

Łódź developed into a city in effect of dynamic population inflows stimulated by favourable economic conditions prevailing in the Eastern markets. The population increase, reaching almost 0.5 million within the few decades at the turn of the recent centuries, was possible due to migrations. Their intensity changed relative to the upturns or downturns in the Russian economy. Therefore, in the 1990s the significance of migration dramatically decreased in view of the deep crisis of Łódź’s traditional textile economic base. The annual volumes of migration inflows and outflows stabilised at a very low level of 5‰, which means that the migration exchange involved only 8000–8500 population. Also, the migration balance in those years was stable and close to zero.

In the post-war period, the largest migration inflows came from the territories of the former regions (województwa): Łódzkie, Piotrkowskie, Sieradzkie, Skierniewickie, and Płockie. The mean distance covered by the migrants to Łódź was 125 km for urban migrants, and 80 km for rural migrants (A r a s z k i e w i c z A., M i c h a l s k i W. 1983/84). As the migration volumes decreased, so did the city’s migration catchment area.

In 1999, the destination of the migration outflow from Łódź was the city’s 20 km- wide rural-urban fringe. However, the median distance exceeded 35.8 km, since the other emigration destination was Mazowieckie Region (Województwo Mazowieckie), first and foremost Warsaw. The share of Łódzkie Region (Województwo Łódzkie) in the outflow exceeded 62%, and that of Mazowieckie Region reached 12%.

The most prevalent destinations of the migration outflows from Łódź were the following counties (powiat): Zgierski, (29.9% of emigrants), Łódzki Wschodni (25.9%), and Pabianicki (15.1%). Migration was closely associated with distance - the farther from Łódź to a given powiat is, the less migrants from Łódź moved to.

Immigrants to Łódź originated from Łódzkie Region (over 56%), Mazowieckie Region (10%), and furthermore from Wielkopolskie, Kujawsko-Pomorskie and Świętokrzyskie Regions. The regional immigration basically came from the counties adjacent to Łódź: Zgierski (21.3%) Łódzki Wschodni (14.1%), and Pabianicki (11.5%). Also, a notable percentage of immigrants came from northward counties, save Skierniewicki County (Powiat Skierniewicki), whose inhabitants find Warsaw to be a much more attractive destination. The lowest immigration inflows came from the southern part of the region, for the population of which Wrocław and Upper Silesian cities are competitive alternatives to Łódź. It can be concluded, therefore, that it is the central counties of Łódzkie Region that provide the demographic backup for the city.

The median distance of the immigration inflow was 72.5 km, twice the distance of the emigration outflow. The domestic immigration inflow zone covered the area within the 150–200 km radius. The immigration inflow, therefore, was predominantly regional in nature, while the emigration outflow could be described as local and suburban in nature.

The migration balance, in overall slightly negative, showed most unfavourable values for the counties adjacent to Łódź (97% negative balance with the region). The balance with other counties was positive, which means that the capital gained population from farther areas of the region, but to a greater extent lost its population in favour of its own agglomeration.

It should be underscored that in terms of interregional exchange Łódź posts a negative migration balance with its own region and Mazowieckie Region, but gains population Świętokrzyskie, Wielkopolskie, and Kujawsko-Pomorskie Regions (in aggregate 66% of the positive balance), and from the eastern regions of Poland. The role of the Świętokrzyski Region is particularly evident, as it has supplied immigrants to Łódź for many years.

Intra-city migrations are different in range and scale. A comparative analysis of the relatively few external migrations and changes of address within the city shows that the latter are more statistically significant for the spatial redistribution of population within Łódź. This was confirmed by the 1997 study of registration documents recording permanent changes of address (migrations) (M i c h a l s k i, S z a f r a ń s k a 2000). At the time of the study, Łódź was divided into 98 units for which migration was analysed. The number of internal migrants so determined was 20 800, i.e. 2.5% of the city population. The migration volumes were strictly correlated with the size of such units - the larger the microdistrict, the larger its migration volume.

The major directions of migration inflows and outflows were identified for nearly all city units within its urbanised area. No such directions were identified if the number of migrants was lower than 10. The immigrants to the given unit most frequently came from one immediately adjacent thereto (60% of all cases). Similarly, the emigrants basically moved their neighbouring units (56% of all cases), very often to those from which most of the immigrants had arrived. Internal relocations within units were statistically significant, too.

The spatial migration pattern was usually concentric, with the migration dynamics radially decreasing from the city-centre to the outskirts, and with the migration balance likewise changing from negative to positive.

Łódź’s intra-city migration volumes diversification is determined by the differences in the population number of each district. Within the city limits no areas were observed that would either rapidly lose or gain population. It seems that the absence of identifiable migration centres is characteristic of the transformation period. Especially that it is accompanied by a deep housing crisis, while migrations are typically informed by the desire to improve the living conditions, which is more easily attainable within a close neighbourhood or within the same, familiar microdistrict. The foregoing conclusion is confirmed by the studies conducted in Warsaw boroughs (gmina), where the incoming migrants predominantly come form the neighbouring boroughs (P o t r y k o w s k a, Ś l e s z y ń s k i 1999).

Literature and sources

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