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The formation of a new transnational labour market: Polish labour migration to Vienna in the 1990s

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Abstract

After the fall of the Iron Curtain Austria's position within the framework of Europe's migration league table shifted from a marginal one to that of an appealing "Gateway to the Golden West" with a strong attraction for migrants. So it is not surprising that the inflow of labour force from Poland, Slovakia, the Czech Republic and Hungary was growing during the 1990s. This has led to the formation of a new transnational labour market which includes the eastern regions of Austria and the countries of East-Central Europe. In 1981 5,911 Polish citizens legally lived and worked in Austria. In 1991 the figure was three times as high (18,321), including 8,932 Polish citizens who had taken Austrian citizenship in the meantime. The highest number of labour migrants from Poland (19,421 persons) was registered in 1995. In 1995-96 there was a clear decline in numbers. As the range of information about Polish migration to Austria provided by official census data was quite inadequate we made field research among Vienna's Polish community. The location chosen for the inquiry was the Polish church, one of the favoured meeting points of the Poles. A sample of 408 Poles were interviewed during a spring week in 1993. Naturally, the financial and personal resources of our Institute were too meagre to aspire to an overall study of Vienna's manifold 'Polonia'. So we tried to concentrate our analysis on some specific topics listed below: socio-demographic characteristics; educational background and qualifications level; labour market position (distribution of migrants among the sectors of the economy, the role of the brain drain and its tranformation into brain waste, illegal employment); position on the Viennese housing market; spatial distribution of the areas of origin in Poland. The main empirical results of the survey which needs stressing are: the selectivity of Polish immigration by socio-demographic criteria; the broad variety of family and household structures; the uneven spatial distribution of the areas of origin of Viennese immigrants; the overrepresentation of the large urban regions among migration origins; the importance of the mainly economic pull factors of the Austrian labour market; the growing importance of temporary migration; the high proportion of highly-qualified personnel among migrants; the broad range of occupations; a substantial degree of dequalification and brain waste; an upward occupational mobility which depends on the duration of stay in Vienna; significantly better housing conditions than those of Turkish or Balkanese guest-workers; the phenomenon of large-scale illegal employment.

The Formation of a New Transnational Labour Market: Polish Labour Migration to Vienna during the 1990s

1. Introduction

For over forty years, Austria was relegated to the perimeter of a geopolitical area. The fall of the Iron Curtain brought to an end this peripheral position. Austria's position within the framework of Europe's migration league table shifted from a marginal one to that of an appealing "Gateway to the Golden West" with a strong attraction for migrants.

Austria still marks a boundary within Europe. This boundary shows in the wide gap between the developed national economies of the West and the transitional economies of Eastern Europe, which are characterised by high unemployment and a lack of job prospects, especially for skilled workers. So it is not surprising that the inflow of labour from Poland, Slovakia, the Czech Republic and Hungary is growing. For the eastern parts of Austria in particular, this means, among other things, that older patterns of East-West migration have gained new prominence since 1989. The suction effect on workers of the reforming former Communist countries has led to the formation of a new transnational labour market which includes the eastern regions of Austria and the neighbouring countries to the east.

2. Polish migration to Austria during the 1980s and 1990s

Under the Communist regime Polish migrants usually came as political refugees and were more or less welcomed. Refugees recognised under the conditions of the Geneva Convention were granted residence and received financial support from the federal and provincial governments. In 1981-1982, after the imposition of martial law in Poland, between 120,000 and 150,000 Poles stayed on as 'tourists' in Austria, with only about 33,000 of them later applying for political asylum (Fassmann and Münz 1994: 152). In fact Austria has certainly not been the favourite destination of Polish refugees and labour migrants moving to Western Europe over the last two decades.[1] According to Central Statistical Office (GUS) data, only 4,3% (11,402 persons) of all permanent Polish migrants during the 1980s migrated to Austria (Grzegorzewska-Mischka 1995: 65, Table A2).

The 1980s were marked by considerable fluctuations in the numbers of Polish migrants[2] and applications for asylum by Polish people. Following the breakdown of the Communist regime, the number of asylum-seekers from Poland declined immediately. Since

1990 Polish citizens have no longer been accepted as political refugees by Austrian federal law. At the same time labour migration from Poland, legal or illegal, has increased as a new phenomenon on the Austrian labour market.

Since the fall of the Iron Curtain the situation on the Austrian labour market has changed fundamentally. Previously, the main regional sources of foreign labour in Austria were Turkey and ex-Yugoslavia, from where in the 1960s the migration of 'guest-workers' was initiated which produced a large supply of labour migrants that have been living in Austria for about 30 years. Of about 720,000 foreigners living in Austria in 1994, about two-thirds came from the south-east of Europe and from Turkey. The new political situation after 1989 produced a significant suction effect on workers from the reforming former communist countries. Growing numbers of job-seekers, especially the highly-skilled and educated, came to Austria, not only from Poland but also from the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Hungary. An enlargement of the recruitment areas of the Austrian labour market took place. East-West migration of foreign workers was one of the significant phenomena of that period.

Table 1: Polish population resident in Vienna 1988-1996

Year	Poles		Total foreign population		% of total foreign population
	absolute	%	absolute	%	
1988	8,867	100	160,170	100	5.5
1989	11,322	128	182,013	113	6.2
1990	13,260	150	206,003	128	6.4
1991	15,891	179	236,888	147	6.7
1992	17,255	195	260,354	162	6.6
1993	19,768	223	293,491	183	6.7
1994	19,537	220	297,687	185	6.6
1995	19,421	219	300.675	188	6.5
1996	18,360	207	284,309	175	6.5
1997	17,909	202	282,494	176	6.3

Index: 1988 = 100

Source: City of Vienna Statistics Office, ADV-Magistratsdirektion

The marked upward trend in Polish migration to Austria is reflected in official census data. In 1981 5,911 Polish citizens legally lived and worked in Austria. In 1991 the figure was three times as high (18,321), including 8,932 Polish citizens who had taken Austrian citizenship in the meantime. In 1995 10,5% (31,534 persons) of the foreign population came from the neighbouring countries in East Central Europe and Poland. This trend is now decreasing slightly. In 1996 the proportion was 10,4%, with 29,557 migrants from East Central European countries living and working in Austria.

Table 1 shows the dynamics of Polish immigration in the 1990s and at the same time the growing proportion of Poles within the foreign labour stock in Vienna. There was a marked upward trend in Polish migration from 1988 to 1993 which reached a peak in 1993. 1994 and 1995 showed a slight decrease and 1996 a sharp decrease (1,061 persons). Poles represented 6,5% of the total foreign population in both 1995 and 1996. The decrease after 1993 was undoubtedly caused by a new and more restrictive immigration law in Austria.

Another factor that needs stressing is that the numbers cited mirror only the official immigration. As illegal labour migration from Poland is of constant significance, the real extent of this migration can only be estimated. Estimates made for the Austrian Foreign Ministry and reported in the mass media put the proportion of foreigners living illegally in Austria at 15% to 20%. The proportion is, of course, significantly higher in Vienna and other urban centres than in the rest of the country.

3. Polish residents in Austria 1991 (census data)

The 1991 Austrian Census showed a resident population of 18,321 Polish citizens 59,9% of whom were male (10,978) and 40,1% female (7,343). In the census year the Poles thus represented only 3,5% of the total foreign population of 517,690 and 4% of the total foreign labour force living in Austria; they were, however, the most numerous group of immigrants from former Communist countries. 60,3% of the Polish citizens in Austria were living in Vienna.

The unbalanced age distribution is a typical feature of this initial stage of the migration flow. The younger age groups dominate with 61,5% of the Poles in the economically active age group between 20 and 40. Children under the age of 14 (2,8%) and older people in particular are significantly under-represented.

The Census showed a strong tendency towards a spatial concentration of the Polish immigration. Spatial concentrations of Poles exist both on a national scale and within urban

areas. As a result of the high absorption capacity of the urban labour market, the majority (65,5%) of the migrants whose mother tongue is Polish are concentrated in Vienna and about 5,5% in certain areas with smaller towns within the Vienna agglomeration (e.g. Baden, Mödling, Korneuburg, Viennese suburbs).

4. General outline of the research project

4.1. Data base and research question

Given the fast-growing importance of the integration of Polish labour migrants into the Austrian occupational system during the 1990s, the range of information provided by official census data was quite inadequate. The scarcity of appropriate information and a trend towards biased speculation called for an independent and scientific assessment of Polish migration to Austria. Naturally, our financial and personal resources were too meagre to aspire to an overall study of Vienna's manifold 'Polonia'. So we tried to concentrate our analysis on some specific topics.[3] The main points that stand out from the broad spectrum of findings are described below.

4.2 An outline of the empirical results of the survey

4.2.1 Socio-demographic features and household structures

Of particular interest is the selectivity of Polish immigration by socio-demographic criteria. Most migrants are young (almost 70% are under 40), male (76,5%) and married (Table 2). These findings are very similar to the Austrian census data of 1991. To a considerable extent young men act as 'pioneers' in the migration process.After being successful on the local labour and housing markets and after establishing an existence, they are often followed by their families. But in the Polish case the underrepresentation of women, which is usually a typical feature of migration flows in their initial phase, is the result of a statistical distortion. Polish observers (Korcelli 1994: 180; Grzegorzewska-Mischka 1995: 67; Kupiszewski 1993: 8) point out that women dominated the migrational outflow from Poland, at least until the early 1990s. The 'loss of Polish women' in Austrian data may well be a consequence of the high rate of illegal female employment in private households and frequent intermarriage with Austrian men.

The asymmetrical age structure of migrants, with the dominance of young adults, is another typical feature of labour migration flows. It must be emphasised that female migrants are even younger than men. 44,8% of Polish women are under the age of 30, compared with 38,8% of men (Table 2). The proportion of migrants over the age of 50 is very small, and

most of them are women. This strengthens the suspicion that those deciding to migrate are mostly persons who can easily be integrated in the local occupational system.

Table 2: Age and gender structure of Polish migrants

	Men		Women		Total	
Age	absolute	%	absolute	%	absolute	%
19-25	72	23.1	23	24.0	95	23.3
26-30	49	15.7	20	20.8	69	16.9
31-35	57	18.3	11	11.5	68	16.6
36-40	47	15.1	6	6.3	53	13.0
41-45	46	14.7	17	17.7	63	15.4
46-50	22	7.0	6	6.2	28	6.9
51-55	10	3.2	6	6.2	16	3.9
over 55	5	1.6	3	3.1	8	2.0
Unknown	4	1.3	4	4.2	8	2.0
Total	312	100.0	96	100.0	408	100.0

Source: Authors' survey data

Table 3 shows that the majority (57,2%) of Poles within the sample came to Austria between 1991 and 1993, with about 34% migrating during the period from 1986 to 1990. Only very few made the decision to migrate during an earlier phase of Polish East-West migration. This structure may be a statistical distortion inherent in the location where the survey was carried out. The Polish church and other meeting places of the Polish community are of particular importance for recent migrants, whereas a longer period of stay abroad favours the establishment of more individual and informal social networks.

Although the majority of Poles came to Austria as more or less 'single' migrants, there exists a broad variety of household structures and relation types between the migrants' households in Vienna and related households in Poland. In the case of migration, a transformation of the migrants' households is the consequence. To the extent that households 'split' within the migration context, the following types need to be distinguished: single migrants with no household members left in Poland, single migrants with spouse and/or children living in Poland; migration of nuclear families; migration of complete households with no family members left behind.

The different types of family-splitting represent successive phases of the migration process. Single migrants form the majority, with many preferring a 'life in two societies'

(Lichtenberger 1984: 413) and family relationships in both Poland and Austria. Only one out of ten immigrants has brought his whole family to Vienna.

Table 3: Polish immigration inflow by time of arrival and gender

Year of arrival	Men		Women		Total	
	absolute	%	absolute	%	absolute	%
until 1975	2	0.7	1	1.1	3	0.8
1976-80	7	2.4	6	6.7	13	3.4
1981-85	21	7.2	8	8.9	29	7.6
1986-90	99	33.8	20	22.2	119	31.1
1991-93	164	56.0	55	61.1	219	57.2
Total	293	100.0	90	100.0	383	100.0

Source: Authors' survey data

The extent of family-splitting is to a large extent determined by the intended duration of stay abroad. Labour migrants who intend only short-term stays for rapid financial gain usually leave their families behind. The longer the period of stay in Austria, the more often the family moves to Vienna. But it is not unusual and even economically sensible for families of long-term migrants to maintain their place of residence in Poland. Spending their earnings in Poland allows a migrant's household a much higher standard of living than would be possible if the whole family moved to Austria.

4.2.2 Level of qualification and occupational structures

One main characteristic of the Polish migration is the high proportion of highly-qualified personnel. Table 4 shows that 11,4% of the migrants are college or university graduates, 49,1% have the final diploma of a secondary school and about one third have completed some kind of professional school. A very small proportion (5,4%) have basic education only. Among female migrants the high proportion of highly-skilled stands out. About 18% of the women are university graduates and more than 60% secondary school graduates. In contrast the proportion of graduates among male Poles is 9,4%, with about 45% having completed secondary school successfully. In our sample the men are less skilled workers than the women. Men have more often served an apprenticeship (40,6%) compared with 12,6% of the women. The better-educated are significantly more interested in long-term or even permanent migration. 43,4% of the migrants who have served an apprenticeship and about 48% of the university graduates want to work in Vienna for as long as possible, until

retirement even. In contrast, about one half of the immigrants with only basic primary education prefer short-term stays of no more than three years.

Table 4: Polish migrants by level of education and gender

Level of education	Men		Women		Total	
	absolute	%	absolute	%	absolute	%
Primary school	14	4.5	8	8.4	22	5.4
Vocational education	126	40.6	12	12.6	138	34.1
Secondary school	141	45.5	58	61.1	199	49.1
University degree	29	9.4	17	17.9	46	11.4
Total	310	100.0	95	100.0	405	100.0

Source: Authors' survey data

Our own data confirm Polish studies (Okolski 1994b) as there was a remarkable decrease in the proportion of university graduates. This was only one fifth as high from 1991 to 1993 as it was in case of Poles arriving between 1975 and 1980. After 1991 a slight reduction in the proportion of secondary school graduates was accompanied by a simultaneous rise in the group of migrants with only basic education. In contrast, during the same period the influx of skilled workers with vocational education increased considerably. Their proportion rose from 15,6% among 1975-1985 migrants to about 39% in the case of Poles arriving between 1991 and 1993 (see Table 5).

Table 5: Changes in educational structure, 1975-93

Level of education	1975-85		1986-90		1991-93	
	absolute	%	absolute	%	absolute	%
Primary school	3	6.6	5	4.2	13	6.0
Vocational education	7	15.6	31	26.3	84	38.7
Secondary school	21	46.7	66	55.9	106	48.8
University degree	14	31.1	16	13.6	14	6.5
Total	45	100.0	118	100.0	217	100.0

Source: Authors' survey data

The causes of this development are probably manifold. A lack of skilled workers on the Viennese labour market during the first half of the 1990s produced a high absorption capacity for this kind of labour force. This coincided with a process of

downscaling trained workers in the Polish manufacturing sector and a high rate of unemployment in Poland.

One fact must not be neglected: job-seekers who have served an apprenticeship are more likely to gain a foothold in a job appropriate to their educational background. Among migrants who possess the leaving diploma of a higher-level school or university, a substantial degree of dequalification occurs more often. The transferability of knowledge also plays an important role. Teachers, lawyers and graduates in the Arts are subject to a higher degree of dequalification than technicians or computer specialists.

The Polish respondents in our sample have trained for a broad range of occupations with the stress on production-related jobs (37%) in manufacturing industry. The building trade (17,2%) and technical jobs (16,7%) are also well represented. In the case of male immigrants, the range of occupations practised in Poland shows a concentration on manufacturing, the building trade and technical professions. Women are more diversely represented in many different occupational groups but the high proportion (18,4%) of technicians is surprising. Before moving to Austria, one quarter worked in administration and about 13% as technicians with high proportions also active in education and science, the health service and manufacturing. There are no marked differences between the range of occupations trained for and the jobs practised in Poland. Worthy of mention is some shifting of occupations with administration, trade and transport gaining in importance compared with a decline in production and in the 'technician' categories. This process needs to be seen in the light of the increasing importance of the services sector in the developed economies all over Europe. The worsening job situation in Poland may well be one of the main reasons for emigration but it cannot be proved by our data.

The actual chances of successfully gaining a foothold on the Viennese labour market vary not only with gender but also with the immigrants' previous educational background and work experience. A comparison between the occupations followed in Poland and the immigrants' representation in different occupational groups and sectors of the Viennese labour market clearly shows a certain degree of brain waste (Table 6). The over-representation of women in the services sector (e.g. domestic services and cleaning jobs) is striking. With a proportion of 58% it is not only six times higher than in Poland but also an indicator of the extent of dequalification and deskilling. Male migrants are well represented in the construction business (38,1%), in manufacturing (26,2%) and in casual jobs. In job-searching the local Polish community plays an important role. About 40% of the immigrants (and 57% of women) got their present job with the support of the Polish network in Vienna.

Table 6: Occupation trained for - occupation in Poland - occupation in Vienna

	Occupation trained for		Occupation in Poland		Occupation in Vienna	
Field of activity	men	women	men	women	men	women
Agriculture/forestry	2.9	2.3	3.0	2.4	3.1	-
Manufacturing	41.1	11.5	35.4	11.8	26.2	4.5
Construction	22.7	-	21.9	-	38.1	1.1
Trade and transport	7.8	4.6	13.5	4.7	6.5	2.3
Services	1.0	10.3	1.0	9.4	4.1	58.0
Technicians	16.8	18.4	12.5	12.9	5.1	2.3
Administration	1.0	16.1	4.4	24.7	1.4	10.2
Public health	1.3	9.2	1.3	10.6	1.0	6.8
Education and research	1.3	12.6	1.3	11.8	1.7	9.1
Other jobs or retired	4.2	14.9	4.7	11.8	12.9	5.7
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Authors' survey data

There are clear discrepancies between the high level of formal qualification among the Polish labour migrants and the largely limited range of jobs which are accessible to them. The Viennese labour market, segmented on ethnic lines, requires migrants to adapt to the existing demand. There is a fixation on a comparatively few positions in the labour market. Some segments are closed to non-Austrians to whom only the insecure jobs of the secondary segment of the labour market are accessible (Fassmann, Kohlbacher and Reeger 1993: 33). Differences in qualification are thus largely ignored by the receiving labour market. This more often concerns female migrants. A lot of the women in our sample expressed their willingness to accept any kind of job to gain a foothold on the Austrian labour market.

A systematic analysis showed that more than one third (36%) of the Poles were subjected to a substantial degree of dequalification. 32% were successful in finding a job more or less equivalent to their educational background. Successful integration into the Viennese labour market requires migrants to adapt to the demand which exists largely in the building trade and services sectors, particularly on the level of labouring and unskilled jobs.

Table 7: Duration of stay and occupation in Vienna

Field of activity	1975-85		1986-90		1991-93	
	absolute	%	absolute	%	absolute	%
Agriculture/forestry	1	2.3	3	2.6	5	2.5
Manufacturing	9	20.9	38	33.3	61	30.0
Construction	7	16.3	31	27.2	33	16.3
Trade and transport	3	7.0	11	9.6	7	3.4
Services	6	14.0	10	8.8	45	22.2
Technicians	5	11.6	5	4.4	7	3.4
Administration	6	14.0	5	4.4	-	-
Public health	1	2.3	1	0.9	7	3.4
Education and research	3	7.0	4	3.5	6	3.0
Other jobs or retired	2	4.6	6	5.3	32	15.8
Total	43	100.0	114	100.0	203	100.0

Source: Authors' own survey data

The duration of the migrants‘ stay in Austria plays an important role in determining the upward occupational mobility of the Poles and in reducing qualitative mismatches between a skilled labour force and the unskilled jobs at their disposal (Table 7). The longer the immigrants stay in Vienna the better their chances of obtaining legal employment in a sector appropriate to their educational background. Sharp deskilling is usually characteristic of the initial phase of migration and of short-term migrants generally. Long-term migrants increasingly become employed as technicians, in education and public health. A comparison of male migrants who arrived between 1991 and 1993 with those arriving between 1981 and 1985 shows a decrease in employment in the building trade from 40,4% to 28,6%. After some years of residence an increasing number of Polish women leave the services sector and gain a foothold in white-collar jobs in administration and public health. It is probably the individual success in finding a job appropriate to one's educational level that determines the decision whether to stay in Vienna permanently or to return to Poland.

Our data confirm the impression that sharp deskilling and dequalification will, in the long run, only be accepted by very few Poles. In comparing the labour market position of

Polish migrants with that of other groups of immigrants (e.g. guest-workers from Turkey and the Balkans), it has to be stated that in the Polish case the concentration process at lower levels of the occupational hierarchy is less marked. The typical features of Polish labour migration are to be found in a wide range of qualifications and a high proportion of the highly-educated segment among the people involved. Once in Vienna, the majority succeed after a relatively short time in getting jobs more or less appropriate for their skills. Pronounced deskilling is usually accepted only by short-term migrants.

4.2.3 Causes of emigration and duration of stay

One finding of this study which needs stressing is the importance of the mainly economic pull factors of the Austrian labour market. Higher wages, better working conditions and career chances, together with better further education chances, are the motives most often cited. According to our sample, push factors like unemployment, the political situation and unfavourable environmental conditions in Poland are clearly of secondary importance. For more than one half (53,8%) of the immigrants, the attractiveness of higher wages determined their decision to come to Vienna. 39,7% were unemployed before moving and therefore tried to improve their situation through migration. The chance for dislocated families to reunite and political motives are of negligible importance.

The majority of the immigrants (57,2%) moved to Vienna between 1991 and 1993 (Table 3). This raises questions concerning the intended duration of their stay in Austria and of migrants' future prospects. The expectations are largely dependent on the planned duration of stay in Austria and are sometimes not very optimistic. It is surprising that very few migrants want to stay abroad till the age of retirement.

One feature of migration in the 1990s is the growth in temporary migration. To a large degree this is determined by the field of activities in which the Poles are working. There is an involuntary seasonality in employment in the construction industry, in the agricultural sector and tourism. Foreign workers from Poland have to be very flexible. They are on the market when needed and they travel back when the demand for work decreases. Concrete ideas concerning the duration of their stay abroad are largely dependent on a successful realisation of the migrants' aspirations. Within the context of this decision-finding process, successful integration within the local labour and housing markets plays an important role - as do family constellations. In the case of unmarried single migrants, concrete ideas concerning the intended duration of their stay are often lacking. Where the migrant's family has already moved to Vienna a longer stay there is likely. But even among married Poles the majority

have left their spouses and children in Poland. 93% of migrants intending to stay no more than three years have left their families behind. Of the single migrants who have left their families in Poland, about 84% do not intend to move their spouses to Vienna. What is remarkable is the fact that even the majority of permanent migrants do not intend to reunite their families. Only one third of the migrants wanting to stay till the age of retirement and 42,1% of those planning a life-long stay want their spouses to move to Vienna too. The extremely high proportion of long-term family-splitting indicates a strong tendency towards "a life in two societies" among Polish labour migrants and is probably to be explained by economic reasons. To some extent these migrants do not live in but simply between two worlds. In the long run this leads to their dividing their place of residence permanently, but it also enables the family in Poland to lead an economically comfortable life.

4.2.4 The areas of origin in Poland

A characteristic feature of Polish labour migration of the 1980s was the concentration of almost 50% of the migratory outflow in four 'woiwodships' (Warsaw, Gdańsk, Katowice and Opole) which comprise 23,5% of the total Polish population (Okolski 1994b: 52).

The results of our survey confirm the uneven spatial distribution of the areas of origin of Viennese immigrants. As regards the regional sources of Polish migration, our data largely confirm the Polish statistics (Korcelli 1994: 182; Kupiszewski 1993: 6) on permanent official migrants. The majority of the migrants in our sample left from Southern and South-East Poland, especially from the 'woiwodships' bordering Slovakia and the Czech Republic. These regions are partly identical with the Galicia of the Austro-Hungarian Empire period. 66% of all migrants emigrated from just eight 'woiwodships'. Of outstanding importance are the administrative units of Krakow and Nowy Sacz. A further migrational flow of considerable size came from the administrative units of Bielsko Biala, Katowice and Kielce and other neighbouring 'woiwodships' in the south and south-east of Poland. According to our sample, the Upper Silesian conurbation plays an outstanding role as an area of origin for the Polish labour force in Austria.

The causes of this are manifold. Firstly, this is a densely-populated urban area where the crisis in the traditional mining and heavy industries has caused a heavy loss of jobs and high unemployment. An exodus of highly-qualified labour was the consequence. The unbalanced structure of the regional labour markets made emigration the only realistic alternative for the unemployed and often desperate. In addition, the relative proximity of these regions to Austria also plays an important role. As short-term pendular migration is a very

popular way of earning a living among Poles, shorter distances make commuting less time-consuming and more convenient. Commuters can thus maintain the social contacts with their families in Poland and the risks and costs of migration are reduced.

Another spatial feature of Polish migration to Austria is the overrepresentation of the large urban regions among migration origins. Most of the immigrants come from urban centres while rural areas exhibit far less willingness to migrate. Before migration, almost 60% of the immigrants lived in the capital of their 'woiwodship'. Only very few of our respondents lived in smaller towns with a population of under 10,000 or in rural areas. Likely causes of this phenomenon are a higher level of education and a marked readiness for geographical and occupational mobility among the urban population.

5. The phenomenon of irregular labour migration from Poland

No precise data on irregular labour migration from Poland to Austria are available so one can only speculate about the magnitude of this flow. Austrian Foreign Ministry estimates put the proportion of foreigners working in Austria without official work permits as high as 50% in some ethnic groups (e.g. Poles and Romanians) with Vienna and other bigger cities having the highest rates and with variations according to different fields of activity and occupational groups.

Both the offical data and the findings of our survey confirm the phenomenon of large-scale illegal employment in the case of Polish immigrants (Table 8). However, many of these irregular immigrants do not stay in Austria for more than a few months or even weeks. According to our study, about 60% of the Poles responding to the question concerned did not possess an official work permit and thus had no legal access to the Austrian labour market.

There is a clear connection between duration of stay and availability of work permits. Whereas more than 80% of the migrants who came before 1985 possess a work permit, only 60% of the Poles that came between 1986 and 1990 have one and only 14,3% of those arriving in 1993. During recent years many new patterns of illegal seasonal work, small trade and long-distance commuting (under the cover of tourism) have emerged. Tourist flows from Poland include a high proportion of short-term migration. The so-called 'false' tourists become engaged in a particular kind of commercial activity. They sell in Austria relatively cheap goods purchased in Poland (i.e. provisions and cigarettes) and take home expensive Western consumer goods.

Table 8: Polish workers in Vienna in 1993 - comparison between official data and authors‘survey data

Field of activity	Official data			Author’s survey data		
	total	men	women	total	men	women
Agriculture/forestry	1.4	1.7	0.7	2.4	3.1	-
Construction	16.6	25.0	0.2	29.6	38.1	1.1
Manufacturing	38.1	50.9	13.1	21.2	26.2	4.5
Metal workers/Electricians	-	67.7	-	-	-	-
Wood workers	-	10.7	-	-	-	-
Unskilled workers	-	8.7	-	-	-	-
Trade and transport	5.3	5.3	5.4	5.5	6.5	2.3
Services	19.9	6.5	46.1	16.5	4.1	58.0
Tourism	-	-	36.7	-	-	-
Cleaning jobs	-	-	51.5	-	-	-
Technicians	3.5	4.6	1.3	4.4	5.1	2.3
Administration	4.4	2.9	7.5	3.4	1.4	10.2
Public health	8.2	1.2	22.0	2.4	1.0	6.8
Education and research	2.5	1.8	3.7	3.4	1.7	9.1
Other jobs or undefined	0.1	0.1	-	11.2	12.9	5.7
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Sources: Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs and authors’ own survey data.

Official data indicate that Viennese Poles mostly work in manufacturing, the services sector and the building trade. Our study shows a different hierarchy led by the construction sector, followed by manufacturing and the services sector. These discrepancies can be explained by the high frequency of illegal employment in Austria's building trade. Of the male Polish migrants possessing an official work permit, 25% exactly are occupied in the building sector but this figure rises to 38,1% in our sample. More than one half (50,9%) of the legally-employed men work in manufacturing. Among the men surveyed, the proportion employed in this sector is only about 26%. In the case of women the discrepancies are particularly marked in domestic service and public health occupations.

The marked discrepancies between legal and illegal employment in the case of the Poles reflect the present rigid trend in Austrian immigration policy. As a result of labour market conditions and political pressure groups, the annual immigration quotas have been

reduced sharply. It is to be expected that as long as the pull factors of higher income and better living conditions are effective, the problem of illegal employment on the Austrian labour market will continue to exist.

6. Polish immigration compared with guest-worker migration from Turkey and ex-Yugoslavia

A wide range of differences must be noted in comparing traditional guest-workers and Poles working in Vienna. The main distinction between these two groups is not in the desire for economic improvement that they both share but rather in their different levels of education and in their labour and housing market positions.

What is clear is that guest-workers from Turkey and ex-Yugoslavia have not, despite their long stay in Austria, succeeded in advancing into higher levels of the labour market hierarchy. They still constitute a specific social stratum on a basic educational and occupational level and show very little upward social mobility. Their labour and housing market positions have not improved markedly over several decades.

The future prospects of Polish immigrants, by contrast, are fairly optimistic. Most Poles will probably enjoy successful professional careers and become fully integrated into the local society after a relatively short period of time. Their high level of education and skills, their obvious adaptability and their ethno-cultural and confessional affinity with the Austrian population will favour a process of social upgrading and the integration of Polish migrants. How long this will take is still hard to predict. Equally difficult to foresee are the processes and exact conditions necessary for such integration. It is clear, however, that individual characteristics will also play a part, and not only socio-economic forces.

The main differences between the two migration flows are as follows:

1. The immigration of guest-workers occurred during a period of economic prosperity, full employment and growing labour shortages. Importing labour was expected to solve the problem of shortages. The immigration of foreign workers was more or less planned and directed by bilateral arrangements. Recruitment Contracts were signed with Turkey in 1964 and Yugoslavia in 1966. This far-reaching selection determined the social and age structures of the migrants, at least in the early phase of migration. The majority of guest-workers came from rural areas and were often engaged in agriculture before migrating. Polish migration is determined by both push and pull factors. It is mostly based on individual decisions and not directed by government arrangements. The main areas of

origin for Polish migrants are urban centres and smaller towns. The Poles that come to Austria thus maintain an urban lifestyle and are accustomed to the workings of a metropolitan labour market.

2. Related to the differences in the areas of origin are those in educational level. The average level of education and the proportion of semi-skilled and highly-skilled workers is much higher among Polish migrants than among the guest-workers from Turkey and the Balkans, a considerable proportion of whom were poorly qualified and even illiterate. To a large extent these also seem to be characteristics of the second generation of migrants. According to LICHTENBERGER's (1984) study of Yugoslav guest-workers, 8,9% had never attended school, 68,8% had primary school level only and 22,3% were professional school graduates. The proportion of guest-workers possessing the final diploma of a higher-level school or university was negligible. More than three-quarters of the Turkish labour force had only primary school education and only about 5% had secondary or post-secondary education (Giffinger and Reeger 1997,: 47). The second generation of migrants, which has grown up in Austria, has, of course, succeeded in improving its educational level, but university graduates with parents whose origins are in Turkey or the Balkans are still a rare commodity in Austria. Among the Poles, college and university graduates account for 11,4% and secondary school graduates 49,1%. There is a higher proportion (18%) of female than male graduates and a strong tendency towards permanent migration, especially among the better-educated. The number of Polish migrants with only a basic primary education is relatively small. The majority have at least served an apprenticeship.
3. The markedly better command of German among the Poles needs to be interpreted in the context of their comparatively high educational level. 87% of the Polish secondary school and university graduates in our sample speak German fluently. Long-term migrants, particularly those working in administration and public health, usually have a good command of German. The vast majority of guest-workers came to Austria without any knowledge of German. Even after two or three decades in Austria, a high proportion of them speak German at only a very basic level - especially Turkish women, who are more or less confined to the domestic sphere.
4. There is a sharp contrast between the labour market position of guest-workers and that of the Poles. Turks and guest-workers from former Yugoslavia are still mainly unskilled or semi-skilled labourers and thus concentrated in low-paid jobs. Even the second generation has largely failed to achieve higher positions in the occupational hierarchy. The reasons are found in their general lack of education and in a mixture of stigmatisation and

discrimination. The Austrian labour market is segmented on ethnic lines and thus characterised by a substantial degree of discrimination and marginalisation. In the Polish case the occupational level aspired to rises in line with their educational background, the duration of their stay and their competence in German. Their relatively high level of formal education enables them to rise quickly from unskilled jobs to a wide spectrum of occupational groups. Their successful integration into the local occupational system without large-scale brain waste can be anticipated in the near future.

5. In the case of guest-workers the ethno-cultural and - in the case of the Turks - confessional dissimilarity between them and the Austrian population and even second and third generation guest-workers remains an obstacle to integration. This implies that the socio-cultural factor in the integration process should not be neglected. Like the majority of Austrians the Poles are Catholics, and their physical appearance does not mark them out from the local population. Due to their often precarious legal status during the initial phase of their stay in Vienna, Polish migrants are also faced with a substantial degree of dequalification and large-scale illegal employment. But once in possession of an official work permit, and the longer they stay in the country, the Poles usually make their way into segments of the local labour market more appropriate to their background qualifications and skills.
6. According to our data, the socio-spatial distribution of Polish migrants within the Vienna urban area is rather similar to that of guest-workers. An uneven spatial distribution, concentration tendencies and marked segregation characterise the housing situation of labour migrants in Vienna, irrespective of their national origins. Some sectors of the local housing market are inaccessible for both guest-workers and Poles. Legal access to council housing is not allowed to foreigners, owner-occupied flats cannot usually be afforded by migrants in the initial phases and cooperative housing is often too expensive. As a result, the private sector of rented flats absorbs the majority of migrants. Necessary urban renewal work is rapidly reducing the cheap rental housing sector, causing a serious lack of affordable dwellings for economically marginal groups of the population (labour migrants, students, the old aged and divorced women with children). The general shortage of affordable housing notwithstanding, it must be emphasised that there are marked differences between the Viennese housing situation of, say, Turks and Poles. As a rule, Polish tenants live in flats which are larger and also equipped with all modern conveniences. Turks and ex-Yugoslavs, on the other hand, are to a large extent dependent on very small and poorly-equipped dwellings which are often situated in dilapidated

buildings. Even after decades of residence in Vienna, the majority of them still experience housing conditions vastly below local standards. The struggle for better-equipped dwellings is often a losing battle, because they have to fight a whole set of prejudices on the part of many Austrian leasors. In contrast, long-term Polish migrants succeed after a relatively short time in obtaining more luxurious flats and often buy cooperative or owner-occupied flats.

7. Concluding remarks

In the course of this analysis an attempt has been made to find answers to the main questions concerning the socio-economic and socio-demographic structures of recent Polish migration to Vienna. Of particular interest is the selectivity of Polish immigration by socio-demographic and qualification criteria. The Viennese 'Polonia' differs from the traditional migration of Turkish and ex-Yugoslav guest-workers in that it involves a high proportion of highly-qualified personnel. Of course, the Poles are subject to a substantial degree of dequalification, at least in the early phases of their stay in Austria, but as a whole a clear trend towards a decline in brain waste emerges the longer the migrants stay in Vienna.

It needs emphasising that the majority of Poles living in Vienna will probably pursue a successful career there and become fully integrated into the local society after a relatively short period of time. Their high level of education and skills, their manifest adaptability and their ethno-cultural affinity with the Austrian population will favour a process of social upgrading and fasilitate their rapid integration into Austrian society. This process is expected to be conflict-free. Even the first generation of Poles has had no serious problems in adapting to the local standards of living, housing and education. But as in other EU countries, Austria's ability to absorb new labour migrants from Poland is decreasing. The implication is that the precarious Austrian labour market situation will make the large-scale illegal employment of Polish workers a constant problem. One thing does seem clear: Polish migration will continue to be one of the main areas of labour migration to Austria and play an important role in European migration in general.

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[1] Of some 1 million people leaving Poland for Western countries between 1980 and 1990, the majority went to Germany and the USA.

[2] Whereas in 1981 only a small percentage (1.7%) of all migrants leaving Poland chose Austria as their preferred destination, this rate rose to 6% in 1984 and reached ist peak at 7.6 in 1986. During the following years the rates declined and the rate of 1.9% in 1990 was more or less equivalent to the rate at the beginning of the decade.

[3] The questionnaire comprised 45 questions in Polish. It was relatively detailed, given that the survey was carried out in the streets. The survey was carried out by Polish students, each of whom was accompanied by an Austrian fellow-student to avoid a loss of information through translation problems. The location chosen was the Polish church, one of the favoured meeting points of Vienna's Polish community. A sample of 408 Poles were interviewed during a spring week in 1993.