

Analysis of Internship at Central Statistical Office of Poland

Today, July 30, 2008, I have completed over 240 hours of internship work at the Central Statistical Office of Poland or GUS (Główny Urząd Statystyczny). My studies at my graduate school in Malibu, California, is focused on Public Policy with an emphasis on economics and econometric analysis. One of the main reasons that I have come to Poland (...) was to gain experience using statistics. My experience has been overall a positive one, and has benefited my studies and given me practical working knowledge as well.

The Central Statistical Office of Poland has been performing statistical research and releasing annual and semi-annual publications for decades. The Central Statistical Office is in Warsaw, however, there is a branch statistical office in each of the 16 voivoidships across Poland. These branches all submit statistics from their particular areas to the main central office in Warsaw. The data is then compiled and published in Annual Yearbooks. These publications include many different sections and areas of Poland.

Every since 2004, the duties and responsibilities of GUS have increased. In order to comply and satisfy all European Union statistical reporting regulations, GUS has been required to improve overall communication between EU institutions, and increase its capacity and reporting areas. This means an increase in the workload as well. It seems, unfortunately, from my brief stay at GUS, that the government is underfunding and understaffing the organization. Although the staff at every level of GUS is highly competent and professional, they are sometimes left to do tasks with a low amount of resources. There is a high turnover rate in the

workforce at GUS, and most workers are actively searching for a workplace that pays more, offers better benefits, and provides an overall better work environment.

My first day at GUS was spent getting acquainted with the Director of the Demographic Surveys Division, and who would become my closest friend (...). She gave me a warm Polish welcome to GUS, and showed me my desk and workspace. I would be working with three employees, who specialized in population migrations, and was determined to learn as much as possible from them. (...)

I learned about almost every single department, spending more time in those where I could refine my skills and pick up new information. I learned about International Statistics, Labour Statistics, Public Relations, Information Technology, and Projections and Analysis. It was this last department where I spent most of my time.

The Projections and Analysis Department's main job is to perform projections and estimates on population in Poland. Most recently, the department had published a publication on what they thought the population trends would take from the years 2000-2030. As luck would have it, I arrived at a moment where the projection's department was adopting a new model to forecast its estimates. The director of the department told me that she would be grateful if I were to help implement this model, called the Rogers-Castro model, into use at GUS. I read through the working paper written by Rogers and Castro, and attempted to gain an insight on how best to use this model. After many hours of research, I decided to send an e-mail to Rogers himself (who I found was on the faculty at Colorado State University) who explained his model to me, involving the complexities that may be found in implementing it in Poland. He also recommended that I speak to an (expert) who lives in Warsaw (..) I passed along this information

to my director, and by some strange stroke of luck, found that the (expert) works at GUS! She is actually the Secretariat General, and European Union representative (a very good contact to meet). In fact, I have met other great, well known professionals in their fields through GUS. The experience I gained, and the contacts that I made, will be an invaluable resource for me in the future.

The internship experience has benefited me on many levels. For one, I have gained experience that I can bring back to my home university, and to my future workplace. Secondly, I have gained contacts, and have learned from their wealth of knowledge. Finally, and most personal to me, I have formed relationships and friendships with every single one of my fellow employees at GUS, and will miss them all very much. I will never forget my internship at GUS.