



Migravalue Project – Output of WP 4.2

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Social Programme of Integration of Re-emigrants

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1. Diagnosis of the migrant's situation – what makes them leave, and what makes them return

1.1 Economic area

A primary motivation of economic migration is first of all a difficult financial situation – insufficient means of subsistence for family and self. A secondary motivation of migration is a desire to increase one's life capital relating to, among others, aspirations and a low esteem of one's own opportunities of development in the country of origin. As the studies carried out show, 39% of the respondents see as the main cause of their leaving to work abroad financial difficulties, their own or their families', as well as perceiving their own financial situation as relatively worse than others. The migrants surveyed in predominant majority (79.1%) stated that on leaving the country their income was below the national average, with 21.7% assessing it much below the average, 18.6% below the average and 38.8% stated that their income on leaving was more or less below the average. Moreover, 32.8% of the surveyed pointed to difficulties in finding any job or a well-paid job as one of the primary motives of leaving. The above data allow to reach a conclusion that migrating persons take up gainful employment abroad because of a financial crisis of self and the family expecting a job abroad to enable them to cope with their financial difficulties and to reduce the crisis.

It ought to be emphasised that by working abroad a part of the migrants surveyed (41.9%) plan to improve the standard of living, their own and/or that of their family, understood as an ability to provide better food and clothing. One third of them (30.5% of the surveyed) want to allocate the means made in Italy (or abroad) to buy or redecorate a flat, house, while 17.1% of the migrants prefer to allocate the money made to buy durable goods, such as new furniture, a computer, equipment, a car, etc.

A significant group of the surveyed see in working abroad a means of increasing one's intellectual capacity as regards acquiring new qualifications (10.2%), a practical command of a foreign language (25%) and getting to know another country (35.9%). Increasing one's intellectual capacity can be perceived as an investment for the future and opening up new possibilities of development.

A desire to ensure a better future for the children is the most often mentioned aim of saving means made abroad. The second position is taken by a specific purchase (e.g. a car, a washing machine, and so on). Quite an important reason for saving (the third position) are uncertain life circumstances. A desire to have a larger financial capital at one's disposal is mentioned only as the fourth reason for saving – and the fifth one is putting money away for one's retirement. The migrants surveyed quite often indicate the fact that they are saving to keep something for a rainy day, which shows their uncertainty of the future and a low sense of social security.

While staying abroad migrants estimate their current income compared to their income in Poland in various ways. 34.9% of the surveyed estimate their income as good, above the average in the country of origin, compared to an income in Poland;

45% estimate their income to be at the average national income level; 10.9% see it as disadvantageous (below or significantly below the average). It means that most of the surveyed are not satisfied with the level of income abroad, 63.3% estimate their work to be partly well-paid, 19.5% estimate it to be below their expectations and capabilities; and only 6.3% estimate it to be fully well-paid. These data find their confirmation in the information acquired from the Lublin Revenue Office: in 2006 1074 migrants from Lublin province and from Lublin reached abroad an income below 37.024 zlotys, 349 people reached an income below 74.048 zlotys, while only 95 people – an income above 74.048 zlotys.

Consequently, the financial situation of migrants and their families does not undergo a significant improvement, but improves their current standard of living because 36.4% of the surveyed claim that thanks to working abroad they can make a living, 44.2% of the respondents put aside small sums of money, while 7% can afford to put aside larger amounts of money. While estimating changes in their families' financial situation, the surveyed assess positively the effects of their work abroad, seeing it as a significant improvement of the financial situation of the family – 25%, and 33.6% as a partial improvement of the financial situation, altogether 58.6%. This level of satisfaction can be a factor discouraging migrants from further staying abroad, on condition there are changes in the country of origin enabling them to reach an income at the national average level.

The economic effectiveness of gainful employment abroad is often in real terms lower than assessed by migrants themselves. It results from the fact of converting income abroad into zlotys according to the buying power of the currency in Poland. Migrants, especially during the first period of their stay abroad, assessing the profitability of their income do not take into account the costs of living in Poland and abroad (costs of living in Poland are significantly lower than in the western countries of the EU).

1.2 Psychological area

Emigrating is in itself a very stressful situation because it causes changes in many spheres of life. When we convert potential stress-generating factors accompanying migration into points of stress, based on the theory of Holmes and Rahe¹ we receive a score of 430 points (fourfold of the most stressful event which is the death of a spouse – 100 points). That is why migrants experience very poignantly symptoms of stress connected with leaving their country such as fatigue (declared by more than 50% of the surveyed), irritation (42%), annoyance (38%), numbness of limbs (35%), and insomnia (20%).

Despite this, the psychological situation of migrants is not homogenous. Their way of experiencing migration varies depending on the motives for emigration, success or failure and presence (or absence) of the family in the host country. People working abroad who are alone, who have left because of a difficult situation of their

¹ Holmes, T., Rahe, H. (1967). The social readjustment rating scale. *Journal of Psychosomatic Research*, 11, 213-218.

family, do not have a chance to visit their family and country and do not earn an expected amount of money are in a particularly traumatic situation. At the same time, there is a section of migrants who emigrate together with their families, who have well-paid jobs and who consequently experience little stress connected with staying away from their country of origin *“I have come here to work and I am here with my wife (...). The pursuit of money has a very bad influence on the family situation, there is no community (...). I am happy I am with my wife (...). In your own circle you can meet with your closest friends, just like I meet with my family (...).”*. These characteristics illustrate extreme psychological situations of migrants seeking gainful employment.

According to Hugo's model², migrants are constantly comparing specific locations in terms of gaining possible advantages and acuteness of inconveniences which they can encounter there. The group of migrants we surveyed most frequently mentioned as an inconvenience connected with leaving to work abroad: separation with their family (mentioned as a loss by 80% of the surveyed), loss of a job in the country of origin (16%) and the expense of health (13%).

On the other hand, the primary advantage of emigration is financial benefit (mentioned by 89.1% of the respondents). Among other benefits of emigration, 54.5% of the surveyed perceive a chance to learn a foreign language, and 45.5% - getting to know another country.

Meanwhile, in the estimates of location of the country of origin the most important inconveniences – the reasons for which the migrants have left – are: financial difficulties (declared as the reason for emigrating by 45% of the respondents), difficulty in finding a satisfying job in Poland (45% of the surveyed) (*“Our only aim is to make money. In Poland it is not possible to work like that, and here you can work”*. *“There is poverty in Poland, no jobs”*. *“Emigration is only and solely a matter of finances, but life has forced us into it”*.)

Migrants are most often delegates of their families who are supposed to achieve financial goals, considered as important. For this reason they feel obliged to attain them. A failure – an inability to accumulate the planned amount of money – makes it for them a reason for shame and causes reluctance to return: *“It is not so great to admit one's own failure, a mistake, that you see – it is not so cool there, because we do have a myth, the American dream and such, that it is so colourful, beautiful there”*.

In face of a difficult situation caused by financial migration, many people take extreme situations as their reference (comparison) point. One of the women surveyed put it in the following way: *“it is difficult, but it was worse in concentration camps and in spite of this people survived” – quote literally!* It shows the power of determination with which they strive to achieve an aim set by the needs of the family.

Migrants experience a great sense of loneliness, intensified by an inability to share their difficult situation with the family and receive support from them, because they are afraid of lack of understanding on their part (shame, reluctance to cause their family to worry).

There is a mechanism of self-confirmation in the decision of emigration, which translates into selecting information they receive about the situation in the country of

² Hugo, G. (1982). Circular migration in Indonesia. Population and Development Review.

origin. *“My dad’s godmother left in 1985 (...) talking to her is like talking to some Robinson – we have nothing in common and it is difficult to persuade her that it is different, that it is better, because her children are now doing better there than herself, and it seems to her that it is quite the opposite”*. This mechanism is additionally strengthened by migrants’ families who confirm them in their conviction about a difficult situation in their homeland.

One of the additional motives for emigration, which can also be a significant barrier for returning, is an escape from problems in the country (family, financial, legal, etc.): *“Visiting home is always like despair (...) Because my husband drinks, because I have debts, etc.”*; *“Lack of financial means, a poor job”*. *“They have to provide for their children’s education”*.

Staying abroad results in weakening of the ties with the family, with a group of friends left behind in the country, with one’s community and in diminishing the importance of some of the values cherished before. The study shows a difference (a diminishing of significance) of such values as: success in life (an average in the group surveyed before emigrating: 2.86; after emigrating: 2.73); an exciting life (an average before emigrating: 2.25; after 2.04) and a comfortable life (the averages respectively 3.08; 2.76). The reason for diminishing the importance of those values for migrants can be found in difficult life and working conditions, which they have to cope with, thus accepting lower standards than in the country of origin.

A long stay away from the country causes a loss of sense of acceptance for one’s own life environment, changes within the self-image – the so called: *“servant syndrome”*.

1.3 Social area – work, family, community of the host country, migrants in institutions

Work

Migrants most frequently do hard, physically and mentally exhausting and badly paid jobs. According to the assumptions of the theory of dual market these are normally jobs that local people do not want to take up. They give a smaller chance of professional development: *“He had better working conditions in my firm because he wore a tie, and now he is going to prune apple trees there or pick blueberry, but anyway – higher wages and a guarantee that he can find a job abroad easier.”* *“Polish people are well-educated, compared to other nations; but even those well-educated work in places or jobs that are not up to their education and aspirations.”* *“I feel unemployed here. I am an art historian and I cannot find anything proper for my education.”* *“We often do not say what education we have because then we are ashamed of the jobs we do in Italy.”*

On the whole, migrants do jobs inconsistent with their qualifications (65.6%), only 12.5% do jobs, which are fully consistent with their qualifications, and 13.5% -

jobs partly consistent. Due to this, for a definite majority of the surveyed work abroad does not guarantee professional development and promotion. 66.4% of the surveyed do not expect this promotion in the country and – 71.1% do not expect it abroad.

Working conditions abroad are assessed more favourably than chances of professional development: 66.4% of the respondents consider them to be satisfactory, out of these 19.5% consider them to be completely satisfactory, while 46.9% to be partly satisfactory (e.g. *“More and more Polish people work in fair conditions and not illegally.” “People develop and we are not at the same place all the time”*.). That does not mean that all migrants are satisfied with their working conditions. For example, a group of women working as carers and housekeepers declare that their working conditions are not satisfactory, and in some cases they even point to humiliating working conditions. *“In Poland workers’ rights are not observed; it is similar in Italy too, but at least you can make some profit”*. *“(…) a lot of people work 24 h a day”*. *“Women mainly clean and look after the house (the study). They normally come from villages or from small towns”*. *“People learn hard capitalism here”*. *“Some Polish people make money using others, nobody will pass a job on to anybody for free”*. *“Treatment in the family – you work too long, people are used for hard work, treated like servants”*. *“My wife (…) where she works there are lots of Polish women. She has to do everything there – wash the old lady, change the old man’s nappy, wipe his bottom, bring a bedpan. She is often fed up with this job. Try lifting an old lying man of 120 kg”*.

Poorly-educated migrants, who come from little towns – remain abroad working in very difficult, even humiliating conditions, but in spite of this they do not show any initiative to improve their situation: *“Those who come to Bologna are usually common, uneducated people from «Poland `B».”*³ *They are afraid of everything, to do any business, to move around in a big city, they do not know the language”*. *“A majority of Polish people constitute those from Kielce region, Podkarpackie voivodship and the «Eastern Wall» and these are basically women of retirement or pre-retirement age who look after people not much older than themselves here”*.

Quite a disadvantageous situation at work, hard conditions, heavy burdens can be the factors encouraging migrants to return.

Family

Among the surveyed who have a family in Poland, there is a conviction that separation has an adverse influence on their marital relationship, to a lesser extent on their relations with children.

Migration weakens emotional ties with the family and a group of friends left behind in the country. Although only a part of the migrants signalise presence of some changes in family relationships, more than one out of ten assesses as adverse their

³ «Poland B» – a common name for the parts of Poland that – for historical reasons – are underdeveloped, if compared to the other parts of the country, and estimated to be neglected, as a rule, by those ruling the country. «Poland B» is mostly Eastern Poland, regions along the Polish border, also called «Eastern Wall».

relationships with children (10.3%), with husband/wife (11.9%) and parents (16.1%). Contacts with friends, acquaintances (39.5%) and neighbours (24.4%) are definitely weakened. Thus, it can be assumed that as a result of these, the whole situation of the people who have migrated – within the communities they have left – changes.

Deterioration of relationships can reach the level of a complete breakdown of the marriage. Migrants find it easy to enter into informal relationships in the country of destination.

It ought to be added, that the study carried out among people who have returned to the country (55 respondents from Lublin province) has allowed us to determine the character of the changes in social relationships after the return. The relationships that improve most often are those with the children (23.6%), with husband/wife (14.5%) and with parents (16.4%). A positive return to neighbourly relationships (7.3%) and other acquaintances (10.9%) is far less common.

Ties with the host country

The following aspects of migrants' everyday life are worth drawing attention to:

- accommodation conditions, living standards: *“It’s unfit for habitation”. “Even if we are treated badly here, like servants. Women are usually tied up to a family they live with”. “We did not buy meat because it was too expensive when converted into Polish money, but we bought a piece and I made something to last longer”. “There is no good meat, bread here, one cannot find the sausage of ours”.*
- alienation from social relationships in the host country and from relations with compatriots: *“We don’t have a good image as Poland, Polish people among the Polish community abroad because nobody cares”. “Polish people abroad do not hold ties. They don’t come to the meetings of their own accord”. “(...) Women drink a lot because they can’t cope with stress (...) Polish people don’t know how to organise their free time, after work they stay at the station and kill the time”. “Contacts among Polish people are very loose. Often because they work too much. Italian people are horrible and they often abuse foreigners”. “It’s a failure to have an Italian man”. “Polish women tend to enter into relationships with Muslims. However, you have to take into account that it is a different culture, mentality, and Polish women – quite independent by nature – can’t be happy with them. Polish women who marry Italians are also unhappy”.*
- breakdown or weakening of family ties: *“When I talk to my sister tears run down my cheeks over the phone (...); I hope she comes because she is my only sister so I miss her. I can also see it in my parents’ (...). Our child was born, we had difficulty choosing a godmother, for example, they are not in touch, only by means of photographs”. (...) “Sometimes, when Saturday comes, a summer evening, we feel like having a barbecue with the family (...) but they aren’t here – although I have a sibling, she is not here”.*
- breaking social ties with the country and lack of this type of ties in the host country: *“The older ones, on the other hand, don’t want to integrate, they shut*

themselves away in their own circles and drink vodka. They also meet at church. And they go to the consulate only when they really have to". "It's a completely different country out of Rome. There are different rules there, the situation of Polish people in the rural Italy looks even much worse in every respect". "Italian people treat us as second class citizens". "Italian people treat all foreigners badly". "Thanks to the Pope they treat Polish people somewhat different, a bit better". "Problems happen. Windows in Polish people's cars are broken (...)". "(...) Our peers, I'll say, I was ashamed of their behaviour. If you receive guests you expect them to be somehow well mannered and [while being guests themselves] they were behaving as if they were in a paddock – some of them forget that there are some rules of good manners, behaviour (...). They think that, yes – here, but out there we can do whatever we want, we can speak Polish, swear (...)".

- specificity of “family” stays;
- role of knowledge vs. lack of knowledge of the language in the (official, social) relationships with the community of the host country: *“On the contrary young people have no complexes and come because they want to. They fully integrate, they speak Italian well. Young people feel well everywhere”.*
- knowledge of the language as a condition of free functioning in the job market: *“(...) with a knowledge of the language, for communication, after a year of work you can really have quite good conditions, including a car and a good job”. “My sister also has better conditions of professional development – she is learning the language now. With the knowledge of the language you can get promoted faster, become a supervisor after only a few months”. “I don't need a language to wipe somebody's bottom”.*

Knowledge of the language can both make it easier to establish ties and consequently to stay in the country of immigration and – at the same time – be a factor creating remarkably good conditions for reducing the period of emigration. People who know the language can make more money, which allows them to achieve their economic goals quicker and to return to their country. Knowledge of the language also makes it easier to overcome barriers, including bureaucratic ones, which conditions a return to the country of origin (e.g. terminating a work contract, returning payments etc.).

- a constructive, supporting function of trade unions *“There are organisations helping foreigners, they are well informed, know the procedures (...). “There is a Polish volunteer providing free help in the seat of Italian Trade Unions (...). “The Italian Trade Unions gave me information which made it easier for me to fix”.*
- administration unfriendly to migrants. Low level of services makes it difficult to accommodate, to familiarise oneself with one's rights and to exercise them: *“(...) bureaucracy in Italy is extremely developed”. “The greatest difficulty at work is bureaucracy, an unfavourable treatment of foreigners”. “The main problem is definitely a lack of understanding between Polish people working here and their employers. It results from a different mentality as well as language problems. Rotation is also a huge problem – an employee never knows how long he will work at one place*

(...)" *“Problems with documents – with getting the so called ‘fiscal code’ (codice fiscale), Italian people can’t read our [original] documents.”*

Migrants in institutions

Way through institutions – how they function – what to change

The decision to take up a job outside Poland starts a way through institutions in the host country. Unfortunately, many Polish migrants surveyed in Italy do not know and cannot cope with them. It increases their sense of insecurity in the new environment.

Lack of information on employment agencies, places and offers of employment as well as on employers (including, what is stressed by the surveyed, lack of warning against swindlers, against abusing workers and not observing the labour law, against a risk for women coming to work) creates a situation of confusion and uncertainty for migrants. The only support, which they find in a network of migration ties with friends and family, which is the main source of information on a specific job abroad (friends 39.9%, family 32.9%) constitutes for many of them a basic guarantee of some level of security.

The institutions which a migrant goes through are connected with the stay (accommodation), work (a work permit, preventative screening before taking up a job, opening a bank account). If, however, not everything proceeds as planned by a migrant – it becomes necessary to turn to social institutions.

Almost all the surveyed (90.6%) had, mainly a single (66.4%), contact with medical institutions during preventative screening connected with taking up a job. These were not only single therapeutic contacts – emergency medical treatment in a health centre or hospital (56.3%), but also hospitalisation and examinations connected with pregnancy and/or birth (7.0%). It can, thus, be assumed that because of health reasons and problems migrants often come into contact with health care in the host country and also that the respondents assess the functioning of the health care rather positively. Not taking into account those who have not come into contact and do not express their opinion, more than every third of the surveyed (36.7%) expresses a view that health care for foreigners working in Italy does not need to be improved and 16.4% claim that a change needs to be introduced.

Those who express opinions on changes emphasise a need for greater availability of medical care, including access to specialists, shortening the period of waiting for a specialist consultation (*“too long periods of waiting for examinations”*), difficulties communicating with the staff caused by the lack of knowledge of the language (*“sometimes it is difficult to communicate”*). One of the respondents’ opinion expresses a wider view on the functioning of the health care in the host country. *“Italians themselves have problems getting emergency medical treatment. There are long queues, sometimes you have to wait half a day to see a doctor. Foreigners as a rule can’t afford to take half a day off work so they don’t go to the doctor.”* That is why, as another of the respondents assesses, changes should have a character which is

“national and not only for foreigners”. Thus, the respondents suggest changes which point to a ruined myth of ideal medical care away from our country.

To eliminate a necessity of using health care in the host country many migrants preventatively take with them basic medication in routine situations (cold, pain) and such medicines which a doctor in the country prescribed them earlier.

Among the surveyed there were people who used local welfare services while staying abroad. This form of support from institutions is normally used by those who find themselves in a really difficult position. Most often it was dinners (14.8%), less frequently clothes and/or shoes (7.0%), subsidising treatment and/or buying medicines (5.5%) as well as, exceptionally help with paying for the flat (2.3%). Although most of the surveyed maintain that they did not find it necessary to seek social welfare, for a part of those who needed it, this help turned out to be difficult to get. Those interested in help had difficulty getting a subsidy to pay for the flat (7.0%) and for treatment and medicines (4.6%) as well as getting a maternity benefit, a possibility of eating dinners and other social benefits.

That is why while assessing welfare services for foreigners (with the exception of those who have no experience of or opinion on the subject) the respondents more often expressed an opinion that the services should be improved (22.8%) than the opposite one (18.7%).

Suggestions of changes include not only increasing the availability and a range of social services and their better organisation: *“providing shelter for the homeless”*, *“subsidising families with a large number of children”*, *“access to one-time welfare benefits”* but also *“better information where you can get such help.”* It is here, in the lack of information for migrants, where the essential barriers may lie in using, in case of necessity, social welfare in the host country. *“I know Caritas functions. I don’t know of any other organisations, I suppose there are few of them.”*

Conclusions:

1. Migration is an efficient way of providing financial support for one’s family, however it is often not possible to determine how effective this way is, especially while taking into account the psychological, social and economic expenses incurred by migrants.
2. In many cases, migration – while solving problems related to providing possibilities of development for the family (improving the financial situation of the family, creating opportunities, prospects for the children) – creates a risk of a family crisis and even its breakdown at the same time. The situation in which the migrants function is internally conflicting.
3. The situation of migrants in the host country, objectively in many respects is a situation that should determine the decision of return to the country of origin. The real wages are not drastically different from those they could get in Poland. At the same time they pay huge psychological and social costs, accepting the discomfort of the stay, not infrequently living in conditions worse than in their own country. Therefore it can be supposed that there are certain mechanisms which act in a way preventing those people from returning to the country.

4. Migrants are convinced that while working abroad they achieve greater social security and better living conditions than in their country. It is because it's easier to find a job abroad than in Poland. They assume that even with an average income they will be able to make a living for themselves and for the family in the country. Such convictions are accompanied by acceptance of much worse living conditions than they would accept in the country of origin.
5. Migrants often accept jobs below their qualifications and aspirations, compared to the jobs they would be inclined to take up in Poland.
6. Providing migrants with remuneration (in the country of origin) at the national average level can be a sufficient economic factor encouraging them to return.
7. The migrants we have surveyed have a very low tendency to postpone consumption because of pessimistic predictions referring to the economic situation in Poland, including an expected high inflation. That means that they will very quickly allocate the money they have made, first of all to cover the current needs and to buy consumer goods, because of decreasing usefulness of money.

2. Factors conditioning return

2.1 Situation in the country of origin on a macro scale

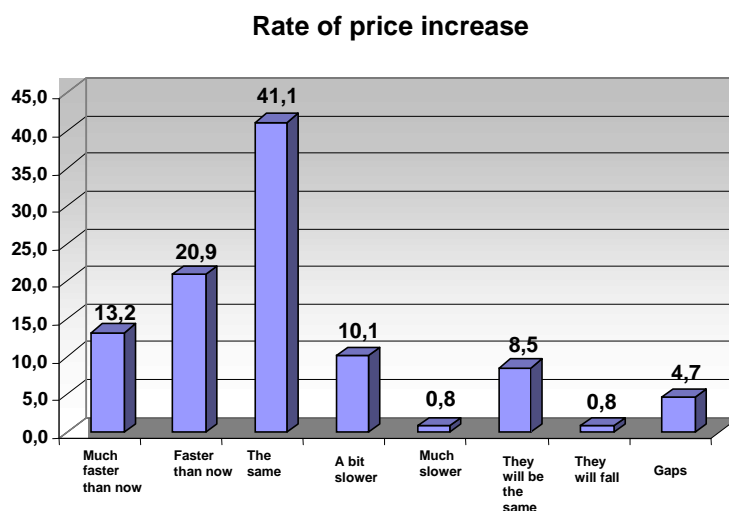
A factor which in an essential way affects migrants' decisions of return are their predictions about the future and prospects of the country they have left. The expectations are formed on the basis of available information coming from the surrounding reality (the media, relatives, other migrants) and – depending on the subject of predictions – they have different subjective probability of occurrence. They concern changes in the demographic and social status of their families, the economic status thereof (the general economic situation) as well as future state of various economic phenomena, such as: the level of inflation, the rate of unemployment, the expected future income etc. Katona shows that the vision of the future formed by households (migrants and their families) has a significant influence on their current and future patterns of behaviour.⁴

Among the factors conditioning their return, in the first place the migrants surveyed mention the possibility of getting a job. Next they mention higher wages (as compared to those they had in the country before leaving) and also higher old-age pension. In the third place they mentioned better living conditions, better prospects and a higher standard of living (with a special emphasis on accommodation issues), as well as better administrative and legal conditions for business activities. A condition necessary to meet migrants' expectations is to improve the economic situation in Poland to such an extent that people who work could get such payments that would fully satisfy the needs expressed by them.

⁴ Katona G. (1975). *Psychological economics*. New York: Elsevier

According to the migrants, it is necessary to change the policies of the state and the way the state is operated. It can be a result of the migrants' image of Poland and Polish politics shaped by the (Polish and foreign) media accessible to them. The media heavily stress the controversial events and put little emphasis on the positive transformation taking place in the country. It can be noticed, too, that the negative image of the situation in Poland is intensified by the information migrants receive from their families remaining in the country. As the study conducted indicates, not rare are the situations where this image seems consciously shaped in a negative way with the aim of motivating the migrant to increase the level of support of the family or at least to keep the stream of financial means flowing. Consequently, it can be clearly seen that the surveyed have an image of the economic situation in the country significantly different from the real one (see table 1). 34.1% of them are of the opinion that the prices will rise faster and much faster than they do at present. The opposite opinion is however expressed by almost one third of the surveyed (10.9%), whereas nearly half of the surveyed think that the rate of price increase will stay at the current level within the next 12 months.

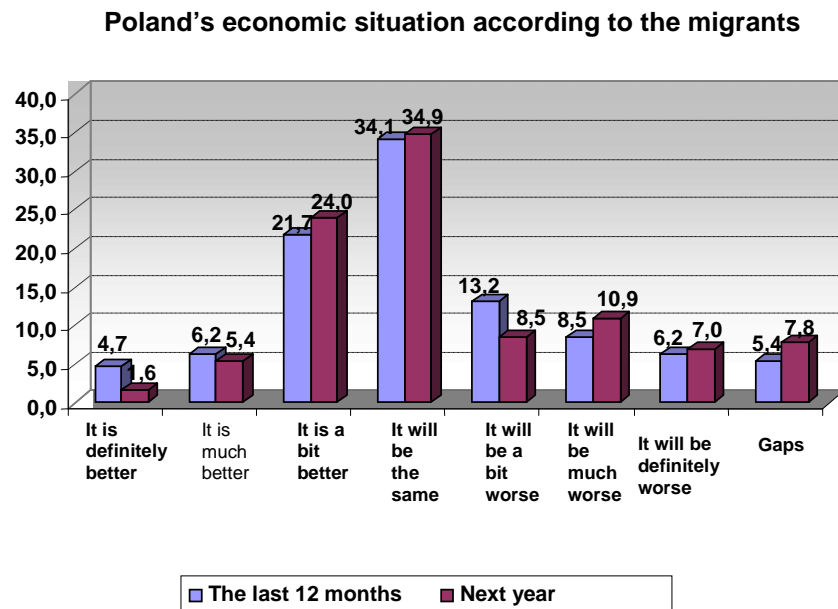
Figure 1. Price formation in Poland according to migrants' opinions



More than one third of the people surveyed claim that the economic situation of Poland, currently and within the next year, will remain the same (see Figure 2). Almost one third of the surveyed (27.9%) think that within the last 12 months it has been worse than it used to be before and almost the same number of people (26.4%) are convinced that the economic situation in Poland will deteriorate even further. 21.7% of the migrants are convinced that it is a bit better and almost the same number of people hope that the economic situation in Poland will improve within the next year. If 34.9% of the surveyed migrants think that in the near future the economic situation of the country will be the same, and 26.4% claim that it will be even worse,

this can constitute a strong motivation for them to continue working abroad and not to think about returning to the country.

Figure 2. Assessment of the economic situation in Poland within the last 12 months and prediction of the situation within the next year



The perception and prediction of inflation has also, among others, a significant influence on the migrants' behaviour concerning consumption and allocation of the financial means⁵. The rate of inflation in the country as expected by the migrants was on an average level of 35%, which again – if compared to the real level of inflation – indicates a rather unrealistic and very negative image of the economic situation of the country and its transformation. As the Main Statistical Office states however, that within the last 12 months of 2006 the prices of consumer goods and services increased by 1.4% (compared to 0.7% in the same period in 2005).⁶

2.2 The migrant's individual and family situation

The migrants assess the influence of their emigration on family relationships in a clearly negative way. Family crisis or difficulties of bringing up children are quoted as reasons for reducing the period of migration and coming back to the country. This phenomenon sometimes takes the form of circular migration, during which a migrant spends a few – a dozen or so months abroad and then returns to the country to foster the relationships and restore family ties. This type of migration concerns especially

⁵ Gacparski P. (1991a). *Economizing – psychological characteristics of motives*. A research report. The Economist, No 2-3, pp 347-353

⁶ <http://www.stat.gov.pl>

migrating women: *“Some women come to Poland for some time and then they are in Italy e.g. for 4 months. “Toing and froing” women.”*

A part of the surveyed are aware of non-economic costs they have to bear as a result of separation with:

- family, friends,
- living environment,
- the home country.

“My sister has a family here, it’s me, of course; you can’t talk about friends, however. There are some aunts, uncles – people whom I always meet at the table, she knows they are the family but she is not in touch with them.” “Polish people are very lonely here because they are away from their families. There are no whole families who have emigrated here, like e.g. in Germany.”

They declare to be ready to return on condition of getting a job, even if it was nominally less paid than their current earnings abroad: *“What makes Polish people return? It could be some new jobs and a relatively fair income.” “If it was possible to return to the country I would hotfoot it!” “(...)Even poorer but in Poland”; “There is a very good way of making Polish people not stay here – let them earn at least 2/3 of what they have here and right away you will not find them here.”*

The present migration from Poland is characterised by three features:

1. Young people with no families leave Poland. That means that the elements of family ties linking them to the country play a lesser function. What more, it should be supposed that a part of them will start a family away from the country of origin, so this factor will not determine the decision of return for this group.

2. Migrants who have families leave them behind in the country. Data from the Main Statistical Office for 2004 show that among migrants who were married and started a family, only 20.3% left as the whole family, together with the children. In most families only one of the family members went to work abroad and the others stayed behind in the country. This tendency is also confirmed by earlier data. In 2002 out of almost 260 000 households from which someone emigrated, in 78.9% cases only one person from the household was out of the country⁷.

3. Women constitute a vast group among young people leaving the country. Among people who have temporarily left the country there is a preponderance of women of all age categories over men. Altogether, in 2004 275 301 women of the age of 20 -34 left the country for a period of time longer than 2 months; it means 48 316 more women than men of the same age.⁸ What more, according to the official data those who leave most often are women below 35, so those who are at the peak of their procreation age. It can be assumed that many of them are mothers with small babies – but babies left at home.

It can therefore be understood why the people surveyed mentioned the following elements as those felt as adverse effects of emigration: separation with the

⁷ Z. Kawczyńska-Butrym. Family in economic migration. In: *The situation of family in modern society – experiences of Central-Eastern Europe* Ed. J. Gorbaniuk. (in print)

⁸ Z. Kawczyńska-Butrym. Micro-social prospect: individual and family gains, costs and losses. In: *Migration – a challenge for the 21st century*, Ed. M. Zięba (in print)

family (67.2%), breakdown of the family (18%), loneliness (11.7%), lack of ability to follow a child's development or loss of contact with a child, pathologisation of the family and emotional problems (13.4%). That means that the family situation can be a significant factor making migrants return to the country. Considering additionally an improvement in the family relationships, which takes place after the migrant's return to the country, the return can be treated as panacea for numerous family problems caused by migration.

It is not right to ignore the new ties indicated by the surveyed, originating as related to emigration and which, based on similar life experiences, can be (become) strong and even prevent the migrants from returning to the country. New relationships compensate migrants for the costs related to breaking ties with friends or acquaintances left behind in the country of origin and constitute a form of satisfying the need of closeness and a sense of security. Those new contacts form a basis for functioning in reference groups.

3. Actions supporting (the decision) return.

As the analysis conducted shows, one of the primary factors creating good conditions for taking the decision of return is a change of the economic and social situation in the country of origin. According to the migrants' suggestions these are: a change of the situation in the job market (an opportunity for them to find a job), an increase of remuneration (an ability to earn at least the national average, understood as the amount which in their opinion guarantees maintaining provisions for a family).

Another essential element considered by the migrants while taking the decision of return to the country is their family situation. Family is a factor strongly emphasised by the migrants in the context of a decision of return.

Therefore, the primary activity should be to change the stereotypical family roles, in which the basic responsibility of a parent, in particular that of a father, is to provide financial and material means. Making migrants realise the significance of closeness with other members of their family, of participating in their children's everyday activities, will allow them to appreciate more accurately the importance of various kinds of costs and benefits connected with migration.

Action needs to be taken providing migrants with efficient information on real changes taking place in the social and economic situation in the country of origin, especially in the sphere of job opportunities and remuneration offered. These activities should not be limited only to providing statistical data but also inform of specific job offers and possible remuneration. Creating a possibility of finding a job in Poland will significantly facilitate a migrant's decision of return to the country, reduce a risk of failure and the economic and non-economic costs connected with changing a job and a place of living. The migrants' image of Poland is also not without significance during their stay abroad: *“The state could do a lot, by sending migrants positive information. (...) I know that a large part of them receive information from Radio Maryja, or information heard from someone; else they still have the same information as 5, 10, 15 years ago – when they left the country; it seems to them that nothing is changing (...) and even if some positive information gets to them, it is foreshadowed by negative one*

– some scandals..”. *“Italian TV ignores us. They don’t even show jokes on the Kaczyński brothers..”*. *“It is difficult to get information about Poland. Most often we call home and receive information from the family..”*. *“A lot is changing in Poland”*. *“Instead of caring for the standard of living of Polish people, internal struggles are going on all the time”*. *“Italian TV doesn’t talk about Poland, they know only about ‘Solidarity’”*. Therefore, it is necessary to see to the image of Poland as a country, especially in the (national and foreign) media and in other channels of distributing information (e.g. churches) accessible to migrants. A system of legal information and educational services (especially learning the language of the host country) should be an element which strengthens the ties with the country of origin as an institution and which simultaneously helps migrants achieve the goals (make more money, save more abroad) mentioned as a condition of their return to Poland.

An important factor allowing migrants to reach a decision of return would be an ability to receive extensive help in the process of re-adaptation to the conditions in the country after a longer absence.

4. Hypothetical situation on return

On return migrants face a necessity of re-adaptation to the conditions in the country of origin.

Re-adaptation concerns various spheres of life, which underwent a transformation during their stay abroad.

Firstly – one has to take into account the changes in the family and parental relationships that have taken place. There is a necessity on part of both partners to adapt to daily life in community, to which they are no longer used. They also need to adjust to the process of children’s development, which took place without their direct involvement. All these could bring about a need to make a recourse to some form of family counselling which would facilitate re-adaptation of all family members to a “normal” functioning.

Secondly – all of the migrant’s non-family social relationships underwent a transformation during their economic migration. Some friendships and neighbourly relationships were weakened, which could cause a lack of a sense of social support and isolation. Therefore, it appears necessary for the local authorities to take actions integrating re-emigrants into the community they have left for some time.

Thirdly – they come to a country, which is in a different economic situation from the one at the moment they left. To a country where one can perceive increase of salaries⁹, of investments, of housing construction. To a country with low inflation, with economic growth¹⁰, with a radical change in the job market (unemployment is

⁹ An average monthly gross income in the enterprise sector for the first half of 2007 was 2,775.41 PLN and it was by 8.4% higher than a year before (last year an increase by 4.6% respectively). In the public sector, in turn, an average monthly gross income was 2,769.69 PLN, that is by 9.6% more than a year earlier (data from the Main Statistical Office, <http://www.stat.gov.pl>)

¹⁰ An initial estimate of the gross domestic product (GDP) for the first quarter of 2007 confirms a steady high rate of economic growth. GDP in the first quarter of this year, compared to the same period of 2006, has really increased by 7.4% (data from the Main Statistical Office, <http://www.stat.gov.pl>).

approaching the level considered as “hygienic unemployment” – in June 2006 it was at a level of 12.4%), so to a country of significantly improved life prospects for its inhabitants.

To what extent are the people working abroad aware of those changes?

To what extent are these changes attractive to them and how can they relate to their individual and family visions of the future?

To what extent can they see the significance of their own financial and life capital (also acquired out of the country, like the knowledge of a language, professional experience, new qualifications, an increase of self-confidence) for the process of transformation occurring in their country?

Therefore, what actions should be taken and by whom in order to make re-emigrants realise the significance of the process of transformation occurring and to help them find their own proper place and role within the process?

On the other hand, a general improvement of the standard of living is still little noticeable, similarly to an improvement of the functioning of institutions (health care, transport, customer service in many institutions, relations with the employer). Re-emigrants, especially those who are used to slightly different standards of employment and conditions of services in many institutions, can feel such a situation in the country as a particular discomfort.

And that also raises a question of how – at least at a level of local communities, where we most often come into contact with institutions – to change the standards of functioning of public institutions and the level of their services?

Both the groups of questions should be posed in local communities. It is there that we should seek practical solutions which improve the standards of living and of making use of various institutions, services and other rights for Polish people who come back to the country and not only.

5. Conditions of permanence of the return

According to the model of introducing changes in a process, the following stages should be considered:

- defrosting the old situation;
- introducing a change;
- consolidating the change.

In case of migration the first stage (defrosting) amounts to taking a decision of returning to the country, concerning which a migrant should be given specific help: information, legal advice, various types of counselling, and so on.

Within this process, the return itself to the country of origin, with an intention of permanent stay, should be considered as a change, while the period of the first 3 to 12 months of stay in the country – as a period of consolidating the change. The key aim of the third stage is the social and economic re-integration of a re-emigrant.

On returning to the country after a longer stay abroad, people have to re-adapt to the situation in the place of their origin. Family provides a part of support in this process. In case of a successful migration – like saving a large sum of money – returning to one’s social environment will be easy. Thanks to their social contacts, the

family that stayed permanently in the country of origin will make it easier for a re-emigrant to re-establish contacts with the circle of family and friends. In a natural way, migration experience becomes an interesting subject for social gatherings and can be one of the possible reasons for the new tightening of contacts loosened or even broken during the stay abroad.

However, negative experience – a failure of stay, not achieving the goals set, etc. – will result in trying to conceal it, which will in a natural way disrupt the process of re-integration.

In consequence, it can lead to social isolation of the whole family – mechanisms, which in this case lead to social isolation, are the same as in the process of limiting social contacts by unemployed people. This situation necessitates institutional assistance so that the family could treat the migration of one of its members as a success, and so that it should not become a cause of excluding him/her from the circle of friends.

Professional integration of re-emigrants is connected with returning to work or starting one's own business. Because many re-emigrants worked in a different field than before leaving the country, their stay abroad is often connected with losing a part of their skills, their professional knowledge becoming outdated or even with a phenomenon of forgetting one's profession. In order to enable the migrant's effective return to a profession they exercised before leaving the country, it is necessary to provide supplementary training during which the migrant can revise and update their knowledge, get back to their professional habits and rebuild the necessary skills. Taking into consideration technological changes taking place in the work place, a part of the contents of training will develop completely new skills connected with operating the most advanced machines and equipment.

In case of starting one's own business, if its object be a result of expanding one's professional experience gained during a period of migration, the integration will consist in entering the circle of entrepreneurs of the country, membership in business associations and establishing contacts with potential co-operators in the country of origin. Such process is quite difficult in Poland because there exist a number of organisations at a variance with each other and there is lack of comprehensive economic information.

When one starts a business with the use of the capital accumulated, without drawing upon professional experience from work abroad, one must meet the same conditions plus additionally revise their plans prepared before leaving the country, taking into consideration the current economic situation in the country of origin.

6. Actions for social re-integration in the country of origin

The areas of facilitating re-adaptation should be:

Actions assisting the return to the family and local community (including improving family and social relationships), taking up a new job, a possible change of place of residence (renting, buying a flat);

Professional training allowing the migrant to find a place in the local job market.

Services connected with improving the standard of living of migrants and their families, ensuring the children's return to a different educational system;

Legal advice and counselling allowing migrants to make an effective use of the financial capital they have brought with them and new skills, competencies, experience and contacts in the country of origin;

An important element strengthening the use of the potential of people coming back from abroad should be actions aimed at facilitating taking up economic activity. Especially – taking advantage of the contacts and relationships in the economic environment in the country in which they used to work (e.g. with their former employer or a specific entrepreneur they were in touch with).