Pomerania in 1688, 1794, and 1905.

BOUNDARY-DEFINING AND DEMOGRAPHIC TRANSGRESSION IN A

BORDERING

"Geopolitics is the discipline concerning the state as a geographical organism or entity in space: that is, the state as land, territory, domain (*gebit*), or most pregnantly, realm. Being a political science it has a steady focus on the statal entity and seeks to contribute to the understanding of the nature or essence (*väsen*) of the state, while political geography studies the earth as a domicile for human societies, in relation to the other qualities of the earth."[1]

B order studies have seen a remarkable renaissance recently. Yet there is a dearth of studies covering longer spans of time, and informed by a comprehensive theoretical approach. In spite of a hundred years of consistency of the inner Scandinavian borders, transboundary relations and interaction have changed considerably.[2] Areas east of the Baltic Sea have been spatially divided and redefined with disastrous consequences in the form of subjugation, expulsion, and even extermination. This is also true of the southern part of the Baltic Sea. Over the centuries, its shores and their hinterlands have undergone a number of territorial changes and political regulations. From being a duchy in the Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation, Pomerania has been divided, redefined, amalgamated, and put under Hanseatic, Swedish, Danish, Brandenburgian-Prussian, German, Soviet, and Polish supremacy. In the 20th century the area underwent four radical changes in geopolitical governance – in 1918, 1933, 1945, and 1989.[3] These geopolitical changes, in turn, have had an impact on the living
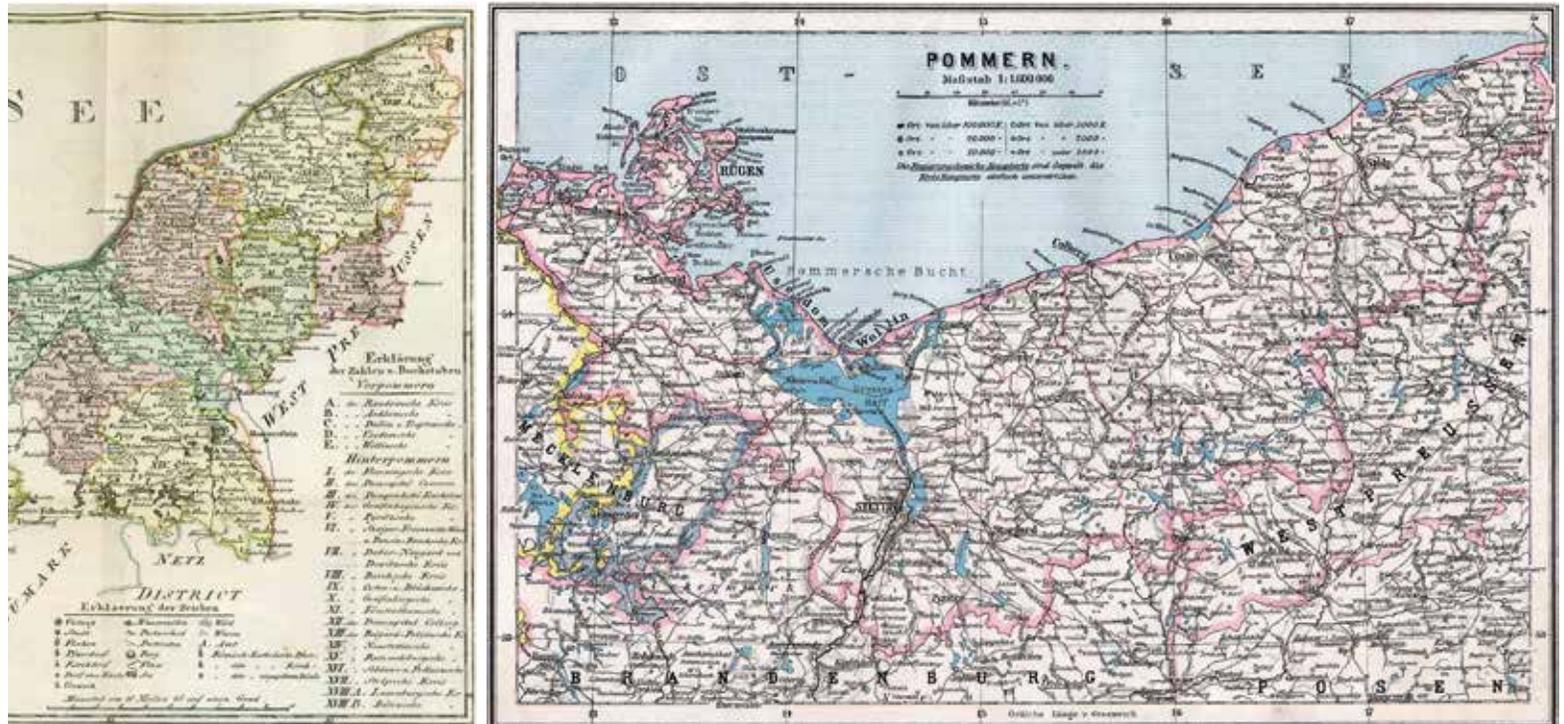
GEOPOLITICALLY CONTESTED REGION

by **Thomas Lundén**

POMERANIA

conditions of the population and their relations to the world beyond the boundaries set by the rulers.

Geography was defined by Torsten Hägerstrand as *"the study of struggles for power over the entry of entities and events into space and time"*.[4] Hägerstrand was interested in how different objects, regulations, and people found (or did not find) locations in a spacetime of changeing accessibility. This study focuses on three aspects of the geography of Pomerania: the *definition* of the area, in terms of bordering and containment; its *governance*, particularly in relation to the third aspect; its *demography*, in terms of the religious and ethnic groups which were allowed in or expelled from the area. Because of innovations in governance and culture taking place in the area, changes in religion and ethnic allegiance also occurred. My intention is to focus on how the changing external and internal boundaries of Pomerania and their various forms of governance reflect openness, osmosis, confinement and, expulsion in relation to domestic and immigrant populations. Examples will be taken from different time periods and different parts of the contested region; I will draw principally upon existing research literature.[5]

Pomerania: Defined and colonized

Pomerania is a relatively unequivocal concept: the Baltic Sea coast east of Rostock and west of Gdańsk and the area some tens of kilometers inland to the south. Politically it can be defined as a number of Pomeranian duchies, the outer boundaries of which have been relatively stable over many centuries, including the island of Rügen, which at times was a separate political

Announcement of the Treaty of Westphalia on the Steps of Osnabrück City Hall, by Leonhard Gey, 1880.

entity. But over this time span the area has been subject to very different geopolitical influences, often resulting in abrupt and profound impacts on its population, and partitionings into entities under fundamentally different regimes. The first evidence of a political territory of Pomerania seems to date back to circa 1170. Pomerania was as that time sparsely populated by Slavic-speaking tribes, and the Polish duke Boleslaw took control of it. Simultaneously the area was being Christianized from southern Germany (Rügen from Roskilde, Denmark) and there was an influx of Germanic-speaking settlers from the west. Political and religious refugees, Mennonite settlers from the Netherlands, colonized the wetlands of eastern Pomerania. Politically, the Pomeranian territories had the following names and durations up to the extinction of the Gryf (Griffen) dynasty in 1637:[6]

- The Principality of Rügen (1168–1325), a Danish fief under local rulers.
- The Duchy of Pommern-Barth (1372–1451).
- The Duchy of Pommern-Demmin (circa 1170–1264).
- The Duchy of Pommern-Stettin (circa 1170/1295–1464, 1532/41–1625/37).
- The Duchy of Pommern-Wolgast (1295–1474/8, 1532/41–1625/37) (1325–1478) including Rügen.
- The Duchy of Pommern-Stolp (1368/72–1459)

THE COLONIZATION PROCESS during the 13th and 14th centuries changed the ethnic structure of Pomerania. The population became Germanized through immigration and assimilation. Around 1500 there were still Slavic speakers in eastern Pomerania as evidenced by a prohibition in the council of Köslin in 1516 against speaking "Wendish".[7] The Protestant reformation was finally confirmed in 1535, when it was declared

a *Landeskirche*, its administrative territory covering the whole Duchy.[8] One of the things the Reformation brought about was that the extremely important fisheries came under ducal control, which had major political and economic consequences. The Church and also the nearby cities had had a large income from fishing on the Stettiner Haff. Their rights were, however, withdrawn by the duke, and fisheries were reorganized both fiscally and legally.[9] The Reformation also caused problems vis-à-vis neighboring Poland, which was formally ecumenical but had an increasingly hegemonic Catholicism, but both states were interested in shipping on the Oder and Warthe rivers, which would have put them in competition with Brandenburg.[10]

Westphalian Pomerania

In the Treaty of Westphalia at Osnabrück, 1648, Sweden received the whole of Vorpommern "forever", including the Island of Rügen, plus certain areas of Hinterpommern with the towns of Altdamm, Gollnow, and Cammin, the island of Wollin, and the area around the Stettiner Haff with the city of Stettin, which became the administrative capital. The main area consisted of the two duchies, those of Pommern-Stettin and Pommern-Wolgast, which had ceased to exist as semi independent entities with the death of the dynasty in 1637. The entire area was put under the Swedish Crown irrespective of the reigning dynasty, and remained part of the Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation and under German law.[11] The exact delimitation of Swedish and Brandenburgian Pomerania was bitterly disputed, and was finally determined by agreement on May 4, 1653, at the "Stettiner Rezess". For the first time, Brandenburg now reached the Baltic Sea east of Wollin. Formally, the duchy of Hinterpommern was founded in 1654 with the Elector of Brandenburg as duke, and a diet in Stargard decided on a constitution.

In spite of Brandenburgian attacks and incursions into Swedish Pomerania, Swedish control would last until the 1674–1679 war, when all of Swedish Pomerania except Stralsund was occupied. Under the Treaty of St. Germain-en-Laye in 1679, Sweden had to leave some territories on the right (eastern) bank of the Oder, including the town of Greifenhagen, now Polish Gryfino.[12] The new border ran between Gartz on the left bank and the southern outskirts of Stettin.

In Swedish Pomerania, local currencies would be kept, but the old division of Pomerania, going back to 1532/41, into the duchies of Wolgast and Stettin, remained, to the extent that each had separate currencies. Not until 1690 did Swedish Pomerania accept the *Leipziger Fuß*, a silver standard, which was accepted by the neighboring states.[13] A few years earlier, Swedish Pomerania invited the first Jews as merchants with the right to use currency (gold and silver), but the local bourgeoisie, which resented Calvinists and Catholics, managed to convince the government to expel all Jews in 1700.[14]

Swedish Pomerania was subject

"THE EXTERNAL FINANCES, CUSTOMS DUTIES, AND THE ADMINISTRATION OF LANDS AND FORESTS WERE UNDER THE CONTROL OF THE SWEDISH GOVERNMENT."

to Swedish military law, and was under the command of the governor general. The external finances, customs duties, and the administration of lands and forests were under the control of the Swedish government. Collection of customs duties was, at least at times, administered by Stockholm, and the customs at Wolgast, in particular, were especially remunerative, given the ships passing the town on the River Peene.[15] Postal communication included contacts with Sweden but also an international (or inter-ducal) line connecting Danzig with Hamburg through four postal offices in Swedish Pomerania. In 1698, Sweden and Brandenburg agreed to recognize their respective postal privileges and to regulate postal traffic across their border, with Stettin as the exchange center.[16]

AS A RESULT OF the Great Northern War (1700–1721), part of Swedish Pomerania was put under Danish administration from 1715 until, in effect, 1721, while the rest was administered by Prussia. The Danish reign was imposed on the territory through the steering and surveillance functions of the regional administration, the legitimizing and registration power of the ecclesiastical administration, and military repression. The Danish attempts to secure an absolutist state power met with resistance from the traditional power structure and conflict between the estates and between regional and local administration.[17] While Denmark appointed a local "government" in Stralsund, Prussia annexed its area to the administration of Pomerania with its capital in Stargard, since Stettin was under sequester from the Swedish reign. The whole area belonged to the Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation, and the Danish and Prussian regents changed representation on an annual basis at the German Diets. The boundary between the two areas was defined by the rivers Recknitz and Peene, which created problems, since the towns of Anklam and Demmin had fields on the Danish side, and in the case of Anklam, Prussia even claimed the right to the bridge across the river to the suburb of Peenedamm and its ravelin. To Wolgast, located where the customs at the Peene River were usually collected, the agreement between Denmark and Prussia meant a cessation of tolls, but during the whole period of Danish reign there were conflicts with Prussia about customs and illegal trade. On the whole the relations between the two governing states are described by Meier as bad.[18]

Towards the western neighbor, Mecklenburg-Schwerin there were also boundary-related problems concerning customs duties, land ownership, illegal crossings of Jews and Roma, as well as the escape of Swedish prisoners of war from Danish Pomerania. The few Jews living in Swedish Pomerania were expelled (with a few exceptions) while Roma were included under the prohibition of vagrancy.[19]

While Denmark lost the area, Sweden, in the Treaty of Stockholm in 1720, regained north-western Pomerania but lost a considerable part of its former territory: Prussia gained Stettin, the islands of Usedom and Wollin, and all of Pomerania south of the River Peene that had already been annexed. The towns of Demmin and Anklam thus went to Prussia, with the small Anklam suburb of Peenedamm remaining on the Swedish side of the Peene.[20] Both states had the right to the river, but there would soon be new controversies about the bridge Prussia took over as part of its fortifications, in spite of Sweden's claims. All merchants lived in the Prussian part, while skippers, carpenters, and the shipyards remained on the Swedish side. Most conflicts concerned fishing and fish vending rights, and negotiations were held in the Dutch mill at Peenedamm. Prussian and Swedish border guards stood just a few steps from each other, and even in times of war civilians could pass without hindrance.[21]

The internal Pomeranian border between Swedish and Prussian territories led to illegal trade nightly across the Oder and the Peene. By gaining Stettin and, in 1745, opening a canal outlet to the Baltic at Swinemünde, Prussia deprived Sweden of much of the customs income from shipping from the Oder through Wolgast and the Peene. The illegal border trade that had benefited from differences in prices and availability now turned to Mecklenburg.[22]

WHEN STETTIN BECAME PART of the Prussian empire, the area was opened to Calvinists, particularly French Huguenots, who in 1721 had been given privileges to settle, as they had done already in the Brandenburg Pomeranian towns of Stargard, Kolberg, and Stolp in 1687–1689. The larger colonization schemes in the wetlands mostly attracted Protestants from Pfalz (Palatinate), but under the enlightened monarch Frederick the Great, even Catholics were allowed to settle north of Pasewalk. There were

This drawing of Anklam and its suburb of Peenedamm was made in 1758 by Georg Hendrik Barfot of the Swedish navy. Before and after the war, the Peene River was the boundary between Anklam in Prussia and Peenedamm in Swedish Pomerania. By permission from Timmermansorden, Stockholm.

In Pomerania one can find the whole of Europe, history and all, compressed and comprehensible.
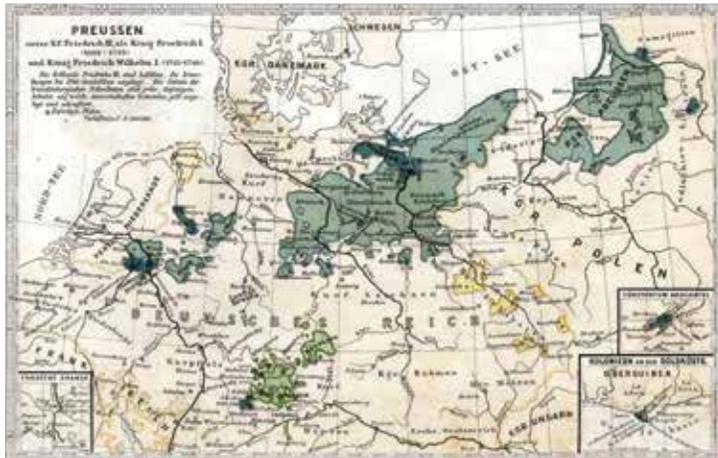
Prussia, 1688–1740.

Prussian uniforms in the 19th century.

several waves of settlement with different goals, the first beginning in 1747 in the Oderbruch wetlands but extending into Pomerania near Stettin, one in 1772 aimed at helping the large estates of Central and Eastern Pomerania with manpower, and another in 1780–1786 mainly consisting of small farmers. Szultka estimates the total number of settlers at 36,000, 70% of whom were immigrants to Prussia.[23]

In Prussian Pomerania the number of Jews was kept track of and restricted. Only one Jew, engaged in the import of kosher wine, was allowed to live in Stettin; others were only allowed as day visitors. In all of Prussian Pomerania there were 25–100 Jewish families, and they were not allowed to increase their numbers (the net result of births, deaths, and immigration emigration had to be neutral, at most). In Swedish Pomerania the attitude was even more negative, but a few Jewish families had settled, and when a royal mint was established in the capital Stralsund in 1757, the administration asked for permission from Stockholm to hire "Israelites", which was granted, in spite of opposition from the Pomeranian clergy and the bourgeoisie. In 1777, the governor general, in the name of the king, issued an edict allowing Jews by concession and under strict regulation to settle and trade in the duchy. Ten years later the Jewish congregation had about 150 members, slightly less than the number of Catholics, which mostly consisted of members of the garrison.[24]

Pomerania under Prussian rule

On October 23, 1815, Swedish Pomerania was annexed to Prussia, and most regulations were adapted to Prussian legislation, but the administrative partition of Pomerania remained, including, until 1874, the boundary between Anklam and Peenedamm. One curious exception from the territorial stability during the 19th century was *Rittergut Wolde* near Stavenhagen which, due to a centuries-old conflict between the duchies of Mecklenburg-Schwerin and Pomerania, was a self-governing enclave exempted from taxation and military conscription. Prussia and Mecklenburg reached an agreement in 1873 that divided the

area, thus slightly enlarging the province of Pomerania.[25] That the inner German boundaries were a hindrance to development is shown by the fact that a direct railway line between Berlin and Stralsund (both in Prussia) was long delayed because it would cut through the duchy of Mecklenburg-Strelitz and its capital Neustrelitz, causing problems with administration, customs duties, etc. Not until the German unification of 1871 and the subjugation of the duchies could the project be implemented. The line opened in 1878.[26]

In an edict of 1812, the Jews of Prussia were given citizens' rights – with certain exceptions, one being that the provisions were not applicable to territories recently annexed to Prussia. Consequently, formerly Swedish Pomerania was not included and this exception was in force until the Prussian Jews Law of 1847, and the regulations were followed strictly. The first Jews in Stettin arrived shortly after 1812, and in Prussian Pomerania the number increased to around 2000 in 1875.[27]

German unification in 1871 meant a further "peripherization" of Pomerania as a territorial entity. A demographic increase, resulting mainly from Stettin's industrial growth, masks two streams of agrarian exodus, one through Stettin Harbor towards North America (until this traffic was diverted to Bremen and Hamburg in 1896), and one westward towards the rapidly industrializing areas of western Germany. The lack of seasonal agricultural labor in 1890 forced the authorities to open the borders to neighboring Tsarist Poland (mostly ethnic Poles) and Habsburgian Galizia (mostly Ukrainians), reaching a peak of around 40,000 immigrants at the outbreak of World War I. The newcomers were forbidden to take industrial jobs in the towns.[28]

Pomerania in a new geopolitical situation: 1919–1939

The aftermath of World War I changed the geopolitical situation of Pomerania. The introduction of democracy through the Weimar constitution created a new system of governance, but the local administration of Pomerania was reluctant and recalcitrant.[29]

Phantom pains that never heal. Will the parts ever be reunited again? Likely not.

Poland was reestablished, and as a consequence an international border was delineated in the east and southeast. Part of Silesia was lost to Poland, which built Gdynia in order to avoid Stettin as an outlet. Swinemünde became the hub of the *Seedienst Ostpreussen*, a shipping service linking the mainland with the exclave of Ostpreussen and the Free Town of Danzig. A railway line though Stettin linked the same territories by sealed wagons through the Polish Corridor, and a motorway was secretly planned through the Corridor. [30]

Hitler's *Machtübernahme* in 1933 can be seen as a return to a pre-Weimar situation of Prussian authority, but it soon turned into a very different kind of governance, merging domestic and trans-border policy into authoritarian geopolitics. [31]

With the Nazi takeover, the rather small Jewish population of Pomerania, circa 6000, was step by step deprived of all citizens' rights, and some managed to leave the Reich. In 1938, after the Anschluss of Austria, the 2400 Jews of Stettin had to take care of 700 Austrian Jews until these were transported yet again. [32]

The Nazi German armament had a great impact on Pomerania. In 1937, the industrial conglomerate IG Farben was ordered to build a *Hydrierwerk*, a hydrogenation plant at Pölitz that would make aviation fuel out of coal from Silesia. In the years to follow, the plant would have disastrous consequences for the local population and for the territorial division of the area. [33]

World War II: Pomerania overrun

Nazi Germany's invasion of Poland on September 1, 1939, and the secret Molotov-Ribbentrop pact included schemes of forced resettlement of populations on a vast scale. Evacuation camps were built in Stettin and Swinemünde. [34] Pomerania seems to have been the first area of Nazi Germany to start the deportation of Jews. On February 11, 1940, around 1200 Stettin Jews were deported under extremely brutal conditions to Lublin in occupied Poland. One reason seems to have been a perceived need to find accommodation for the workers at the Pölitz plant. [35] Stettin also served as a hub in the transportation of Jews from Nazi-occupied countries. On October 30, 1942, the troop transport ship D/S Donau arrived in Stettin with 302 men, 188 women, and 42 children, all Norwegian Jews, for further transport to Auschwitz. Six men survived. [36]

In the war years that followed, the agrarian and remote Hinterpommern was used for the evacuation of civilians from the Ruhr and Berlin areas destroyed by Allied bombing. Forced labor was also recruited from Poland; some of these people were transported to farms on Rügen and in the Stralsund area where they were joined by other slave laborers from Italy, France, and Ukraine. [37]

Even before the outbreak of the war, the concentration camps in Pomerania were placed at military establishments. The Peenemünde complex used forced labor, concentration camp prisoners, and even prisoners of war. [38] The air base and aircraft production site at Barth also included a concentration camp. There was also a prisoner-of-war camp at Barth with Allied soldiers divided into Anglo-American and Soviet departments. In November 1944 around 150 Hungarian Jews were brought there to work, and until the end of the war younger prisoners were brought to Barth to speed up production. When the Soviet troops were approaching in April 1945, the prisoners were forced to leave, those unable to walk were shot, and others died or were shot during the retreat. [39]

The final months of the war affected Pomerania more than many other parts of Northern Germany. While the Western Allies bombed the military and industrial target of Stettin, Swinemünde, and Pölitz, the Soviet army advanced on land and, to some degree, on and under water, meeting desperate defense by the Nazi German army. Civilians fleeing from East Prussia, Danzig, and Hinterpommern were interspersed with the retreating and advancing armies. In Pomerania, Stettin and Swinemünde became centers to which the refugees had to pass on their way westwards. From the evacuated concentration camp Stuthoff, near Danzig, prisoners were sent on death marches through Hinterpommern, carefully divided into Jews and others. Some people were able to get to Rügen, Denmark, and Kiel, but many died of starvation, exposure to the elements, the Allied bombings of Stettin and Swinemünde, or simply by being murdered.

A new border is established: Oder-Neisse – a rule with exceptions

Excerpt from the Potsdam Agreement of August 1, 1945:

> **The three Heads of Government agree that, pending the final determination of Poland's western frontier, the former German territories east of a line running from the Baltic Sea immediately west of Swinamunde, and thence along the Oder River to the confluence of the western Neisse River and along the Western Neisse to the Czechoslovak frontier … shall be under the administration of the Polish State and for such purposes should not be considered as part of the Soviet zone of occupation in Germany.**
>
> Potsdam Agreement VIII: B

In an explanation to the Potsdam Agreement, the land boundary was defined as a straight line from the church in Ahlbeck on Usedom to the middle of the bridge across the Western Oder, three kilometers west of Greifenhagen (Polish: Gryfino), but in reality the boundary had to be modified in relation to the terrain. At meetings in Greifswald and Schwerin on September 20–21, the boundary was redrawn between the villages of Altwarp and Neuwarp (Polish: Nowe Warpno). The change was to be effective starting October 4. The former municipal center of Pölitz

"WHEN THE SOVIET TROOPS WERE APPROACHING IN APRIL 1945, THE PRISONERS WERE FORCED TO LEAVE, THOSE UNABLE TO WALK WERE SHOT, AND OTHERS DIED OR WERE SHOT DURING THE RETREAT."

Marking the new Polish-German border on the Oder River in 1945.

Refugees trail, eastern Germany 1945.

was replaced by Löcknitz, and the Kreis Usedom-Wollin, losing Swinemünde, had to move its administration to the insignificant resort of Bansin. A railway crossing the new boundary was deleted from the plan.[40] A further change of land was decided in the Treaty of Zgorzelec between Poland and the GDR, on June 6, 1950, giving Poland land at Ahlbeck in order to include the waterworks of Wolgastsee serving Świnoujście, and giving the GDR a piece of land of equal size towards the coast. Until the beginning of 1951, the Polish town was thus served with water from the GDR, involving difficulties of a financial, technical, legal, and security nature.[41]

The most remarkable territorial anomaly was the Pölitz exclave of the Soviet Occupation Zone (occupied, or directly under Soviet control), existing from October 4, 1945, to September 28, 1946, stretching from Ziegenort (Trzebież) to Stolzenhagen (Stołczyn), along the lower Oder, about seven kilometers wide, and separated from Germany by a slice of Polish territory 12 to 13 kilometers wide. It included eight parishes (*Gemeinden*) and was exempted from Polish administration and put directly under provisional administration by the Soviet Union. The intention was to dismantle the important Hydrierwerk without intervention from the Polish authorities. The exclave had German mayors belonging to the two recognized political parties, KPD and SPD. Telephone, telegraph, and postal connections were attached to Mecklenburg-Vorpommern. But most connections on land with Germany were impossible, since the Polish authorities required visas that were rarely given, and people were even robbed of their papers. Workers were recruited by force from Wolgast and shipped on dirty barges to Pölitz, working under severe conditions. The existence of a Soviet-German exclave with thousands of Germans just a few kilometers from

Szczecin was a bone of contention between Poland and the USSR. One of the last transports of workers back to Germany was captured by Polish border soldiers on Stettiner Haff and robbed of their belongings before being allowed to continue.[42]

The great expulsion

After the provisional Soviet and Polish take over of the area, an expulsion of Germans started. The Polish army pushed around 110,000 people out of Hinterpommern but was temporarily stopped by the Soviets who were in need of German manpower. The Potsdam Agreement contains a chapter regulating the expulsion:

> **§ XIII. Orderly Transfers of German Populations**
> **The Conference reached the following agreement on the removal of Germans from Poland, Czechoslovakia and Hungary:–**
>
> **The three Governments, having considered the question in all its aspects, recognize that the transfer to Germany of German populations or elements thereof, remaining in Poland, Czechoslovakia and Hungary, will have to be undertaken. They agree that any transfers that take place should be effected in an orderly and humane manner.**[43]

On November 21, the Allied Control Commission (ACC) agreed with Poland and Czechoslovakia that the evacuation should be carried out between the evacuation state and receiving zones in occupied Germany. The British Zone would receive 1.5 million people from "Polish Regained Territories", the Soviet Zone 2.75 million from Czechoslovakia and

"THE EXISTENCE OF A SOVIET-GERMAN EXCLAVE WITH THOUSANDS OF GERMANS JUST A FEW KILOMETERS FROM SZCZECIN WAS A BONE OF CONTENTION BETWEEN POLAND AND THE USSR."

Poland. The transfer was to start within 10 days in the beginning of the winter. Between November 20 and December 21 another approximately 290,000 persons were expelled via Szczecin.[44]

The ACC appointed an executive group to handle the expulsion but also the repatriation of slave labor from Germany.[45] After many controversies, tribulations, and atrocities during the expulsion, an agreement was reached on February 14 between Great Britain and Poland called *Operation Swallow* about sea transport between Szczecin and Lübeck in the British Zone of 1000 persons per day and train transport of 1520 persons per day from Szczecin to Bad Segeberg through the Soviet Zone. Poland would provide trains, food, and guards.[46] Between February 1946 and October 1947, another 760,000 Germans were expelled from the area under Operation Swallow according to a quota system. Specialists were saved for last, while those viewed as worthless were expelled first.[47] The deportees were mostly old people and women, only 8% were men of working age; no babies remained. Szczecin would serve as an operational center, but a capacity of 2500 did not suffice, given that 8000 arrived every day, many of them in very bad shape. On their way back from Lübeck to Szczecin, the ships carried Polish workers, probably slave laborers.[48]

On the receiving side of the new border, the British administration of northwestern Germany, including the mainly agrarian and unscathed Schleswig-Holstein, was badly prepared for the influx of refugees, not only through Operation Swallow but also "transit" refugees via the Soviet Zone and residents from the SBZ.[49] In a short time, the population of Schleswig-Holstein, receiving refugees from Pomerania, Danzig, and East Prussia, increased by 67% causing a partial conversion of the resident population into a kind of Danish identity, and even resulted in requests for a boundary revision that would cede Southern Schleswig to Denmark. In Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, part of the SBZ, refugees made up 43% of the population in 1949, coming mostly from Hinterpommern and East Prussia, and some were allotted agricultural land until 1950, but the settlement scheme was badly run and many abandoned it before collectivization. Szczecin also became a hub for Polish Jews returning from the Soviet Union and for further transport to Palestine.[50]

The Polish resettlement of "recovered territories"[51] involved severe problems. Many "colonizers" went west with the intention of plundering and then returning to Warsaw to sell the spoils. In the formerly ethnically mixed areas of Hinterpommern, autochthonous Poles complained that only 25% of the land would remain to them while new settlers would get the rest, many of whom did not know how to manage land. During Nazi rule many ethnic Poles and Kashubs tried to be classed as Germans on the *Volksliste*; now they tried to regain their former ethnicity. Some of these half Germanized farm laborers and farmers had served in the Prussian army or even in the *Wehrmacht*.[52]

After the first years of turmoil, the situation in the new Polish areas began to stabilize. From the areas lost in the east, there came families – sometimes a whole village. Used to traditional small farms on the fertile black soils, they now had to become accustomed to technically more advanced systems of cultivation on the meager sandy soils of Pomerania. From the destroyed towns of central Poland, there came young men, some of whom later brought wives from home. From Western Europe there came prisoners of war (ethnic Poles from German territories) plus a group of reemigrants from Germany, France, Belgium, and some other countries. But conspicuously few expatriates chose to colonize the new areas, and, in particular, the miners and steelworkers from Lothringia and Silesia had problems assimilating, while the relatively few workers from Germany conserved their ethnicity better, some of them settling in Szczecin. After the Ukrainian uprising in southeastern Poland in 1947, it was decided in "Operation W" to disperse the ethnically Ukrainian population and resettle them in a different part of the new territories. In the Szczecin area, around 65% of the population came from the central parts of Poland, the remainder consisting of people from the East or repatriates.[53]

The Soviet base at Świnoujście comprised the larger part of the seaport, the old and new fortifications on both sides of the Świno and the area of the old spa. In 1958, the spa area was opened to visitors, making it one of Poland's most important health resorts, but until 1957 Polish citizens needed a special visa to visit the islands of Wolin and the Polish part of Uznam. After an agreement in October 1991, the Russian troops withdrew to Kaliningrad in December.[54]

A closed border between "brother nations"

With the reestablishment of a Polish state and the creation of a Soviet Occupation Zone, transformed in 1949 into the German Democratic Republic, a border was established between two territories under the protection of the Soviet Union, with Soviet military in both of them. The German side was first called Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, but in 1947 the Soviet military administration ordered the *Landesregierung* to use the word "Mecklenburg" for the whole area, and the word "Vorpommern" was in practice forbidden until around 1985, and the Länder were abolished

Grotewohl (l.) and Cyrankiewicz walking to the Zgorzelec community center to sign the border treaty on July 6, 1950.

To cross a border is to create a relation. The movement becomes a link between two places.

in the GDR in 1952.[55] The border was determined and formally recognized in an agreement between Poland and the GDR on July 6, 1950, in Zgorzelec, the former eastern suburb of Görlitz.[56] But from the first demarcation in 1945 to late 1946, there were visa requirements for people crossing the border, except for the German population being expelled westwards. After that, until 1972, the border was closed to "ordinary residents in the border zone". Then it was opened to residents with identification cards, resulting in marked daily cross-border movements mainly for shopping purposes, which led to a new closure in 1980, with exceptions permitted for such things as emergencies and visits up on personal invitation. In 1989, with the fall of the Berlin Wall, the border was opened to those with passports.[57]

Poland gets a new neighbor

A Polish-German border agreement was signed on November 14, 1990. The border opened in 1991, but passports were still required because it was the boundary of the Schengen Area. A treaty on cooperation was signed on June 17.[58]

When Poland entered the EU on May 1, 2004, border controls were softened and coordinated into a simple one-step border station.[59] As a consequence, Germany regulated the import of Polish manpower for a seven-year period. On December 21, 2007, Poland joined the Schengen Agreement, formal controls on the border were ended, and several old local roads crossing the border were opened.

In spite of its openness, the border between Poland and Germany in Pomerania is part of one of the sharpest boundaries in Europe in terms of ethnicity, language, and religion. Border crossings are mostly instrumental, relating to differences in the supply and prices of goods and services.[60] There is little social interaction between population groups across the border, with one exception: the settlement of Polish citizens in the villages and small towns on the German side, due to the availability of relatively cheap and good housing (partly because of depopulation and westward migration[61]), and the proximity of the Szczecin job market.[62]

Conclusion

This study focuses on three aspects of the geography of Pomerania: The *definition* of the area, in terms of bordering and containment, its *governance*, particularly in relation to the third aspect, its *demography*, in terms of which religious and ethnic groups were allowed in or expelled from the area. In the long history of Pomerania, groups in the area also changed religion or ethnicity. Slavic-speaking populations were assimilated into "Germanness" both in medieval times and during Prussian jurisdiction, while Jews, defined by religion or by descent, under the same Prussian rule, were accepted and eventually integrated into society until, with the dictatorship of National Socialism, they were defined as aliens and expelled or exterminated. Finally, with the preliminary Oder-Neisse agreement, a territorial redefinition resulted in a giant redistribution of the population, an ethnic cleansing leading to a sharp ethnic divide between "Germans" on one side and "Poles" (with small and powerless minorities of Jews, Kashubs,

Belarusians, and Ukrainians) on the other. Many of the Polish Jews returning eventually left for Palestine/Israel or the US. A further complication was the factual division of Germany into two states with a closed border, which had repercussions on the German-Polish border area as well.

Some of these changes were the result of decisions made by political leaders in Berlin, Stockholm, Paris, Warsaw, and Moscow and at meetings of major powers. In other cases, changes took place through a slow, often intergenerational shift of allegiance. Obviously, social theories on migration only apply to a small extent. With the increasing openness of the German-Polish border since 1989, it is no longer the border on the ground but the border in the mind that keeps the Pomeranian state territorial division sharp. However, with the "western drift" on both sides, the German side is being partially emptied and to some extent refilled with Polish immigrants, an effect of *push and pull* factors. But in the long history of Pomerania, the most important factors in the demography of the area have been the intended and unintended geopolitics of the states involved. ❌

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