in Görlitz

Source: Own compilation on the basis of data from the Görlitz Town Office.

The settlement of Poles, mostly from the Polish eastern border areas, in Germany, mostly in its western borderland, started already in the 1990s and intensified in the early 2000s. What seems to be the chief reason for the Polish citizens is the availability of flats and houses much cheaper than those in Poland. The local authorities saw this as a chance of improving the demographic structure because most settlers were Poles aged 25–45, i.e., young, still in the reproductive period, who, given a suitable social support, could boost the population number and rejuvenate the age structure in those areas (Kałucki, 2012). According to the report by the Public Affairs Institute, the ‘vanishing border’ is a trend that can cautiously be called a sort of re-Slavonisation of those areas (Łada, Segeš, Frelak, 2012).

An important date in Polish-German contacts was 1 May 2011 – an official opening of the labour market to citizens of eight new European Union states (those admitted to the EU structures in 2004) from East-Central Europe, including Poland. According to the report by the Public Affairs Institute, Poles’ interest in work abroad keeps declining, and this also holds for the German labour market. But there is an increase in the number of emigrants wanting to live in Germany, especially in the border region with its rich housing offer. The prices of flats or homes in the former GDR are often half of those in Poland (Sakson, 2008). As Wesołowska (2011) reports, the price of a 60-m² flat in a restored Görlitz tenement house is 70–100 thousand Zlotys, by 50–70 thousand Zlotys cheaper than in Zgorzelec (135 thousand Zlotys). The prices of flats for rent are somewhat different, usually higher than on the Polish side. The rent for a 59-m² flat in Görlitz is about 1,190 Zlotys. This should be supplemented with its maintenance costs, and in Germany those are among the highest in Europe (Gierak, Gadomska, 2012). Still, when signing a contract for a minimum of 18 months, lessees can have several discounts that are part of the so-called ‘welcome package’. It includes free rent for the first three months, free urban transport also for the first three months, the return of the cost of electrical energy for one month after a year, a free banking account for a year, etc. (Kuś, 2012). However, it should be noted that the rent price relations differ between Görlitz and Zgorzelec, and between Görlitz and Wrocław. From the point of view of a Pole living in Zgorzelec, the cost of renting a flat and its maintenance is relatively high, and for a Pole from Wrocław those prices are comparable, and often even lower.

Syrians are the next largest group of foreigners in Görlitz (together with Russians), but decidedly less numerous than Poles. For the first time they were included in the town’s statistics as foreigners in 2010, i.e., before the outbreak of the civil war in Syria (15 March 2011). In the years 2010–2013, the number of Syrian citizens in Görlitz ranged from 3 to 8 persons, but in 2014 its Town Office registered 75 Syrian citizens. And in 2015, the town had already as many as 369 inhabitants of Syrian origin, which made them the second largest group of foreigners here. Such a great rise is due to the rapid inflow of Syrians to Europe, mostly to Germany, caused primarily by the civil war going on in Syria, but also by a cheaper and relatively safer journey to the EU than in 2014, a Facebook effect, and economic reasons (a shorter route via Turkey-Greece than via Turkey-Italy). On 5 September 2015 Angela Merkel, the German Chancellor,

took a decision, consulted only with Austria, to open the border for refugees from Syria camping at a railway station in Budapest. In the opinion of her critics, this decision brought about a mass inflow of migrants from the Near East to Germany (Photo 1).



Photo 1. A forced stopover of refugees from Syria on their way to Western Europe – the Keleti railway station in Budapest (Hungary)

Source: Kulczyńska (1 Sept. 2015).

Also other groups of foreigners are well represented (Fig. 7). Among them are the Vietnamese, the number of whom varied over the study period. In the years 1993–1999, it grew from 58 (9.7% of all foreigners) to 116 (11.5%), and since 1999 it had dropped (with slight fluctuations) to 63 persons (2.2%) in 2014. The reason for such a large number of them in the town's population should be sought in the previous epoch, when numerous Vietnam citizens came to the GDR to study or work as contract workers on the basis of an agreement about brotherly cooperation in employment and qualifications. In 1989, there were 90 thousand foreigners in the GDR, including 60 thousand Vietnamese. Although after the unification of Germany in 1990 and the collapse of the East-German economy, the Bonn authorities concluded an agreement with the Hanoi government to end the contracts, offering in return for an earlier departure a one-time severance pay and an air ticket, most of them decided to stay (Pomianowski, 1995).

When analysing changes in the number of foreigners in Görlitz, it is worth having a look at other, equally large groups. In the years 1993–2014, there was an increase in the number of Russian and Turkish citizens; an increase until the mid-1990s and then a drop in the number of those from Greece and Italy, and a drop in the number of Bulgarians (Fig. 7).

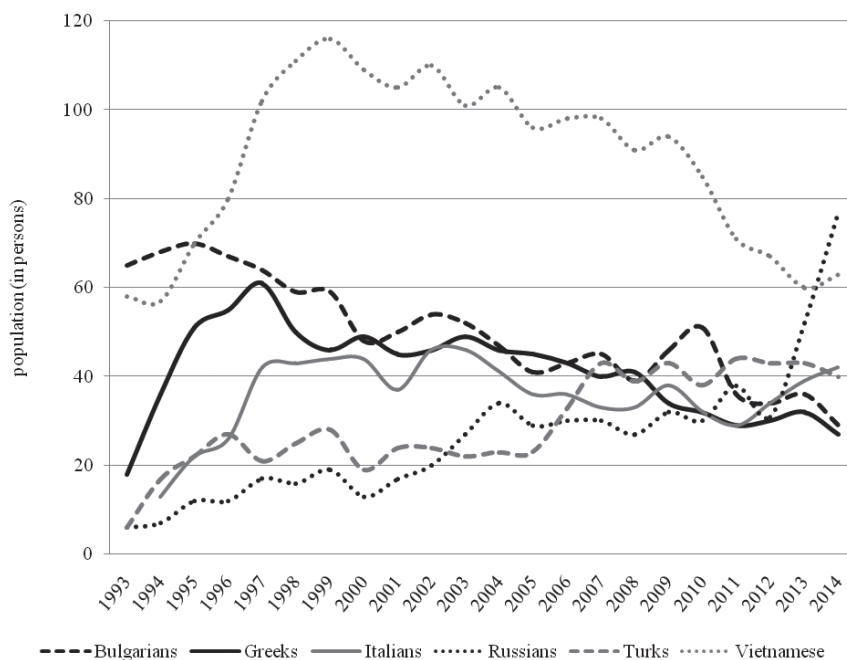


Fig. 7. Selected groups of foreigners living in Görlitz

Source: Own compilation on the basis of data from the Görlitz Town Office.

In terms of the origin of foreigners by continent, both at the start and end of the study period, a decided majority came from Europe, although the directions and intensity of their inflow had changed. In 1993, they usually came from the former East bloc countries, making up as much as 90.9%. Those arriving from outside Europe were mostly from Vietnam (58 persons), Cuba (7 persons) and the United States (7 persons). One may also add that in that year 0.5% of the Görlitz inhabitants were stateless people, or persons without the citizenship of any state (Fig. 8).

In 2014, the proportion of foreigners living in the town and coming from Europe amounted to as much as 88.8%. The remaining 11.2% were people from Asia, Africa, North America, South America, and Australia, as well as those of an unknown country of origin (Fig. 9). The most numerous group of citizens from outside Europe came from Asia (primarily south-eastern and southern Asia, and the Near East), 245 persons in all, or 75.6% of the total number of foreigners staying in Görlitz (without Europe). The

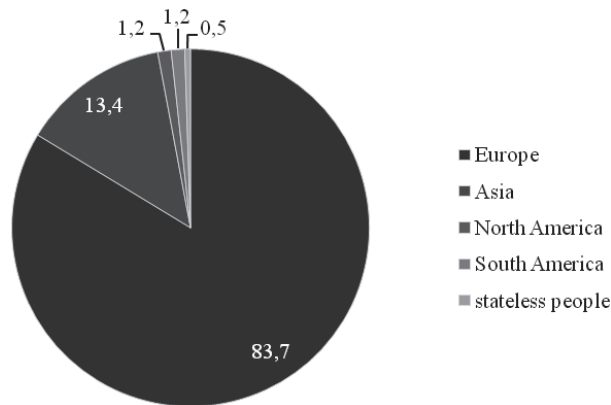


Fig. 8. Origin of foreigners in Görlitz by continent in 1993 (in %)

Source: Own compilation on the basis of data from the Görlitz Town Office.

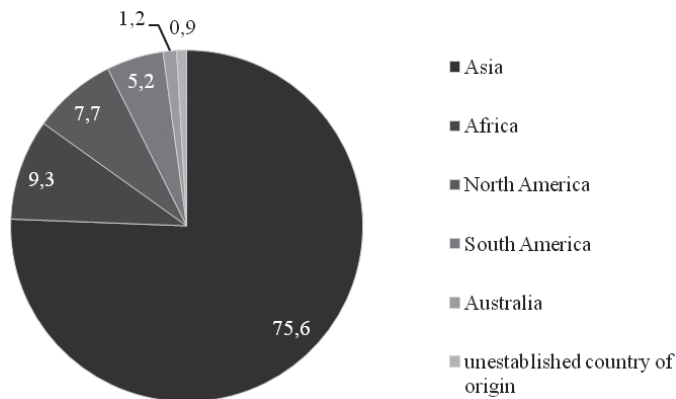


Fig. 9. Origin of foreigners in Görlitz by continent in 2014 (without Europe) (in %)

Source: Own compilation on the basis of data from the Görlitz Town Office.

chief places of origin were: Syria (75 persons), Vietnam (63), India (33), and Afghanistan (15). A much smaller group came from Africa (9.2%), and more precisely from the northern African states like Morocco (14 persons), Libya (7), Egypt (5), and Algeria (4).

In sum, there was an increase in the proportion of foreigners from Europe in Görlitz and a re-orientation in their countries of origin. At the start of the study period decidedly predominant among them were persons from the former Eastern bloc. Today the town's inhabitants include people from both, the former Eastern bloc and other parts of Europe: (a) from the West, e.g. Belgium, the Netherlands, and France, (b) from the South: Portugal, Spain, Italy and Greece, and (c) from Scandinavia: Denmark, Sweden and Finland. Still, it should be emphasised that Görlitz has become an attractive place to live primarily for Polish citizens.

Population migrations as the chief factor determining the nationality structure of the split towns

When analysing changes in the number of migrants in Zgorzelec and Görlitz per 1,000 inhabitants, the two towns can be seen to have completely different migration profiles (cf. Fig. 10). Over the study period, Zgorzelec showed a general decline in the proportion of newly registered persons from 14.8‰ in 1990 to 10.1‰ in 2014. Naturally, those figures underwent periodic fluctuations, but even so the inflow coefficients until the mid-1990s were higher than in the second decade of the 21st century, which means that at the start of the study period the inflow was higher than at its end. The highest immigration coefficient was recorded in Zgorzelec in 1991, at 19.5‰. The number of persons registering out of the town also showed a downward tendency. Although this coefficient also fluctuated over time, it declined slightly from 15.5‰ in 1990 to 14.9‰ in 2014. Still, there were two distinct sub-periods when the coefficient assumed the highest values: one after Poland's accession to the European structures, and the other after the opening of the German labour market to Poles.

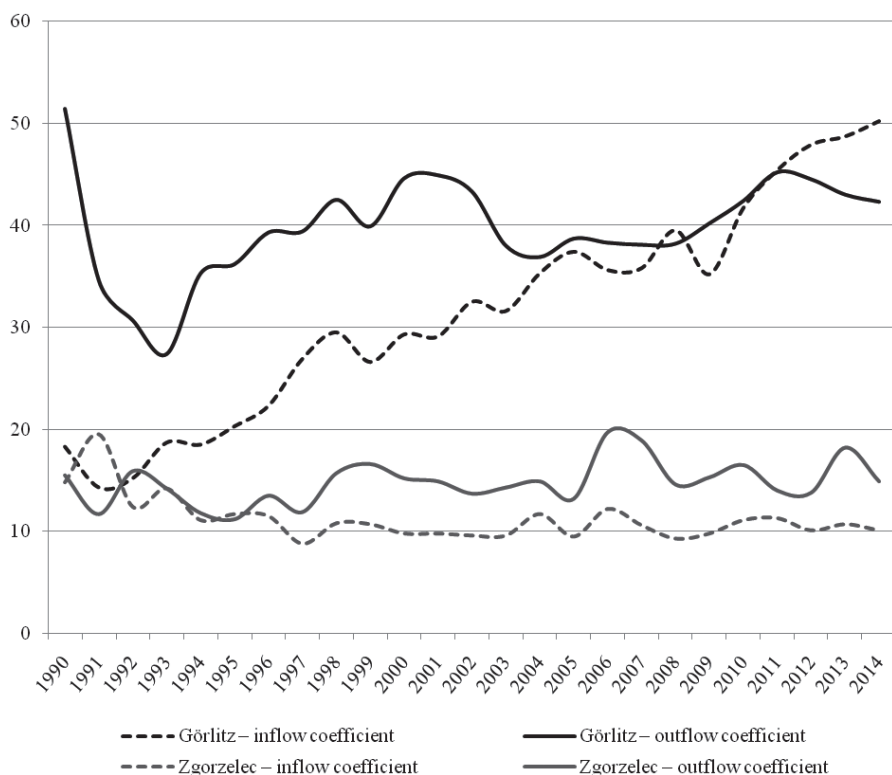


Fig. 10. Emigration and immigration in Zgorzelec and Görlitz in the years 1990–2014 (in ‰)

Source: Own compilation on the basis of Central Statistical Office data.

In Zgorzelec, the net migration figures varied (Fig. 11). At the start of the 1990s in-migrants outnumbered out-migrants, hence net migration coefficients were positive. In-migrants greatly outnumbered out-migrants in 1991, when the net migration was 7.8‰, the highest value recorded in the town over the study period. A slight predominance of persons immigrating over emigrating ones was also noted in 1995, when the net migration was 0.5‰. Since 1996 one can observe a steady predominance of the number of out-migrants over that of in-migrants, which shows Zgorzelec to experience an advancing migration loss. The greatest net migration outflow (−8.3‰) was registered here in 2007.

Görlitz has a different migration profile. Here the inflow coefficients kept growing from 18.3‰ in 1990 to 50.2‰ in 2014, while the number of out-migrants showed a downward tendency, even though those coefficients were very high. Over the years 1990–2014 the number of out-migrants dropped from 51.4‰ to 42.3‰ (cf. Fig. 10). Such high outflow figures in the 1990s are connected directly with the unification of Germany and the effects it has brought about.

When analysing changes recorded in Görlitz in the number of in- and out-migrants, it can be noted that the net migration coefficient is negative over most of the study period (Fig. 11). The net out-migration figure was especially high in the years 1990–1992, the highest, −33.1‰, being recorded in 1990, i.e., the year of the unification of Germany.

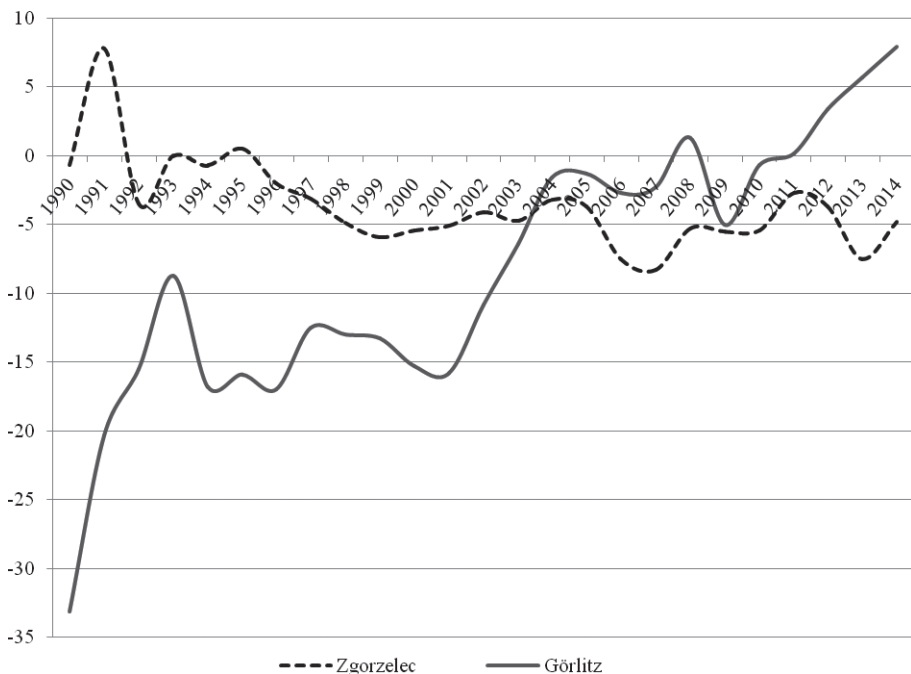


Fig. 11. Net migration in Zgorzelec and Görlitz in the years 1990–2014 (in ‰)

Source: Own compilation on the basis of Central Statistical Office and Statistisches Bundesamt data.

The high net out-migration was the resultant of low inflow coefficients and high outflow ones. In the successive years, the net migration was still negative, the coefficients falling from -16.8% in 1994 to -10.8% in 2002. It was only in 2008 that in-migrants slightly outnumbered out-migrants, which caused the net migration coefficient to be positive, at 1.3% . Since 2011 one has been able to observe an advancing increase in in-migration in Görlitz. The town recorded the highest net migration inflow, at 7.9% , in 2014.

Summing up and conclusions

When comparing the structure of foreigners by country of origin in the two towns, it can be observed to be more diversified in Görlitz than in Zgorzelec. Görlitz has a much higher proportion of foreigners in its population than Zgorzelec, and also their greater diversity in terms of the country of origin. There were 2,927 foreigners living in the town in 2014 (5.4% of the total population) coming from 55 countries, while Zgorzelec had 154 (0.5%) foreigners representing only 20 countries. Still, in each town there are groups of foreigners that predominate in terms of numbers, accounting for more than 30.0% of their total figure. In 2014, the largest group of foreigners living in Zgorzelec was that of Ukrainians, their proportion amounting to 36.4% , and in Görlitz Poles predominated among foreigners, accounting for as many as 69.0% of them.

In recent years, Europe can be said to have experienced a real immigration boom. The chief immigrant streams come from the Near East and Northern Africa, and turn primarily to highly advanced countries of Western Europe, like Germany, Austria or Sweden. It seems that it is in those states that a rapid change occurs in the structure of the population by country of origin. This problem has also appeared in Görlitz, where a steep year-to-year increase can recently be observed, especially in 2015, in the number of citizens from Syria (369 persons), Afghanistan (100), Morocco (37) and Libya (21), as well as Albania (99) and Kosovo (59). In sum, the number of foreigners registered in Görlitz in 2015 was 4,266, up from the previous year by as many as 1,339 persons (the dynamics index 145.7).

It seems that both the number and structure of foreigners by country of origin are determined primarily by the intensity of migration. Zgorzelec can be seen to have started with a net in-migration, which showed there to be an increase in the inflow of migrants. But since 1996 it has had a net out-migration and migration losses. Görlitz, in turn, has a different migration profile. Since 1990 the town has experienced a great migration loss of the population. The mass outflow of the population from Görlitz was an effect of the unification of Germany in 1990. People emigrated from the eastern to western German lands. It is only in the 21st century that the number of immigrants began to exceed that of emigrants, which has been caused to some extent by an inflow of Poles to German border towns, including Görlitz.

In the age of present-day intensive migrations from the Near East and Northern Africa, one can expect a further rise in the number of immigrants mostly in Western

Europe, offering refugees much more than the other European countries (e.g., better living conditions, social benefits). In 2015, close to 90% of the migrants landed in only three European Union countries: Germany, Austria and Sweden. Such a great disproportion in the distribution of refugees in the Union calls for changes intended to restrict this concentration. At the close of April and the start of May 2016, there appeared information in the media that those changes might include a reform of the Dublin Convention on asylum applications and a pecuniary punishment for countries refusing to admit refugees (a fine of 250 thousand euros per refugee). This last proposal seems to be greatly exaggerated; while it may lead to a seemingly even and just distribution of refugees in Europe because initially they would be directed also to less wealthy EU countries, with time most of them might attempt to move to the economically more advanced states of Western Europe anyway.

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OBCOKRAJOWCY W PRZYGRANICZNYM ZESPOLE MIEJSKIM ZGORZELEC-GÖRLITZ

ABSTRAKT: Celem artykułu jest charakterystyka zmian liczby i struktury obcokrajowców według kryterium kraju pochodzenia w podzielonych miastach granicznych Zgorzelec i Görlitz w latach 1993–2014 na podstawie danych statystycznych uzyskanych z Urzędów Miast, z tym że dla miasta Zgorzelec analiza – z uwagi na brak danych – dotyczy wyłącznie roku 2014. Miasta charakteryzują się różną liczbą i strukturą obcokrajowców kształtowaną przede wszystkim pod wpływem zmian stopnia przenikalności granic państwowych oraz procesów integracyjnych w Europie, jak również coraz intensywniejszych ruchów migracyjnych. Görlitz cechuje się dużo wyższym odsetkiem obcokrajowców w populacji miasta (5,4%) niż Zgorzelec (0,5%), a ponadto większym ich zróżnicowaniem według kraju pochodzenia (w Görlitz cudzoziemcy pochodzą z 55 państw, w Zgorzelcu – z 20 państw). Dominującą grupą wśród cudzoziemców są Polacy (69,0% ogółu obcokrajowców). Wydaje się, że trwający obecnie napływ migrantów z Bliskiego Wschodu oraz Północnej Afryki jeszcze bardziej różnicuje strukturę cudzoziemców według kraju pochodzenia, jak również zmieni proporcje między rodzimą ludnością niemiecką a liczbą obcokrajowców, zamieszkujących miasto.

SŁOWA KLUCZOWE: liczba obcokrajowców, struktura obcokrajowców, pogranicze polsko-niemieckie, Zgorzelec, Görlitz