



*The 19<sup>th</sup> International Scientific Conference*  
**“DEFENSE RESOURCES MANAGEMENT  
IN THE 21<sup>st</sup> CENTURY”**  
**Braşov, November 7<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> 2024**



**VARIOUS DIMENSIONS OF LOCAL AND SOCIAL  
SECURITY – THE PERSPECTIVE OF ILLEGAL  
MIGRATION IN POLAND**

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**Abstract:**

Illegal migration has become a significant concern for Poland, particularly in the context of broader European migration trends. This article examines the various dimensions of local and social security in Poland, focusing on the challenges posed by illegal migration. It explores the impact of illegal migration on public safety, economic stability, social cohesion, and public services. The research aims to provide a comprehensive analysis of how illegal migration affects local communities and national security in Poland, considering the perspectives of policymakers, law enforcement, and the general population. By employing a combination of qualitative and quantitative research methods, this study seeks to contribute to the ongoing debate on migration and security in Poland.

*Key words: Illegal migration; local security; social security; Poland; migration policy; public safety; social cohesion.*

**1. Introduction**

Migration has always been a significant aspect of human history, with people moving across borders for various reasons, including economic opportunities, political asylum, and family reunification. However, illegal migration presents distinct challenges for host countries, particularly in terms of maintaining local and social security. In Poland, illegal migration has emerged as a pressing issue, especially in light of the European migration crisis and the country's strategic location as a gateway to the European Union (EU).

This research article aims to explore the various dimensions of local and social security in Poland from the perspective of illegal migration. It will examine how illegal migration influences public safety, economic stability, social cohesion, and public services. Furthermore, the study will analyze the responses of local communities, law enforcement agencies, and policymakers to the challenges posed by illegal migration.

**2. Methodological assumptions**

The primary objectives of this research are:

- To analyze the impact of illegal migration on local and social security in Poland.
- To explore the responses of Polish law enforcement agencies and local governments to the challenges posed by illegal migration.

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- To assess the perceptions of local communities regarding the effects of illegal migration on social cohesion and public safety.
- To propose recommendations for policymakers to address the security challenges associated with illegal migration in Poland.

Research Questions are as follows:

- How does illegal migration affect local and social security in Poland?
- What are the primary concerns of local communities regarding illegal migration?
- How do law enforcement agencies in Poland respond to the challenges posed by illegal migration?
- What strategies can be implemented to mitigate the negative impacts of illegal migration on local and social security in Poland?

This study employs a mixed-methods approach, combining both qualitative and quantitative research methods. The research methods include:

- **Literature Review:** A comprehensive review of existing literature on illegal migration, local security, and social security in Poland will be conducted to provide a theoretical framework for the study.
- **Case Studies:** Selected case studies of Polish cities and regions most affected by illegal migration will be analyzed to gain insights into the local dimensions of security concerns.
- **Surveys and Interviews:** Surveys will be distributed to residents in selected regions to gather data on their perceptions of illegal migration. In-depth interviews will be conducted with law enforcement officials, local government representatives, and migration experts.
- **Data Analysis:** Quantitative data from surveys will be analyzed using statistical methods, while qualitative data from interviews will be analyzed through thematic coding.

### **3. Theoretical Framework: Illegal Migration and Security**

Illegal migration refers to the movement of people across borders without legal authorization. This can include individuals who enter a country without proper documentation, overstay their visas, or engage in unauthorized activities such as working without a permit. In the context of Poland, illegal migration has been influenced by several factors, including its location as an eastern border of the EU, the economic disparities between Poland and neighboring countries, and broader global migration trends.

The scope of illegal migration in Poland is multifaceted, involving economic migrants, asylum seekers whose applications have been rejected, and individuals trafficked for labor or sexual exploitation. This complexity makes it challenging for authorities to manage and control illegal migration effectively.

Security, in the context of migration, is a broad concept that encompasses various dimensions, including national security, public safety, economic security, and social cohesion. The securitization of migration refers to the process by which migration is framed as a security issue, often leading to stricter immigration controls, increased border surveillance, and the criminalization of illegal migrants.

In Poland, the securitization of migration has been influenced by broader European trends, particularly in response to the 2015 migration crisis. The Polish government's approach to migration has increasingly emphasized security concerns, with illegal migration being perceived as a potential threat to national sovereignty, public order, and social stability.

Poland has historically been a country of emigration, with millions of Poles migrating to other countries, particularly in the 19th and 20th centuries. However, since the

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fall of communism in 1989 and Poland's accession to the EU in 2004, the country has increasingly become a destination for migrants. This shift has brought new challenges, particularly in managing illegal migration.

The historical context of migration in Poland is essential for understanding the current dynamics of illegal migration. The transition from a country of emigration to one of immigration has required significant adjustments in migration policy and law enforcement practices.

Illegal migration to Poland has been influenced by several factors, including the country's economic growth, its strategic location within the EU, and global migration trends. Some of the key trends in illegal migration to Poland include:

- **Eastern Migration:** A significant portion of illegal migrants in Poland comes from Eastern Europe, particularly Ukraine, Belarus, and Russia. The ongoing conflict in Ukraine and economic instability in Belarus have contributed to an increase in illegal migration from these countries.
- **Asian and African Migration:** There has also been a growing trend of illegal migration from Asia and Africa, often facilitated by human smuggling networks. Migrants from these regions may view Poland as a transit country on their way to Western Europe.
- **Asylum Seekers and Refugees:** Although Poland has not been a primary destination for asylum seekers compared to countries like Germany or Sweden, there has been an increase in asylum applications from individuals from the Middle East and Africa, many of whom enter the country illegally.

Poland's legal and policy framework for managing migration, including illegal migration, is shaped by its obligations as an EU member state, as well as national legislation. Key aspects of this framework include:

- **Border Controls:** Poland's eastern border is also the EU's external border, making it a critical point for controlling illegal migration. The country has invested in border security measures, including physical barriers, surveillance technology, and increased personnel.
- **Immigration Laws:** Poland's immigration laws have been tightened in recent years, with stricter penalties for illegal entry and overstaying visas. The government has also implemented measures to facilitate the deportation of illegal migrants.
- **International Cooperation:** Poland cooperates with other EU member states and international organizations, such as Frontex, in managing migration flows and combating human smuggling and trafficking.

### **4. The Impact of Illegal Migration on Local and Social Security**

One of the primary concerns associated with illegal migration is its impact on public safety and crime. Illegal migrants, particularly those involved in human trafficking or smuggling networks, can contribute to criminal activities in host countries. However, it is essential to distinguish between the actions of a minority of illegal migrants involved in criminal activities and the broader population of migrants who may be law-abiding but lack legal status.

In Poland, the perception of illegal migrants as a threat to public safety has been shaped by media coverage and political discourse. There have been instances of criminal activities involving illegal migrants, such as drug trafficking and violent crimes, which have heightened public fears. However, studies have shown that illegal migrants are not more likely to commit crimes than the general population, and their involvement in criminal activities is often linked to their precarious legal status and lack of access to legal employment.

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The economic impact of illegal migration is a complex issue, with both positive and negative dimensions. On the one hand, illegal migrants often fill labor shortages in certain sectors of the economy, such as agriculture, construction, and domestic work. Their labor can contribute to economic growth and the competitiveness of businesses that rely on low-cost labor.

On the other hand, illegal migration can also have negative economic consequences. The presence of illegal migrants in the labor market can lead to downward pressure on wages, particularly for low-skilled workers, and may contribute to the informal economy. Additionally, illegal migrants may place a strain on public services, such as healthcare and education, if they are not contributing to the tax system.

In Poland, the economic impact of illegal migration is a contentious issue. While some sectors of the economy benefit from the labor of illegal migrants, there are concerns about the long-term sustainability of relying on a labor force that lacks legal status and the potential for exploitation and abuse of illegal workers.

Social cohesion refers to the ability of a society to function as a unified whole, with a sense of shared identity and mutual support among its members. Illegal migration can challenge social cohesion, particularly if migrants are perceived as being culturally different or if their presence leads to competition for resources and opportunities. In Poland, the issue of social cohesion has become increasingly important as the country has become more diverse due to migration. Illegal migrants, who often lack access to integration programs and face legal and social barriers, may struggle to integrate into Polish society. This can lead to the formation of marginalized communities and exacerbate tensions between migrants and the native population. Immigrants in Poland are shaped by various factors, including cultural differences, economic competition, and media portrayals. Negative perceptions of illegal migrants can contribute to social polarization and hinder efforts to promote integration and social cohesion.

The presence of illegal migrants can place a strain on public services, particularly in areas such as healthcare, education, and housing. In Poland, illegal migrants may have limited access to public services due to their legal status, but they may still require emergency healthcare, education for their children, and other essential services. The impact of illegal migration on public services is a source of concern for local governments, particularly in regions that experience higher levels of migration. The challenge lies in balancing the need to provide essential services to all residents, regardless of legal status, with the need to maintain the sustainability of public services and ensure that they are not overwhelmed by demand.

Poland's response to illegal migration has focused heavily on law enforcement and border control measures. The country's eastern border is a critical point of entry for illegal migrants, and the government has implemented various measures to enhance border security, including the construction of physical barriers, the deployment of additional border guards, and the use of advanced surveillance technology.

Law enforcement agencies in Poland also play a crucial role in identifying and apprehending illegal migrants within the country. This includes conducting regular checks on businesses and residences where illegal migrants may be employed or housed. The government has also increased penalties for those who facilitate illegal migration, such as human smugglers and employers who hire illegal migrants. Despite these efforts, challenges remain in effectively controlling illegal migration. The porous nature of some border areas, the involvement of organized crime in human smuggling, and the difficulty of identifying illegal migrants who have integrated into local communities all contribute to the complexity of the issue. Local governments in Poland face the direct impact of illegal migration, particularly in terms of providing services and maintaining public order.

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Responses to illegal migration at the local level vary depending on the region and the specific challenges faced by local communities.

Some local governments have adopted proactive measures to address the needs of illegal migrants, such as providing access to emergency healthcare and education for migrant children. Others have focused on enforcing immigration laws and cooperating with national authorities to identify and deport illegal migrants. Community responses to illegal migration are also diverse. In some areas, there is a strong sense of solidarity and support for migrants, with local organizations and volunteers providing assistance. In other areas, particularly where there are concerns about crime or economic competition, there may be more resistance to the presence of illegal migrants. Poland's national policy on illegal migration is shaped by its obligations as an EU member state, as well as domestic political considerations. The government has taken a firm stance on illegal migration, emphasizing the need to protect national borders and maintain public order.

At the same time, Poland participates in international cooperation on migration issues, including through its involvement in Frontex, the EU agency responsible for border management. Poland has also engaged in bilateral and multilateral agreements with neighboring countries to enhance cooperation on migration control and combat human smuggling and trafficking. The effectiveness of Poland's national policy on illegal migration is influenced by broader European and global trends, as well as the country's ability to balance security concerns with humanitarian obligations. Based on the analysis of the impact of illegal migration on local and social security in Poland, several recommendations can be made to address the challenges associated with illegal migration: While Poland has made significant investments in border security, further enhancements could be made to improve the effectiveness of these measures. This could include increasing cooperation with neighboring countries to address cross-border migration, investing in new technologies for border surveillance, and enhancing the capacity of border guards to detect and prevent illegal entry.

To mitigate the impact of illegal migration on social cohesion, it is essential to improve integration efforts for migrants, regardless of their legal status. This could include providing access to language and cultural orientation programs, facilitating legal pathways to regularize the status of long-term illegal migrants, and promoting community engagement initiatives that foster understanding and cooperation between migrants and the native population.

Illegal migrants are often vulnerable to exploitation in the labor market, particularly in low-skilled and informal sectors. To address this issue, Poland could strengthen labor inspection and enforcement mechanisms to prevent the exploitation of illegal migrants and ensure that all workers, regardless of their legal status, are treated fairly. Additionally, efforts could be made to create legal pathways for migrant workers to enter the country and participate in the labor market legally.

Given the transnational nature of migration, international cooperation is essential for effectively managing illegal migration. Poland should continue to engage in bilateral and multilateral cooperation with neighboring countries, as well as participate actively in EU initiatives on migration management. This could include sharing intelligence on human smuggling networks, coordinating joint border operations, and participating in EU resettlement and relocation programs.

Finally, Poland could benefit from developing a comprehensive migration policy that addresses both legal and illegal migration. This policy should take into account the need to balance security concerns with the protection of migrants' rights and the promotion of social cohesion. A comprehensive approach to migration would also involve engaging a

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wide range of stakeholders, including local governments, civil society organizations, and the private sector, in the development and implementation of migration policies.

### **5. Conclusion**

Illegal migration presents significant challenges for local and social security in Poland, influencing public safety, economic stability, social cohesion, and the provision of public services. The country's response to illegal migration has focused primarily on law enforcement and border control measures, but there is a need for a more comprehensive approach that also addresses the underlying causes of migration, promotes integration, and protects the rights of migrants.

By enhancing border security, improving integration efforts, addressing economic exploitation, strengthening international cooperation, and developing a comprehensive migration policy, Poland can more effectively manage the challenges associated with illegal migration and contribute to a more secure and cohesive society.

This research has provided an in-depth analysis of the impact of illegal migration on local and social security in Poland, drawing on a combination of qualitative and quantitative research methods. The findings highlight the complexity of the issue and the need for a multifaceted response that takes into account the perspectives of all stakeholders involved.

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