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## Migration of population in big Polish cities as compared to smaller cities and towns in the light of selected parameters of the migration process

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**MIGRATION OF POPULATION IN BIG POLISH CITIES  
AS COMPARED TO SMALLER CITIES AND TOWNS  
IN THE LIGHT OF SELECTED PARAMETERS  
OF THE MIGRATION PROCESS**

**ABSTRACT.** The aim of this paper is to present and specify to what extent the migration over the past few years has affected selected Polish cities with a population of more than 100 thousand and how the migration trends in those cities have developed in comparison with the other cities and the rural areas. The research showed that since mid-1970s there have been a constant and relative decrease in internal migrations, which was stopped in the early 21<sup>st</sup> century. The faster decrease of the inflow over the outflow of population, caused bigger and smaller cities, treated as a whole, reach a negative migration balance. These radical changes in the direction of internal migration caused the negative balance in rural areas to decrease.

**KEY WORDS:** internal migration, foreign migration, large towns, territorial distribution.

One of the factors modifying the dynamics of the population process is the movement of people classified as a change of the place of residence. In Poland, after the period of the development of the trends resulting from the overall post-war situation, the flow of population has regained importance in the recent years as a result of the economic and political changes. It was, on the one hand, the new social situation created by the market economy, and, on the other hand, Poland's opening to the West, which is reflected in the passport regulations, that incited changes not only in the levels but also in the directions of migration. Not only is this new wave of migration reflected in the manpower balance of our country, but, in the long term, it will also affect the demographic balance of our

country, which will in turn affect the population growth and structure in Poland. We should stress, in particular, that the migration changes take a specific character in big cities, which until quite recently have been a kind of “a harbor” for manpower surplus coming both from the rural areas and smaller cities and towns.

Therefore the goal of this paper is to present and specify to what extent the migration over the past few years has affected selected Polish cities, i.e. those having a population of more than 100 thousand (61.6% of the population of all cities and towns, 29.3% of the total population in Poland in 2003) and how the migration trends in those cities have developed in comparison with the other cities and the rural areas. The survey covers 40 Polish cities whose total number of population exceeded in 2003 100 thousand inhabitants. The analysis was based on data relating to the years 1988-2002, which covers, on the one hand, a period of relative stability in terms of the population size of these cities (Table 1), and on the other hand, a period of social and economic transformations, which have influenced the developing demographic trends.

Table 1. Towns over 100 thousand inhabitants in the years 1950-2003

YEAR	NUMBER	TOWNS
1950	16	Bydgoszcz, Bytom, Chorzów, Częstochowa, Gdańsk, Gdynia, Gliwice, Katowice, Kraków, Lublin, Łódź, Poznań, Szczecin, Warszawa, Wrocław, Zabrze
1952	17(+1)	Sosnowiec,
1954	19(+2)	Radom, Wałbrzych,
1956	20(+1)	Białystok,
1958	21(+1)	Toruń,
1959	22(+1)	Ruda Śląska,
1965	23(+1)	Kielce,
1969	24(+1)	Bielsko-Biała,
1973	25(+1)	Olsztyn,
1975	27(+2)	Tychy, Wodzisław Śląski,
1976	31(+4)	Opole, Rzeszów, Rybnik, Tarnów,
1977	33(+2)	Dąbrowa Górnicza, Elbląg,
1979	35(+2)	Gorzów Wielkopolski, Włocławek,
1980	37(+2)	Płock, Zielona Góra,
1981	38(+1)	Kalisz,
1984	39(+1)	Jastrzębie Zdrój,
1985	41(+2)	Legnica, Koszalin,
1980	42(+1)	Grudziądz,
1990	43(+1)	Słupsk,
1992	42(-1)	Wodzisław Śląski,
2002	40(-2)	Jastrzębie Zdrój, Słupsk

Source: Długosz, Z. 2005: Population movements in large Polish cities in 1988-2002. In Szymańska, D., Grzelak-Kostulska, E. editors, *Bulletin of Geography socio-economic series* n° 4/2005, Toruń: Nicolaus Copernicus University Press, pp. 25-36.

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It should also be remembered that the situation in large cities determines to a large extent the system of regional settlement, especially in those regions where big cities are more numerous or where the most populous cities are located (Table 2). Therefore in analysing the cartograms presented in this paper one has to bear in mind the sizes of the cities in particular voivodeship.

Table 2. Distribution of large towns according to voivodeships and the percentage of their inhabitants (in 2003)

VOIVODESHIP	TOWNS	ACCORDING TO	
		VOIVODESHIPS	TOWNS
Dolnośląskie	Legnica, Wałbrzych, Wrocław	42	30
Kujawsko-Pomorskie	Bydgoszcz, Grudziądz, Toruń, Włocławek	63	39
Lubelskie	Lublin	35	16
Lubuskie	Gorzów Wielkopolski, Zielona Góra	46	30
Łódzkie	Łódź	54	27
Małopolskie	Kraków, Tarnów	54	27
Mazowieckie	Płock, Radom, Warszawa	62	40
Opolskie	Opole	23	12
Podkarpackie	Rzeszów	19	8
Podlaskie	Białystok	41	24
Pomorskie	Gdańsk, Gdynia	48	33
Śląskie	Bielsko-Biała, Bytom, Chorzów, Częstochowa, Dąbrowa Górnicza, Gliwice, Katowice, Ruda Śląska, Rybnik, Sosnowiec, Tychy, Zabrze	60	48
Świętokrzyskie	Kielce	36	16
Warmińsko-Mazurskie	Elbląg, Olsztyn	35	21
Wielkopolskie	Kalisz, Poznań	35	20
Zachodniopomorskie	Koszalin, Szczecin	44	31

Source: Długosz, 2005

The most basic issues are presented in view of both internal and foreign migrations. Tracing back the internal migrations in Poland since the 1970s one can easily discern the inflowing and outflowing tendencies both in cities and rural areas. Whereas until the 1980s the immigration and emigration showed a high level of fluctuations, in the subsequent years they started to drop (Fig. 1a and 1b). It has to be stressed here that until the beginning of the 1990s, the immigration rate for bigger cities was lower than that for rural areas and smaller cities. It was only later that the immigration into rural areas outgrew the immigration not only into large cities but also into smaller cities and towns. As for the emigration, on the other hand, rural areas showed the biggest rates almost over the whole period analysed here, while big cities showed the lowest

rates. It was only at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> and the 21<sup>st</sup> centuries that the relative level of emigration leveled out, however, recently the emigration from smaller cities and towns have exceeded not only the emigration from large cities, but also from the country. As a consequence of such trends, rural areas after 2000 were characterised by a positive migration balance, whereas cities with the population of over 100,000 saw in 2003 for the first time after the war a negative value of the net migration coefficient, which had already been the case before in the other cities and towns (Fig. 1c).

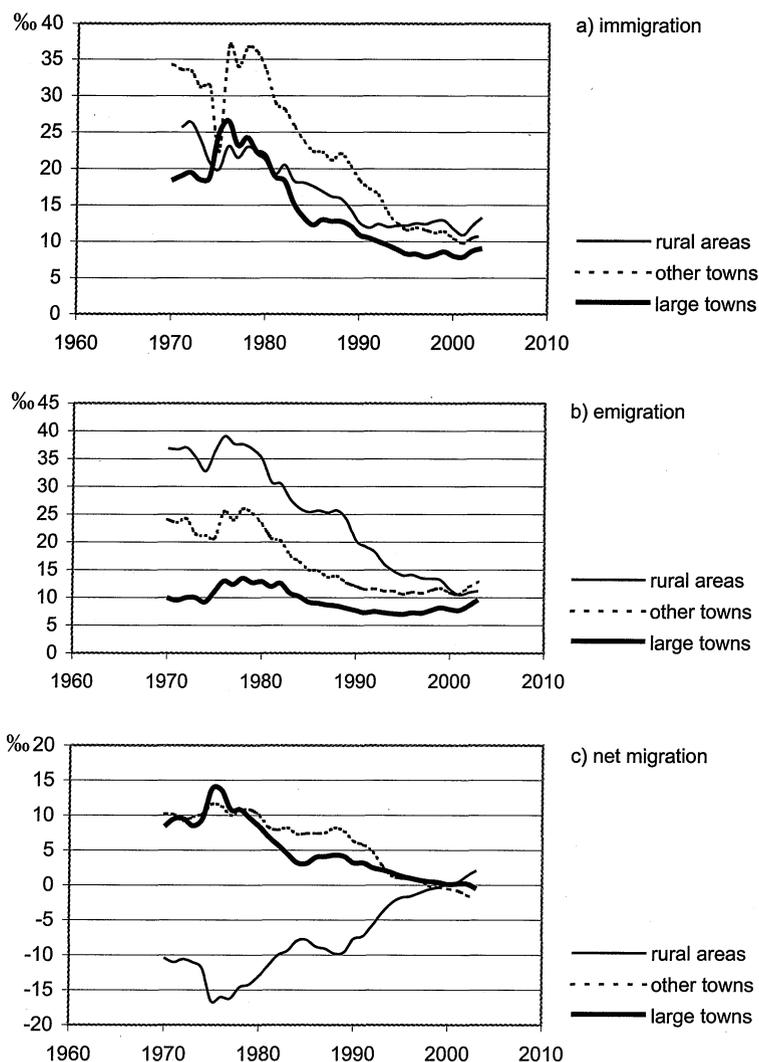


Fig. 1. Population migration in Poland in the years 1970-2003  
 Source: Długosz, 2005.

As far as a detailed analysis of the situation in the major Polish cities inhabitants in 1988 is concerned, one has to note that the highest immigration rate (it fluctuated between 6.9-30.4 ‰) over 20‰ was observed in Dąbrowa Górnicza, Opole, Olszyn, Koszalin and Legnica, while the lowest (under 10‰) was observed in Gliwice, Łódź, Warszawa, Kraków, Wrocław and Kalisz. In 2003 the level of influx of population into large cities clearly decreased (it fluctuated between 4.4 and 14.1‰), with Gdynia, Olsztyn, Zielona Góra, Chorzów, Warszawa and Koszalin having the level exceeding 11‰, and Wałbrzych, Łódź, Ruda Śląska and Radom having the lowest level (under 6‰). Therefore, taking into consideration the level of influx in both categories, one has to notice that it was only in Warszawa, Gliwice and Kraków that the rate grew, whereas the other cities saw a clear drop (fluctuating between 19.9-0.4‰ points), which was the strongest (under 11‰ points) in Dąbrowa Górnicza, Legnica, Opole, Tarnów and Zabrze.

The emigration of population from large cities in 1988 r. fluctuated between 4.4 and 23.2‰. The highest rate (over 12‰) was observed in Chorzów, Dąbrowa Górnicza, Opole, Sosnowiec and Koszalin, whereas the lowest rate (below 7‰) in Warszawa, Łódź and Kraków. In 2003 the emigration from those cities also decreased, oscillating between 6.7 and 14.2‰, with the highest outflow (over 12‰) in Koszalin, Rzeszów, Toruń, Poznań, Gdynia, Chorzów and Kielce, and the lowest (under 8‰) in Łódź, Zabrze, Wałbrzych, Ruda Śląska and Elbląg. Therefore it can be concluded that the outflow of population from the majority of the big cities grew even by more than 4‰ points, as it was the case in Rzeszów, Toruń, Poznań and Kielce, whereas in Chorzów, Wałbrzych, Legnica, Elbląg, Zabrze, Ruda Śląska, Dąbrowa Górnicza, Bytom, Opole, Sosnowiec, Rybnik, Gdańsk and Wrocław they decreased. It was only in Białystok and Zielona Góra that they remained unchanged.

The situation indicates that the balance of internal migration has changed radically in the largest Polish cities. In 1988 a negative balance was observed only in Chorzów (9.3‰) and Gliwice (1.3‰), whereas in the other cities it was positive and fluctuated between 0.9 and 16.7‰. The highest rates (over 8‰) were observed in Dąbrowa Górnicza, Olsztyn, Lublin and Białystok, while the lowest (under 2‰) in Kalisz, Gdańsk, Wrocław, Tychy and Łódź; in 2003 it was only in Warszawa, Olsztyn, Gdynia, Zielona Góra, Kraków, Wrocław and Białystok that the migration balance was positive and fluctuated between 4.1 and 0.3‰. In the other cities a migration loss was observed, which fluctuated between 5.6 and 0.3‰, with the biggest loss of population flow (under 3‰) in Kielce, Tychy, Tarnów, Toruń, Włocławek, Radom, Rzeszów, Koszalin, Sosnowiec and Wałbrzych. To sum up, in the years 1988-2003 in a vast majority of the cities in question the decrease in the net migration coefficient fluctuated from 0.9 to 17.9‰ points, and was the highest (above 11‰ points) in Dąbrowa Górnicza, Tarnów, Koszalin, Rzeszów, Włocławek, Lublin and Toruń. It was only Chorzów, Gliwice and Warszawa that saw a rise in the migration balance ranging between 9.3 and 0.1‰ points.

The changes in migration have affected the territorial modifications of the migration parameters as well as the migration balance. The situation in the big cities in question in 2003 as compared to the other cities and rural areas is presented in Fig. 2.

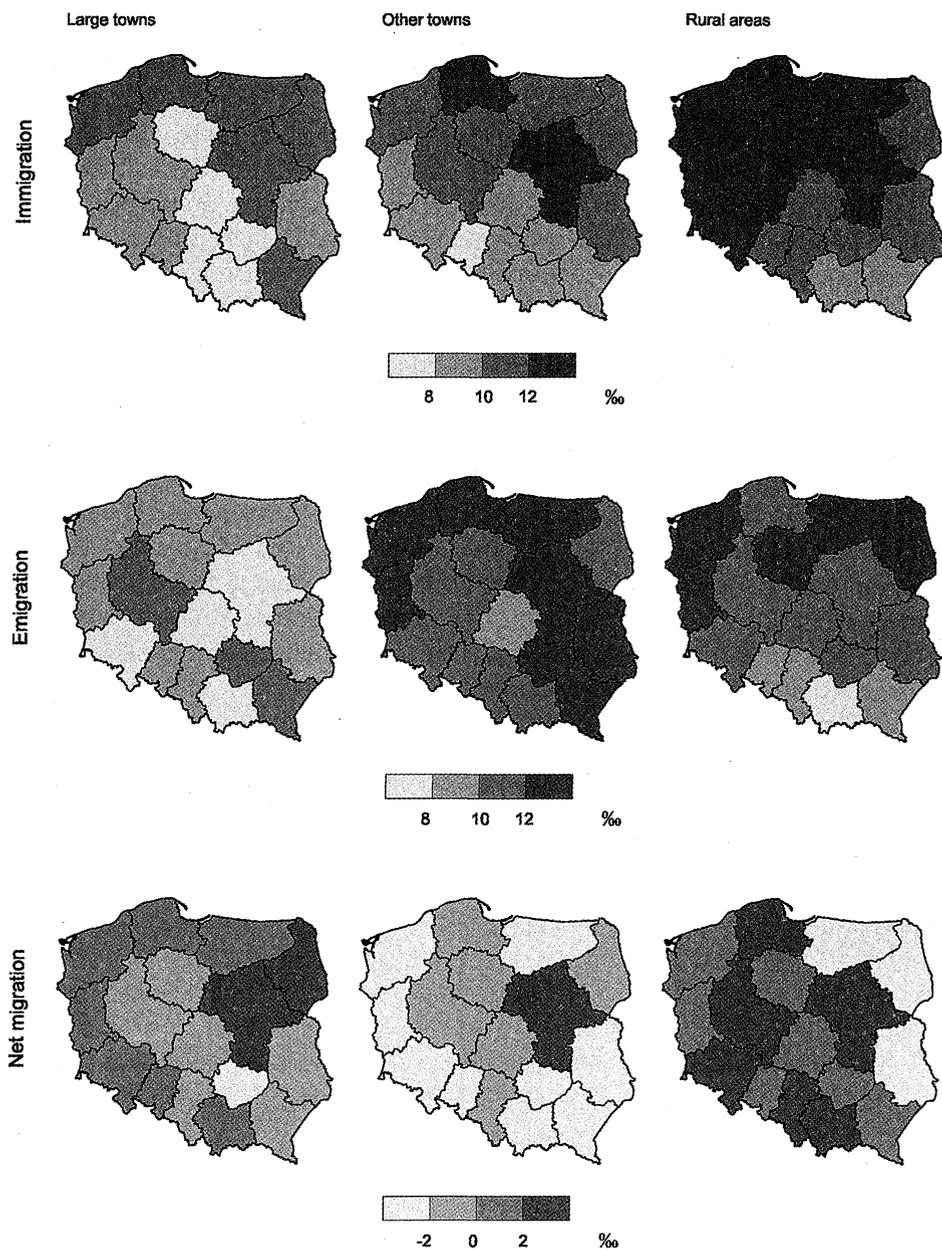


Fig. 2. Population internal migration in 2002  
Source: Długosz, 2005.

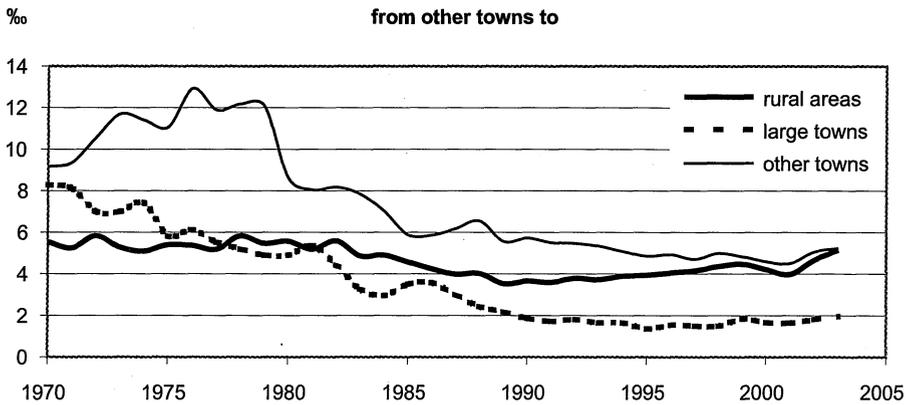
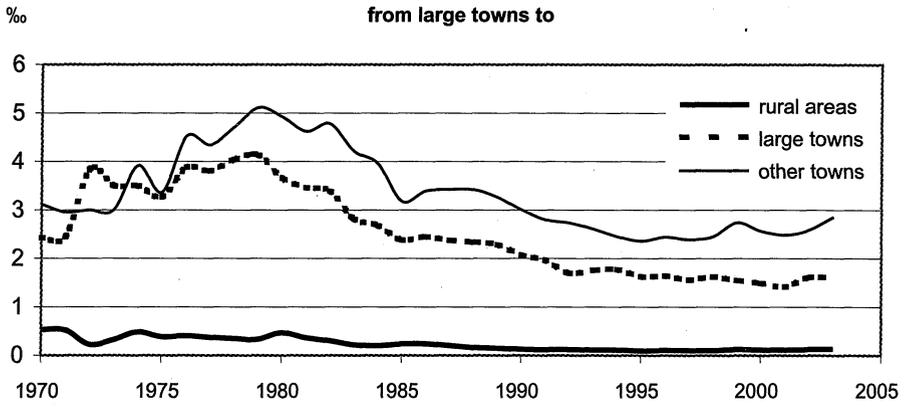
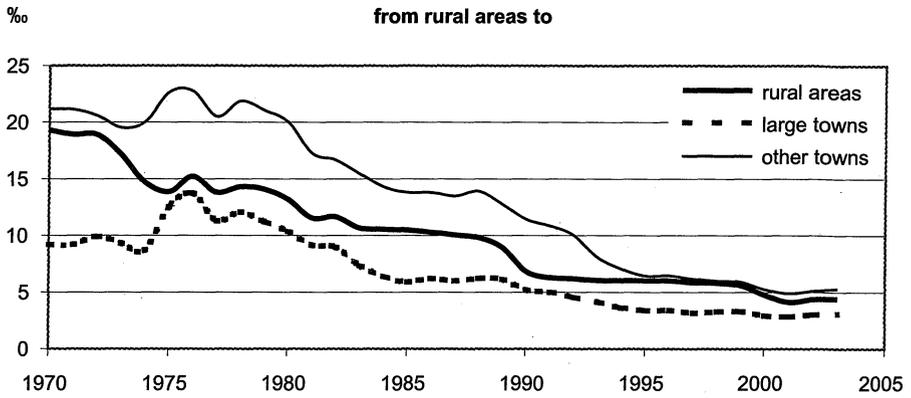


Fig. 3. Internal population migration in Poland according to directions in 1970-2003

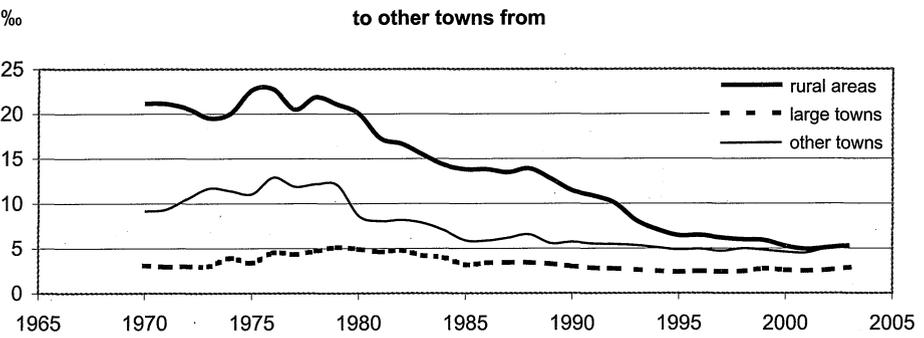
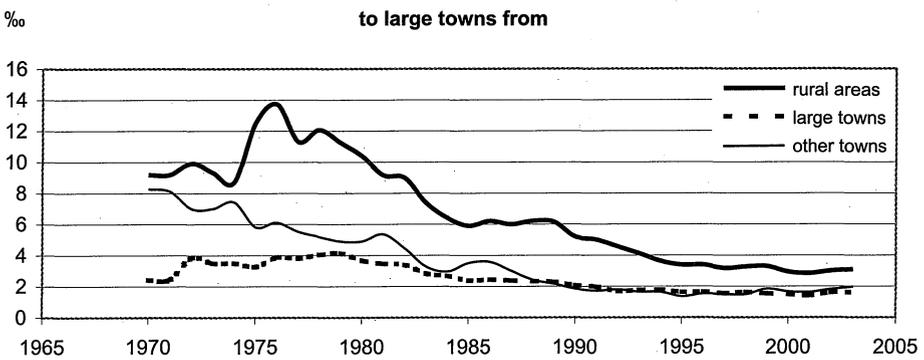
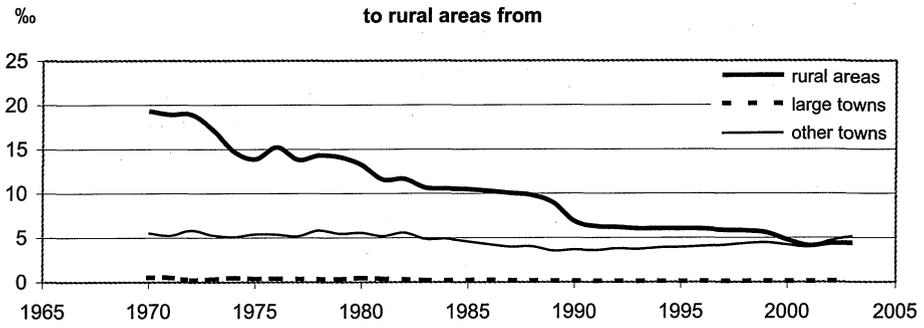


Fig. 4. Internal population migration according to directions in 1970-2003

What had changed was not merely the levels of the population flow, but first and foremost the directions of migration between particular types of settlement units. While in the years 1970-2003, in a situation of a decline, the migrations of population from rural areas to smaller cities always exceeded not only the migrations to bigger cities but also to the country (Fig. 3a). In the case of the emigration from smaller urban centers, these relations before the 1980s looked a little different, with stabilizing tendencies in the influx of population into bigger cities and a growing tendency in the immigration to the rural areas and smaller urban centres in the last years (Fig. 3c). Different tendencies can be seen in the dynamics of migration from big cities. Since mid-1970s the population from these urban centres moved mainly to smaller cities and in a slighter extent to cities with 100,000 or more inhabitants, whereas the migration into the country clearly showed lower levels, with stable dynamics beginning from 1990. The tendencies in the directions of migration are presented in Fig. 4.

Let us now look at the directions of migration in view of the big cities in question in relation to the other centres in Poland. In 1988 the migrations from cities in general to the cities with the population exceeding 100 thousand, which were fluctuating between 3.3 to 18.2‰, reached the highest levels (above 10‰) in Dąbrowa Górnicza, Gdynia, Katowice, Ruda Śląska, Wałbrzych, Opole, Rybnik, Olsztyn and Chorzów, and the lowest (below 5‰) in Kalisz, Łódź, Kielce, Kraków, Gliwice, Radom, Płock, Częstochowa and Warszawa. In 2003 the migrations in this category (fluctuating between 11.3 and 2.4‰) reached the highest (over 7‰) level in Chorzów, Gdynia, Dąbrowa Górnicza, Olsztyn, Katowice and Warszawa and Poznań, whereas the lowest (below 4‰) in Tarnów, Włocławek, Radom, Kalisz, Częstochowa, Płock, Wałbrzych, Kielce, Łódź and Legnica. This means that the migrations from towns and smaller cities to cities with the population exceeding 100,000 inhabitants generally dropped, most notably so (above 4‰ points) in Dąbrowa Górnicza, Wałbrzych, Ruda Śląska, Katowice, Opole, Legnica and Gdynia. The increase in the migration in this direction was observed only in Warszawa, Gliwice, Kraków, Poznań, Chorzów, Wrocław and Zielona Góra, i.e. in the biggest cities.

As far as the emigration from the biggest cities in 1988 is concerned, it can be seen that it fluctuated between 3.2 and 21.8‰, with the highest emigration (over 9‰) in Chorzów, Dąbrowa Górnicza, Sosnowiec, Katowice, Gdynia and Bytom, i.e. in Upper Silesia cities, and the lowest (under 4‰) in Warszawa, Kraków and Łódź. In 2003 with a general decrease in the level of emigration (it fluctuated between 3-10.1‰) the general situation did not change substantially. As previously, the greatest emigration levels were observed in the cities of the Upper Silesia conurbation, and the lowest (under 3.5‰), apart from Kraków, Wrocław and Łódź, also in Częstochowa and Bielsko Białe. Therefore It can be concluded that the increase in the emigration from large urban centres into cities

in general (up to 1‰ points) in the years 1988-2003 was only observed in Warszawa, Kielce, Poznań, Gliwice and Rzeszów, whereas the other cities saw a decrease in the emigration, with the most radical drop (over 3‰ points) in Chorzów, Legnica, Dąbrowa Górnicza and Wałbrzych.

As a consequence of the situation, a positive balance in the migrations between large cities and the other centres in 1988 was observed in Chorzów, Gliwice Kalisz, Płock, Sosnowiec, Tychy, Elbląg, Gdańsk and Bytom, whereas the inflows and outflows were balanced in Włocławek, Radom, Łódź and Kielce. In the other big cities the migration losses reached 6.6‰, with the greatest values (over 3‰) in Dąbrowa Górnicza, Gdynia, Olsztyn and Opole. In 2003 the number of big cities with a positive balance increased. This group apart from the cities mentioned above (except Gdańsk and Chorzów) included Włocławek, Wałbrzych, Kielce, Radom, Tarnów, Ruda Śląska, Legnica, Koszalin, Częstochowa and Rybnik. The inflows and outflows leveled out in Łódź, as well as in Lublin and Dąbrowa Górnicza, while the greatest losses (over 2‰) in this respect were observed in Warszawa, Olsztyn, Zielona Góra, Kraków, Wrocław, Gdynia and Poznań, i.e. the biggest cities. As a result of such trends in the migration of population from big cities into other cities and towns the largest rise in this respect (over 2‰ points) in the years 1988-2003 was observed in Chorzów, Warszawa, Wrocław, Zielona Góra, Kraków and Gliwice, and the sharpest decrease (over 3‰) in Dąbrowa Górnicza, Wałbrzych, Katowice, Ruda Śląska and Rybnik.

Also the migration between large cities and rural areas has shown very peculiar trends. In 1988 the migration from villages to large cities fluctuated between 2.8 to 14‰, with the highest migration rates (over 10‰) in Płock, Tarnów, Białystok, Dąbrowa Górnicza, Lublin, Włocławek, Legnica, Koszalin, Olsztyn, Opole and Rzeszów, and the lowest (under 4‰) in Gliwice, Łódź, Warszawa, Gdańsk, Chorzów and Wałbrzych. In 2003, with the substantial decrease of immigration from the country to big cities (fluctuating from 0.8 to 5.9‰) the largest rates (over 5‰) were observed in: Olsztyn, Rzeszów, Płock and Białystok, and the lowest (below 1‰) in Ruda Śląska and Chorzów. Comparing the tendencies in 1988 and 2003, one can notice a general decrease in the immigration rates from the country to big cities, with the highest rate (over 7‰ points) in Dąbrowa Górnicza, Płock, Legnica, Białystok and Włocławek, and the lowest (under 1‰ points) in Warszawa, Gdynia and Gliwice.

As far as the emigration from big cities to the country in 1998 is concerned, with the extremes ranging from 1.2 to 6.5‰, the largest outflow (over 4.5‰) was observed in Opole, Tarnów, Białystok, Płock and Zielona Góra, whereas the lowest (under 1.6‰) in Warszawa, Tychy, Chorzów, Łódź and Katowice. In 2003, with the overall increase in the emigration from big cities to rural areas (fluctuating between 1.6 and 9.9‰), the highest emigration rate (over 7‰) was

seen in Rzeszów, Toruń, Kielce, Poznań, Koszalin, Tarnów, Płock and Opole, whereas the lowest (under 3‰) in Ruda Śląska, Chorzów, Zabrze, Katowice, Sosnowiec, Wałbrzych and Bytom, i.e. the cities of The Upper Silesia Region. Comparing the cross sections of 1988 and 2003, one can observe for most big cities an increase in the migration to the country, which reached 6.1‰ points, and was most clear (over 3‰ points) in Rzeszów, Toruń, Poznań, Kielce, Bielsko, Koszalin and Gdynia. It was only in Wałbrzych, Elbląg, Zabrze, Białystok and Ruda Śląska that an increase was observed.

A result of these trends was the clearly changing balance of migration from the country to big cities. While in 1988 all big cities saw a positive balance of migration with the rural areas, in 2003 they showed a negative balance. In 1988 the net migration coefficient fluctuated between 10.1 and 0.7‰. The most favourable balance (over 7‰) was observed in Dąbrowa Górnicza, Płock, Włocławek, Tarnów, Legnica, Lublin, Białystok, Rzeszów, Koszalin and Olsztyn, whereas the least favourable (under 2‰) in Wałbrzych, Gliwice, Wrocław, Gdańsk, Poznań and Łódź. In 2003 the migration losses in large cities in relation to the rural areas fluctuated between 0.3 and 4.8‰, with the highest losses (over 4‰) in Toruń, Rzeszów, Poznań and Kielce, and the lowest (under 1‰) in Warszawa, Elbląg, Białystok, Zabrze, Gdynia, Katowice and Ruda Śląska.

As can be easily seen, a decrease in the net migration coefficient was seen in all major cities (between 1.9 and 12‰ points), and as far as the balance of migration with rural areas is concerned, the greatest decrease (over 10‰ points) was observed in Rzeszów, Dąbrowa Górnicza, Płock, Toruń, Tarnów, Lublin and Koszalin, whereas the lowest (less than 3‰ points) in Wałbrzych, Gliwice and Warszawa.

Figures 5-9 show the migration trends and the balance as at 2003 based on the generally available statistical data.

Foreign migrations in the recent years have also shown very characteristic tendencies. We have seen a particularly high growing tendency in the migration of population from abroad since 1990, when not only the influx to big and smaller cities but also to the rural areas increased (Fig. 10a). Although the immigration from abroad has always remained on a low level, the new political and economic reality launched a mobility of immigrants unseen since the 1950s. The several-fold higher emigration shows fluctuating tendencies (Fig. 10b). Although in the recent years these tendencies have become weaker in bigger cities and have approached the level of emigration from the other cities, they have been considerably higher than the rural emigration. To a large extent, it was the foreign emigration levels that determined the negative balance of foreign flows in the postwar period and in the years analysed here (Fig. 10c), which not only in the recent years have been relatively favourable in the rural areas, and have reached a similar level in bigger and small cities in 2003.

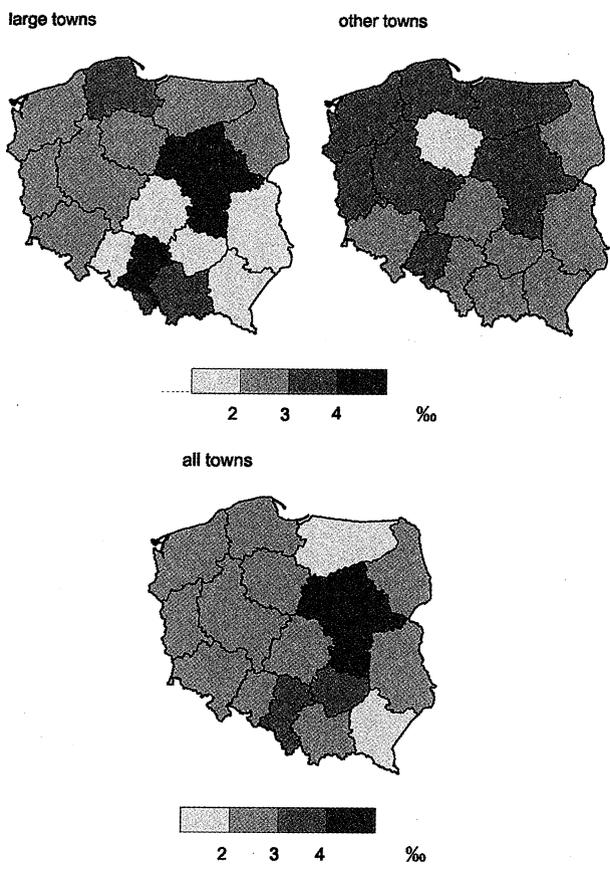


Fig. 5. Population internal migration in 2003 from urban areas to: large towns, other towns, all towns

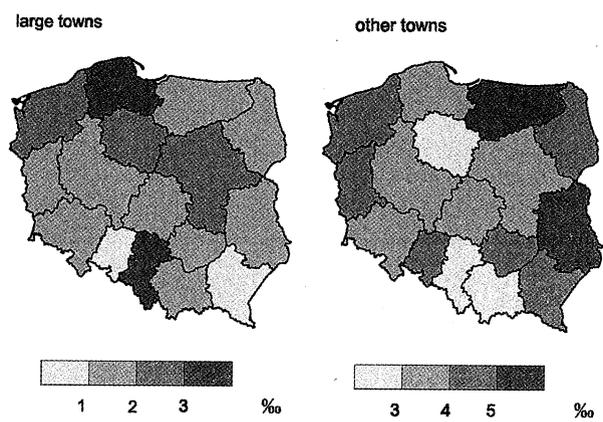


Fig. 6. Population internal migration in 2003 to: all towns from large towns, other towns

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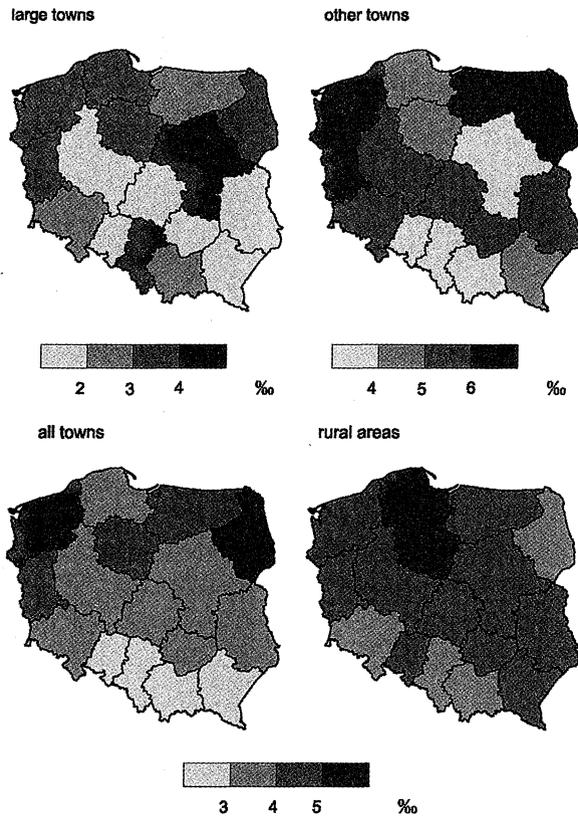


Fig. 7. Population internal migration in 2003 from rural areas from: large towns, other towns, all towns, rural areas

Analysing foreign immigration into big cities one has to observe that in 1988 it reached 4.3 (per 10 thousand inhabitants). The highest influx (over 2) was seen in Tarnów, Opole and Zielona Góra, whereas the lowest (under 0.3) in Sosnowiec, Gliwice, Wałbrzych, Radom and Gorzów Wielkopolski. In 2003 the level of immigration was higher and reached 5.8 (per 10 thousand inhabitants). The highest rates (over 4) were observed in Rzeszów, Tarnów, Bielsko Biała, Olsztyn and Gdynia, whereas the lowest (under 0.5) again in Wałbrzych, Sosnowiec and Dąbrowa Górnicza, Bydgoszcz, Rybnik and Lublin. Thus, comparing both cross-sections, we notice that most bigger cities saw an influx of population from abroad reaching 4.7 (per 10 thousand inhabitants). The relatively highest dynamics (more than 3 persons per 10 thousand inhabitants) was seen in Rzeszów, Bielsko Biała and Gdynia. A decrease in the dynamics in 2003 was observed in Lublin, Kalisz, Zielona Góra, Rybnik, Dąbrowa Górnicza, Płock, Wałbrzych and Szczecin.

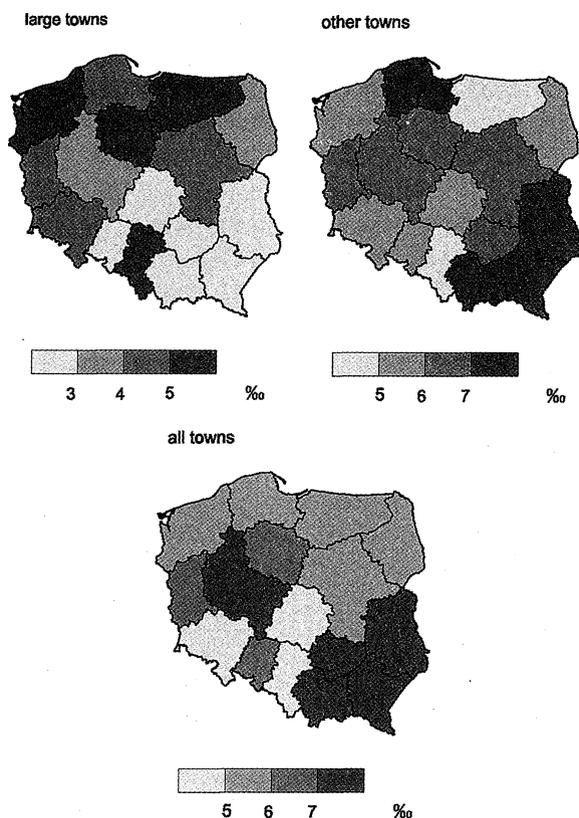


Fig. 8. Population internal migration in 2003 from rural areas from: large towns, other towns, all towns

The emigration abroad from big cities in 1988 reached an extreme value of 145 persons (per 10 thousand inhabitants). The cities with the highest emigration figures (over 20) included Bytom and Opole, Gdańsk, Chorzów, Gdynia, Dąbrowa Górnicza, Zabrze, Kraków and Katowice, and those with the lowest, Wałbrzych, Sosnowiec, Kielce, Bydgoszcz and Szczecin. In 2003 the emigration from big cities changed considerably, reaching the level of 54.7 persons (per 10 thousand inhabitants). The highest emigration (over 20) was seen in Ruda Śląska, Chorzów, Bytom, Zabrze, Gliwice, Opole and Tarnów, while the lowest (below 1) in Kraków, Gorzów Wielkopolski, Włocławek and Płock. As can be concluded from a detailed analysis and comparison of the years 1988 and 2003, most of the major cities saw a drop in the emigration numbers reaching 115 persons (per 10 thousand inhabitants). Rates over 20 persons were observed in such cities as Bytom, Gdańsk, Opole, Kraków, Dąbrowa Górnicza and Gdynia. The highest increase in the emigration abroad was seen in Ruda Śląska, Gliwice, Tarnów, lower in Wałbrzych, Sosnowiec,

Kielce, Legnica, Koszalin, Bydgoszcz and Szczecin, and the lowest in Bielsko Biała, Białystok, Rzeszów, Zabrze, Kalisz and Tychy.

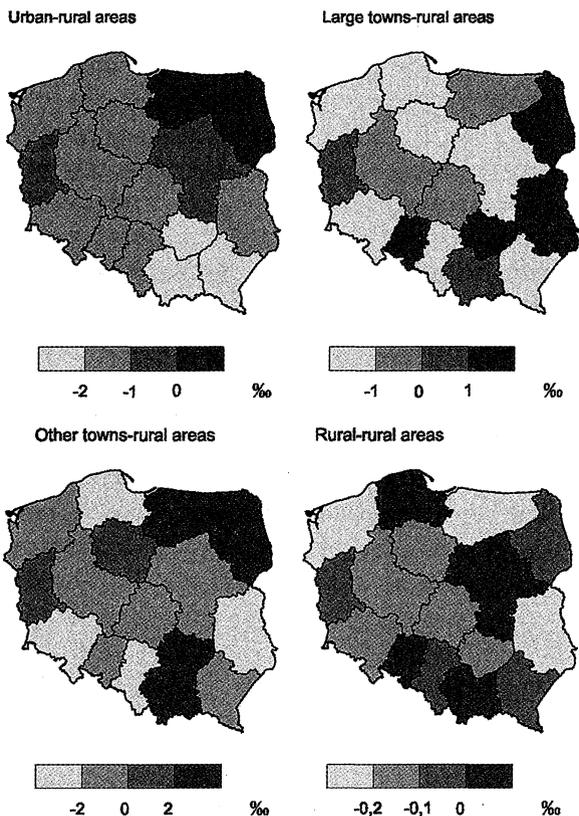


Fig. 9. Net internal migration rate in 2003

As a result of the foreign migration trends described above a positive migration balance was observed in 1988 in such cities as Szczecin, Kielce, Bydgoszcz, Kalisz, Wałbrzych and Sosnowiec, whereas in 2003 in Kraków, Gorzów Wielkopolski, Warszawa, Częstochowa, Włocławek and Rzeszów. However, most of the biggest cities in question were affected by losses in the foreign migration balance. In 1988 the losses, amounting to 20 persons (per 10 thousand inhabitants), affected to the largest extent Bytom, Opole, Gdańsk, Chorzów, Gdynia, Zabrze, Dąbrowa Górnicza and Kraków, whereas in 2003 Ruda Śląska, Chorzów, Bytom, Zabrze and Gliwice, i.e. Upper Silesia cities. A detailed analysis in the changes in the dynamics of the foreign migration balance shows that between the years 1988 and 2003 the migration deficit was limited to the largest extent in Bytom, Gdańsk, Opole, Kraków, Dąbrowa

Górnica and Gdynia, whereas in such cities as Ruda Śląska, Gliwice, Tarnów, Wałbrzych, Sosnowiec and Legnica the deficit clearly deepened.

The territorial depiction of foreign migrations in major Polish cities as compared to the other cities and towns and rural areas in 2003 is presented in Fig.11.

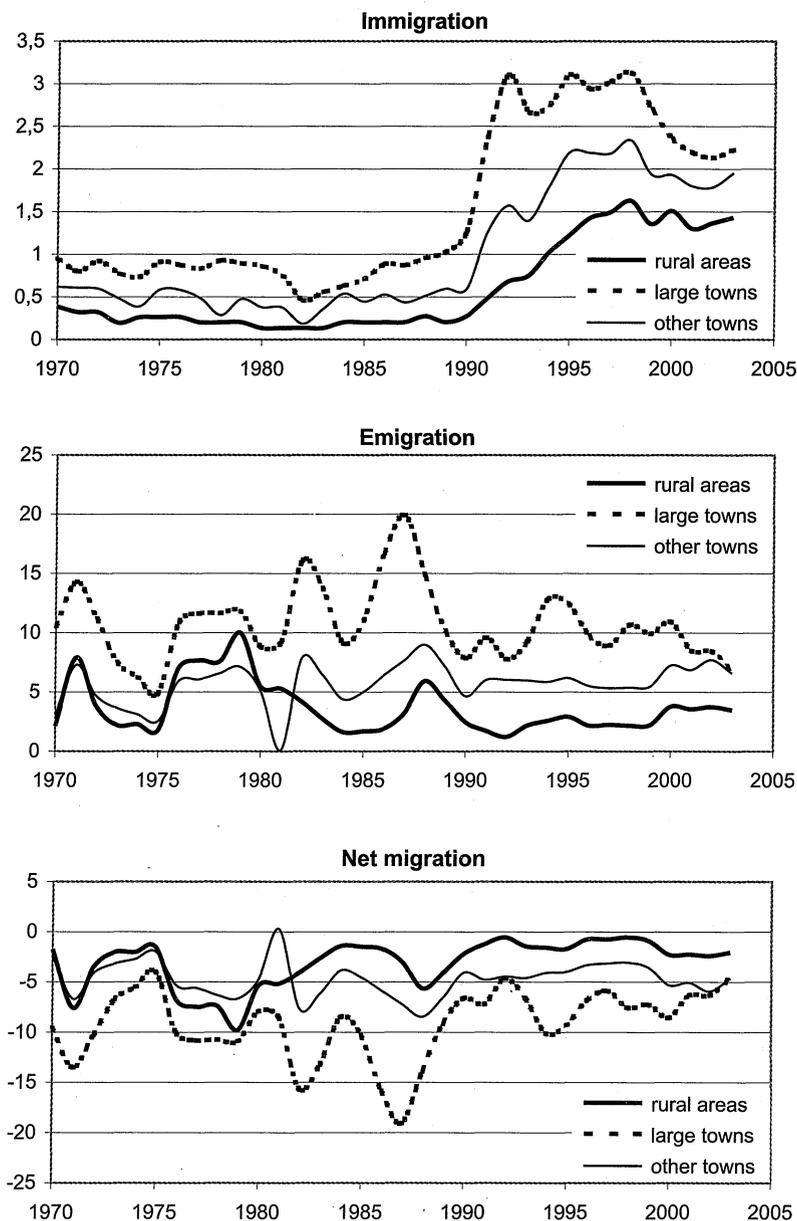


Fig. 10. Foreign migration in 1970-2003 (per 10,000 inhabitants)

MIGRATION OF POPULATION IN BIG POLISH CITIES AS COMPARED TO SMALLER CITIES...

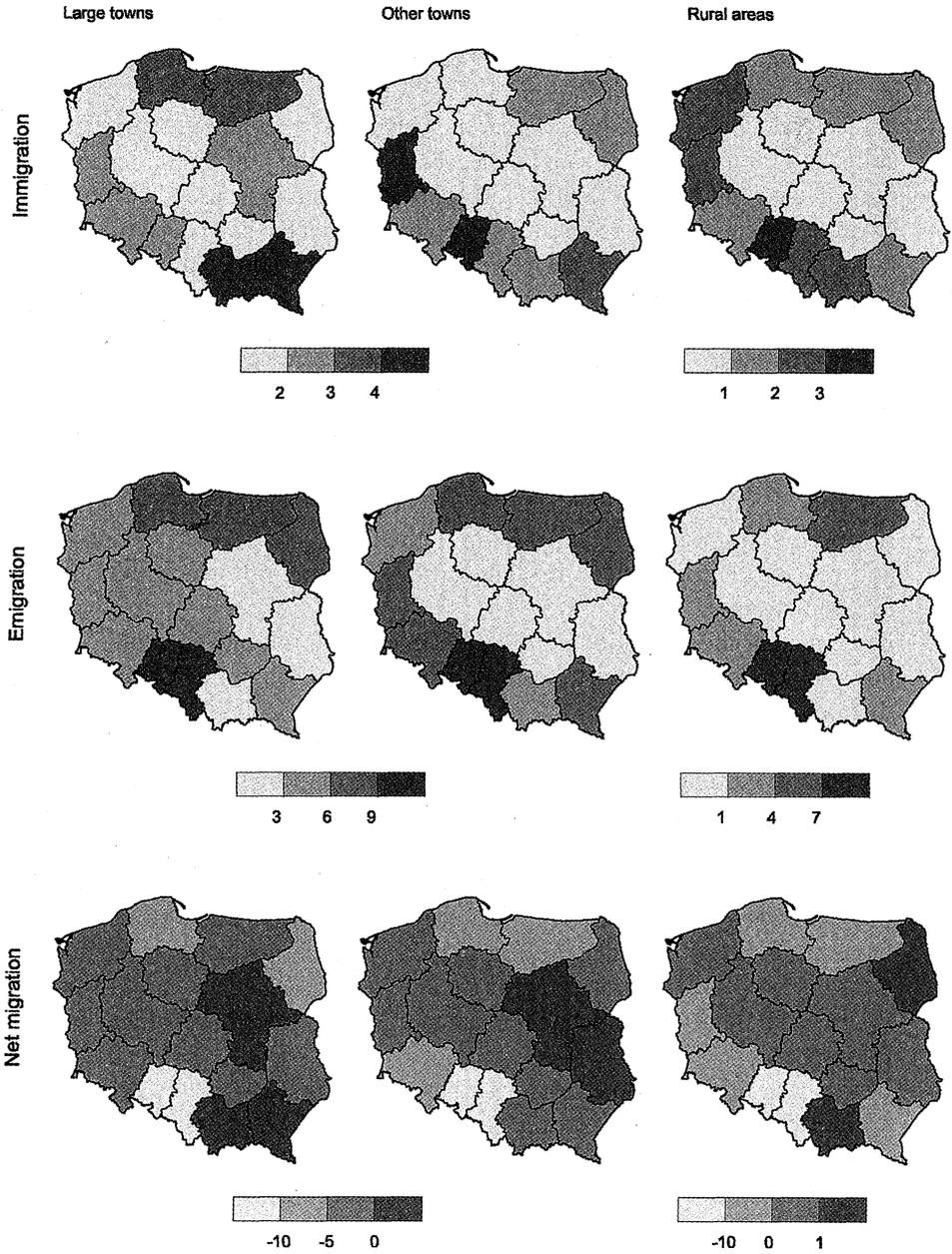


Fig. 11. Foreign migration in 2003 (per 10,000 inhabitants)

In conclusion we can state that  
 — since mid-1970s there have been a constant and relative decrease in internal migrations, which was stopped in the early 21<sup>st</sup> century;

- these tendencies have converged both with the influx and outflow of population, in very general terms, regardless of the type of the settlement unit (big city, smaller cities and towns, rural areas);
- the faster decrease of the inflow over the outflow of population, caused bigger and smaller cities, treated as a whole, reach a negative migration balance;
- radical changes in the direction of internal migration caused the negative balance in rural areas to decrease, as a result of which the balance of migrations in the rural areas in the recent years have reached positive values;
- such a situation resulted, on the one hand, from the changes on the job market, which effected a decrease in the emigration of people from the country to cities, and on the other hand, from the increased flow of migrants in the recent years in the opposite direction, which in practice translated into the creation of immigration rings around all major Polish cities (except for the Upper Silesia conurbation);
- since the 1990s one has been able to observe major changes in the dynamics of foreign migrations resulting from the liberalization of the passport and visa regulations, which has intensified both the inflow and the outflow of population;
- it seems that the migrations into and from Poland not only of Poles, which have continued for some time now, have caused sharp fluctuations in the dynamics of migration;
- in view of this, since the 1980s the negative balance of foreign migration has improved relatively in major cities, where the flows are effected by the dominant group of persons changing their place of residence;
- the regularities in the territorial tendencies shown in the cartograms presented in this paper should be treated with reserve, because the state as at 2003 is not necessarily an objective reflection of reality (the 2003 situation may have been exceptional), therefore only a research covering a sufficiently long period (no comparative data relating to the present-day administrative system in Poland) can indicate the actual trends both for internal and foreign migrations;
- in the case of foreign migrations, it has to be stressed that the present-day situation reflects not only the historical problems, but also the long-established migration traditions.

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