

# The Economic and Social Implications of Post-Accession Migration from Poland as Depicted in Weekly Magazines

## Introduction

The aim of the paper is to analyse topics in the public debate on the recent wave of emigration after Poland's accession to the European Union. The main focus in the analysis is on the impact of the recent wave of emigration on the Polish labour market and its social implications. The public debate is understood as a kind of discussion of a particular subject that often continues for a long time and in which people (especially public figures) express different opinions. The opinions, being widely spread through various means of mass communication, become quite often the basis of a *common sense* understanding. The public debate consists of many elements, such as press articles, TV talk shows, soap operas (e.g. *Londoners*), political discussions, experts interviews. The debate on post-accession emigration has been quite intense in the field of social and economic science. More and more research institutions, teams and individuals have taken up the issue of post-accession migration as a main field of study. The results of these studies have been presented and discussed in detail during many conferences, panels and meetings.

The media text presenting opinions on the recent wave of emigration can be empirical material for content analysis of the main topics in the debate. What is being analysed is the *representation* of a problem, in our case – the recent wave of emigration from Poland. *Representation* can be defined as a way “the world is socially constructed and represented to and by us in meaningful ways”.<sup>1</sup> The *representation*, in other words, is a socio-cultural construct that does not have to be “objective” or “true”. This analysis compares the *representation* of the recent wave of emigration and emigrants themselves to empirical data to reveal the ideological or mythical dimensions of the media representation.

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<sup>1</sup> Ch. Barker, *Cultural Studies. Theory and Practice*, London 2008.

In this study I have focused on press articles presenting various aspects of recent emigration in two weekly magazines: "The Politics" (pol. "Polityka"), and "The Common Weekly" (pol. "Tygodnik Powszechny"), each of them having different ideological and political connotations. "The Politics" is a weekly magazine of a new-liberal, left-wing connotation, whereas "The Common Weekly" is considered to be a more conservative, Catholic magazine. Both of them include articles that relate to the most important recent social, political, economic and cultural issues. Both of them have a long-standing tradition in Poland and have been in print for over 50 years now. However, it has to be clearly stressed that such a selection, limited to two weekly magazines makes no claim to be representative of the whole press debate. The aim of the paper is much more modest, it just seeks the reflection of the some voices in press articles on migration. I have selected 71 articles (50 from "The Politics" and 21 from "The Common Weekly") published between May 2004 and May 2010 which touch upon the issue of post-accession migration from Poland. All the articles have been coded according to code frame and then analysed quantitatively and qualitatively (content analysis).

## The Dynamics of Press Debate on Migration

The public debate on the post-accession wave of emigration in Poland presented in the two magazines has had its own dynamics. It has been intense at some particular periods, especially between 2006 and 2008. In the first two years after accession, the main topics of the debate included issues such as:

- immigration regulations for new EU members (the open labour market for new member states, free movement within EU),
- new destination countries (especially the UK, Ireland and Sweden),
- the number of emigrants who are leaving Poland,
- socio-demographic and professional profile of 'new' emigrants.

Between 2006-2007 the primary topics in the debate were:

- professionals' and experts' emigration (especially medical experts)
- economic effects of emigration for home and receiving countries,
- the gap in the Polish labour market (experts, skilled workers),
- the everyday life of emigrants in receiving countries,
- job careers abroad (upward/downward job mobility connected to social deprivation of Polish graduates),
- the social implications of emigration, such as family break-ups, the phenomenon of "euro-orphans", difficulties with adaptation/integration and the sense of identity.

Between 2008-2010 the last wave of emigration is not the main concern in the public debate. However, the main focus in press articles has been on:

- return migration at the time of recession,
- economic difficulties of return,

- socio-cultural difficulties of returns,
- the balance of the last five years of the recent wave of emigration.

## The Economic Effects of Post-Accession Migration from Poland

The effects of post-accession migration on the Polish economy have been discussed quite often in both magazines since 1<sup>st</sup> May, 2004. In 23 out of 50 analysed articles in "The Politics" (46%) and 14 out of 21 (67%) articles from "The Common Weekly", authors discuss this issue. In many articles the issue of the economic effects of emigration is described with the help of experts' opinions or is based on various studies (mainly in "The Politics"). However, experts' opinions are not used in clear and consistent ways. Authors in the press reports or features ask migrants about their opinions, which are quoted in the text. In "The Common Weekly" there are also opinions of clergymen quoted in a few articles. The effects of migration on the local economy that are pointed out in the articles are evaluated as "positive" or "negative". In some cases it is quite difficult to associate the effect to one of the categories. For example, salary increases in some sectors of the Polish economy can be considered to have been a "positive" effect, but on the other hand, when the salary increases are higher than the level of efficiency, the final effect – inflation – is "negative". There are not many differences in the *representation* of the economic effects in two magazines. The positive changes caused by migration from Poland can be described in terms of a "cause-effect" chain. In the light of the press debate the emigration is linked with such effects as:

- money transfer to Poland that has an effect on:
- the level of consumption (standard of living),
- investments (property market, local infrastructure),
- decrease in surplus labour force,
- decrease in unemployment,
- economic growth (GDP).

Even if all these effects are not linked in the analysed press articles, they are seen as linked and the overall picture is fundamentally optimistic.

On the other hand, the analysed articles in both magazines include opinions on negative effects of emigration on the Polish economy. The main concerns are:

- gap in the labour market (professionals),
- inflow of experts and skilled workers from the beyond the eastern border,
- disappearance of the local spirit of entrepreneurship.

The wave of recent emigration is considered to be the main cause of a huge gap in the Polish labour market especially in specific sectors and professions. The gap is considered to be filled by professionals and skilled workers from abroad, mainly coming from beyond the eastern border. So, the first effect is at the same time a cause of the second one. Despite the fact that the opinions about positive effects of emigration are mentioned a bit more often, the *representation* of the effects of the migration under-

stood as a construct seem to be ambivalent. All effects – both negative and positive one – are presented in table 1.

**Table 1.** The impact of recent emigration: economic effects

<b>“The Politics”</b> <b>(pol. “Polityka”)</b>	<b>“The Common Weekly”</b> <b>(pol. “Tygodnik Powszechny”)</b>
<b>A: Positive effects on the Polish economy:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• money transfer to Poland</li> <li>• increase in consumption</li> <li>• new investments (property market)</li> <li>• economic growth (GDP)</li> <li>• surplus labour decrease</li> <li>• unemployment decrease</li> <li>• salary increase in some sectors</li> <li>• labour market open for new workers (Asia, Africa)</li> </ul>	<b>A: Positive effects on the Polish economy:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• money transfer to Poland</li> <li>• increase in consumption</li> <li>• new investments (self-employment)</li> <li>• surplus labour decrease</li> <li>• unemployment decrease</li> <li>• salary increase in some sectors</li> <li>• higher poverty line</li> <li>• development of local infrastructure</li> </ul>
<b>B: Negative effects on the Polish economy:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• gap in the labour market (professionals, skilled workers)*</li> <li>• the inflow of professionals and skilled workers from behind the eastern border</li> <li>• disappearance of the local spirit of entrepreneurship</li> <li>• increase in the illegal employment (no tax paid)</li> <li>• decrease in external (western corporations) investments</li> <li>• local salary increase higher than efficiency</li> </ul>	<b>B: Negative effects on the Polish economy:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• gap in the labour market (professionals, skilled workers)*</li> <li>• the inflow of professionals and skilled workers from the beyond eastern border</li> <li>• disappearance of the local spirit of entrepreneurship</li> <li>• local salary increase higher than efficiency</li> <li>• lost balance of the age of population (pension system)</li> </ul>

\*Professions which faced the gap after 1<sup>st</sup> May 2004: medical experts, scientists. Skilled workers – mainly in construction sector.

The effects of the recent wave of emigration discussed in the magazines need to be verified in the light of empirical data to reveal the ideological dimension of the debate. In the category of “positive” effects of migration, money transfer is the most often mentioned positive effect of migration. Due to quite a big difference in average salaries between Poland and receiving countries, emigrants’ transfers can be a considerable part of family budgets and investments in Poland. Data from the National Bank of Poland indicate that the annual amount of money transferred from emigrants to Poland has increased each year from 2.6 bn euro in 2004 to 5 bn euro in 2007.<sup>2</sup> However huge this annual “extra” income seems to be, it cannot be con-

<sup>2</sup> I. Grabowska-Lusińska, M. Okólski, *Emigracja ostatnia?*, Warszawa 2009, p. 199.

sidered as the main factor in GDP growth in a country as large as Poland. Migrant transfers' role in GDP is insignificant and is being exaggerated in press articles.

Even if transfers cannot significantly influence the national economic growth, their role on the family budget, consumption level, local infrastructure and investments is hard to overestimate. Research conducted in the UK indicates that 37.5% of Polish migrants transfer or spend one/fourth or more of their salary in Poland.<sup>3</sup> Much research into the way migrants' transferred money is being spent indicates that the main field is everyday consumption (42%-90%, depending on the research). Everyday consumption includes expenses for basic needs essential for economic stability of migrants' families. The second category often pointed out are expenses connected with life satisfaction, such as entertainment, travel, small investments in home redecoration, new hi-tech devices and kitchen implements. The third category of expense is connected with various kinds of investment in extra education (their own and migrants' children, new qualifications), small businesses such as shops, restaurants, garages, and agro-tourist farms. All these initiatives taken up by migrants or their families develop the local infrastructure.<sup>4</sup>

In many press articles, authors point to the decrease in surplus labour force in Poland as a positive effect of recent wave of emigration on Polish labour market. This aspect has a quite solid empirical basis in relation to young graduates entering the labour market, as well as a large surplus of workers in the agricultural sector of economy. In the light of the demographic data, young graduates from Polish universities entering the labour market have been part of a baby-boom. The Polish labour market would not have been able to absorb them due to their large number and its structural inability to adjust (low demand for qualifications offered by graduates). From the perspective of the labour market rules this category of potential actors can be viewed as surplus labour force. The same can be said of workers employed in the agricultural sector of the economy. Due to the process of economic transformation, the structure of Polish employment has been changing. The huge (in comparison to western Europe) percentage of workers employed in the agricultural sector has shrunk. Emigration of workers from this category is described in literature in terms of "crowding-out". For both categories emigration has been the best solution to avoid marginalization in the Polish labour market.<sup>5</sup>

Another, quite often discussed effect of migration in the press article sample is the decrease in the rate of unemployment in Poland. This is a good example of a mythical way of understanding the effects of emigration. The correlation between the rate of unemployment and the number of emigrants leaving Poland in the overall popula-

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<sup>3</sup> M.P. Garapich, D. Osipović, *Migpol. Badanie sondażowe wśród obywateli polskich zamieszkałych w Wielkiej Brytanii i Irlandii*, Wrzesień, Mig Research – Grupa Żywiec S.A., 2007, [online:] [http://www.polishpsychologists.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/12/Raport\\_migpol.pdf](http://www.polishpsychologists.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/12/Raport_migpol.pdf), 26 June 2010.

<sup>4</sup> I. Grabowska-Lusińska, M. Okólski, *Emigracja ostatnia?*, p. 199.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibidem*, *passim*.

tion is rather weak.<sup>6</sup> As many studies indicate, unemployed people rarely emigrate. The category of the unemployed in Poland is varied. The dominant strategies of long-term unemployed people are based on the reduction of expenses to social welfare allowance or pursuing black market jobs, sometimes for a long time.<sup>7</sup> Recent research indicates that most of the post-accession emigrants are people employed in various sectors of the economy in Poland who are not satisfied with their low salaries and working conditions. Low salary is the main "push factor" in the process of migration. Even in the case of young graduates with no job experience, their entering the Polish labour market would only mean a low salary and probably a job with no reference to their qualifications, not necessarily unemployment. In the group of twenty-five young immigrants (graduates) to Ireland, whom I asked about their job experience in Poland during in-depth interviews in 2008, just one of them said that he had not been able to find any job in Poland. Twenty-four out of twenty-five had had full-time or part-time jobs during their studies or just after graduation, but salaries and working conditions had been unsatisfactory. The one who had not been holding down a job had not even looked for one because he had decided to go abroad just after graduation.<sup>8</sup> Another argument quite often provided in the press debate – that those who emigrate would leave more posts on the labour market to fill by the unemployed – is another myth. In the case of skilled workers, such as a plumber or carpenter, the gap can only be filled by the unemployed with appropriate qualifications and skills, but such workers usually have a more or less stable job. The rate of unemployment is the effect of many economic, social and political factors. Emigration might be one of them, but its real impact on unemployment is very difficult to measure. In the light of empirical data, the explanation, "big number of emigrants means lower rate of unemployment", is a myth. It can be viewed as a way of *common sense* explanation constructed for ideological purposes (e.g. to support a political party and its ideology).

Among the negative effects of post-accession emigration from Poland discussed in press articles are the gaps in the Polish labour market. The topic of skilled workers, as well as highly skilled professionals, leaving the country, has been raised many times in an aura of a serious threat for the Polish economy. In the case of skilled workers in such sectors as construction or customer service, that gap can be supported with appropriate empirical data. The gap in the construction sector has been especially noticeable in the context of a huge construction boom after 2004. In 2004, 114.9 thousand permissions for housing investments were issued. Since then, the number of permissions has increased each year reaching its peak in 2007 (247.7 thousand) and then slowed down (GUS/Central Statistic Office 2010). At the same time qualified construction workers could have quite easily (especially in years 2004-2007) found a job in their profession in Ireland, where the average salary was 4-5 times higher.

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<sup>6</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>7</sup> *Socjologia bezrobocia*, ed. by T. Borkowski, A. Marcinkowski, Warszawa 1996.

<sup>8</sup> M. Dzięglewski, *Bariery na drodze integracji polskich emigrantów poakcesyjnych w Irlandii*, "Studia Migracyjne. Przegląd Polonijny" 2011, Vol. 2, pp. 131-148.

This strong "pull factor" caused quite a noticeable gap in the Polish labour market in construction. Many articles published in the weekly magazines analysed also refer to the emigration of highly skilled and well-educated specialists, mainly medical staff: physicians, surgeons, cardiologists. This category's position in the Polish labour market is considered to be one of the most deprived. Low salaries and terrible working conditions are, in the opinion of journalists and medical specialist themselves, the main argument for leaving the home country. Dreadful working conditions include long working hours (no time for family life), feudal character of Polish public health institutions, and barriers on professional careers (nepotism, caste-structure). However, in the light of empirical data there is no evidence of mass emigration of medical staff from Poland. Polish doctors who want to apply for a job in the EU, have to obtain a certificate confirming their qualifications from The Central Medical Chamber. In the first few months after Poland's accession there were just a few applications for a certificate. In years 2004 and 2005 according to CMC about 4,000 medical specialists left Poland, which constitutes 3.3% of all the employed in the Polish medical system.<sup>9</sup> This number is not significant and does not threaten the stability of the Polish medical system. The aura of mass emigration of highly skilled medical experts is another example of constructing a mythical thread in the press debate.

Another issue discussed in the press articles is the inflow of skilled and unskilled workers and specialists to fill in the gaps in the Polish labour market. Poland, traditionally a country of emigration, does not have much experience receiving large numbers of immigrants. One can observe the accumulation of factors that favour emigration from Poland with no factors in place which could attract immigrants. Poland is one of the countries with the lowest percentage of immigrants within the European Union, which is estimated around 0.1% of the population (in many EU countries, the proportion is around 15% or more).<sup>10</sup> The reason for the insignificant number of immigrants to Poland is not just economic. Too strict immigration and naturalization policies make the country less attractive for potential immigrants. The need for a modern migration policy (including emigration and immigration) has been raised since the late 90s by politicians and demographic and economic experts. The public debate on the migration policy felt a special impulse after Poland's accession to the EU, but it is still under discussion. According to a report from the Central Statistics Office, the number of immigrants living in collective households in 2008 was estimated to be 10,242 people.<sup>11</sup> Of that number, 26.6% of the immigrants were

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<sup>9</sup> G. Ciechomska, E. Ey-Chmielewska, *Gotowi do emigracji?*, "Gazeta Lekarska" 2004, Vol. 10, [online:] <http://www.gazetalekarska.pl/xml/nil/gazeta/numery/n2004/n200410/n20041013>, 26 June 2010.

<sup>10</sup> Instytut Pracy i Spraw Socjalnych/Institute of Labour and Social Studies, *Założenia programu polityki ludnościowej w Polsce. Raport w sprawie polityki migracyjnej Państwa*, 2003, [online:] <http://www.ipiss.com.pl/opracowania.html>, 26 June 2010.

<sup>11</sup> GUS/Central Statistics Office, Department of Population Research, *Informacja o badaniach zasobów imigracyjnych w Polsce w roku 2008*, 2008, [online:] [http://www.stat.gov.pl/gus/5840\\_8243\\_PLK\\_HTML.htm](http://www.stat.gov.pl/gus/5840_8243_PLK_HTML.htm), 26 June 2010.

Ukrainians, 9.2% Byelorussians and 4.2% Chinese. Only 38% of immigrants over the age of 15 were employed or self-employed. 57% indicated themselves to be 'passive' in the job market. Active in the job market, 1/3 of the employed immigrants worked in the agricultural sector (unskilled workers), 18% worked in the construction sector, 16% in various segments of industry and 13% in education. The empirical data suggest that unskilled workers found employment in sectors "abandoned" by Polish emigrants, but because of the huge number of emigrants (around 1.1 m by the end of 2006 according to Grabowska-Lusińska and Okólski<sup>12</sup>) and rather insignificant numbers of immigrants (around 10,000-15,000 a year) the balance remains markedly negative. The threat of an immediate, massive inflow of immigrants to Poland presented in some press articles is yet another myth. The change of a country's profile from an emigration into an immigration country is a long-lasting process. This is a question of the future, the question that strongly depends on the country's immigration policy. Even after the EU enlargement in 2007, the potential immigrants from Romania and Bulgaria did not arrive to Poland. For many immigrants, Poland is just a transit country, a door to better developed western labour markets.

The last, and a quite often mentioned aspect, of the recent wave of emigration discussed in the press is the disappearance of a local spirit of enterprise. Some journalists argue that the migrants' families in Poland became dependent on money transfers from abroad. The transfers are treated as a stable income in the family budget. Recent research indicates that the money is spent mainly on everyday consumption and small-scale investments, such as house redecoration. The allocation of migrants' income mainly for consumption does not generate any new jobs in the Polish labour market. As a result of transfers, migrants' family members living in Poland do not take up any initiative to get a job. This situation might be true only in some regions with a large number of emigrants, such as Upper Silesia (pol. Opolszczyzna). In that region about 30,000 families can live thanks to money transferred from abroad.<sup>13</sup> According to Romualt Jończy who conducted extensive research in Opolszczyzna, this region having the highest standard of living in Poland is being quickly depopulated. Migrants' transfers instead of creating a new job opportunities demotivate migrants' family members who depend on money transferred from abroad.<sup>14</sup> However, it is difficult to estimate what part of migrants' salaries is invested e.g. in small business creating new jobs. Due to lack of empirical data the correlation between emigration and the level of local spirit of entrepreneurship cannot be verified. Some research, however, indicates that in many cases the decision to emigrate is made in the hope of accumulating economic capital essential to investing back in the home country.

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<sup>12</sup> I. Grabowska-Lusińska, M. Okólski, *Emigracja ostatnia?*

<sup>13</sup> B. Łabutin, *O emigracji zarobkowej mówi profesor Robert Rauziński*, "Gazeta Opole" 2004, 16 November, [online:] <http://opole.gazeta.pl/opole/1,37656,2395132.html>, 26 June 2010.

<sup>14</sup> R. Jończy, *Migracje zagraniczne i zatrudnienie na obszarach wiejskich województwa opolskiego w kontekście światowego spowolnienia gospodarczego. Stan i tendencje*, Opole 2009; idem, *Migracje zagraniczne z obszarów wiejskich województwa opolskiego po akcesji Polski do Unii Europejskiej. Wybrane aspekty ekonomiczne i demograficzne*, Opole-Wrocław 2010.

## The Social Implications of Post-Accession Emigration

The social implications of the recent wave of emigration have become another popular topic in press debates. In the magazines under analysis, twenty of fifty articles in "The Politics" (40%) and fourteen out of twenty-one (67%) in "The Common Weekly" relate to the social effects of emigration. The coverage difference of this topic is significant (27%). The *representation* of the post-accession migrant in "The Politics" is based on the concept of one-dimensional *homo oeconomicus*. In articles under analysis published in this magazine there are not many descriptions of migrants' everyday social lives, the process of acculturation, integration in the new society or ties with home country. The authors focus on economic determinants of migration. In "The Common Weekly" there is more space for discussion of social aspects of migrants' life abroad and the consequences of the migration for family life and ties with the home country. The effects discussed in both magazines are evaluated as "positive" or "negative" for individuals and society (Table 2). Among the "positive" effects of emigration, authors mention new cultural and professional experience abroad. Emigration is treated as a school of citizenship in well-developed democratic societies. Living abroad is considered to be a school of innovative attitudes. A well-organised Polish diaspora is treated as a strong political lobby group. All the "positive" social implications are difficult to be verified due to lack of empirical data. These aspects discussed in press debates determine new fields of research which need to be explored. In the light of return migration, issues such as the impact of emigration experience onto the innovative attitude back in the home country, seem to be quite an important field of investigation yet to be conducted.

**Table 2.** Social implications of emigration

<p><b>"The Politics"</b> (pol. "Polityka")</p>	<p><b>"The Common Weekly"</b> (pol. "Tygodnik Powszechny")</p>
<p><b>A: Positive effects:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• new professional experience</li> <li>• new cultural experience (customs, language)</li> <li>• innovative attitude</li> <li>• avoidance of the psychological breakdown caused by unemployment</li> <li>• a school of citizenship in well developed democratic societies</li> </ul>	<p><b>A: Positive effects:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the school of citizenship in well developed democratic societies</li> <li>• education (studying abroad – better preparation for the EU labour market)</li> <li>• Polish diaspora – a political lobby group</li> </ul>
<p><b>B: Negative effects:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• family bonds break-ups</li> <li>• "euro-orphans" phenomenon</li> <li>• the social deprivation of graduates working in low paid unskilled jobs</li> </ul>	<p><b>B: Negative effects:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• family bonds break-ups</li> <li>• "euro-orphans" phenomenon</li> <li>• the social deprivation of graduates working in low paid unskilled jobs</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• psychological difficulties (low self-esteem, depression, feeling of alienation in the receiving country)</li> <li>• the problem of identity (home country ties loosen, 'nomad' attitude)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• religious traditions uprooted</li> <li>• psychological difficulties (low self-esteem, depression, feeling of alienation in the receiving country)</li> <li>• the problem of identity</li> <li>• the problem with physical health (long working hours, lack of sleep and proper nutrition)</li> </ul>
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The positive social implications of emigration are outnumbered by a long list of negative ones. At the beginning of this list, in both magazines, two topics became leading ones in the whole debate on "social costs" of emigration: family break-ups and the phenomenon of so called "euro-orphans". The second important topic in the press discussions is the social deprivation of young graduates working in low paid unskilled jobs. The third group of topics in the press debate were the psychological costs of emigration, such as a feeling of alienation in the receiving country, low self-esteem, depression. Another quite often discussed topic is the process of losing ties with the home country and a problem of identity (the emergence of nomadic attitudes). Other discussed aspects were problems with physical health (long working hours, lack of sleep and proper nutrition) and the loss of religious traditions among emigrants ("The Common Weekly").

There are not many empirical data to verify all of these aspects. Some of them need to be investigated with the use of qualitative methodology. The leading voices in the press discussion concerning family break-ups, however, caused a kind of a moral panic<sup>15</sup> and provoked a discussion of the social costs of emigration. The separation of family members in the context of emigration is an element of the main strategy of Polish married emigrants. Usually a man (father, husband) goes abroad alone and once he has achieved the economic stability in the receiving country, the rest of the family (wife, children) would join him. Sometimes these are women who emigrate first. Quite rarely emigrants make a decision to emigrate with the whole family. In some cases emigrants intend to stay abroad for a specific period of time, sending money to their families at home. The length of the emigration period varies from a few months to a few years. During this time the emigrant visits his/her family a few times a year for short holidays. In the opinion of many journalists and experts quoted in the press articles, this strategy of emigration is the main cause of family break-ups and higher number of divorces. In some articles published in "The Politics", one can read about married emigrants who after a significant time spent abroad, start a new family or an informal relationship. There is little empirical data supporting the strong correlation between the number of emigrants and family break-ups, so it is difficult to say whether people emigrate because of the loose family relationship or whether

<sup>15</sup> S. Cohen, *Folk Devils and Moral Panics. The Creation of the Mods and Rockers*, London-New York 2011.

the emigration is the main cause of the loosened relationship. What is more, the rising number of divorce cases in Poland has to be analysed in the wide context of changing family patterns and values hierarchy. The family pattern has significantly changed from the traditional patriarchal one to a model of family based on partnership. In the value system one can observe significant changes as well. The family is still one of the core values for Poles, but the roles and relationship within the family are being understood differently. Such values as individual success and professional career are becoming more and more important in a changing Polish society. All these arguments illustrate the lack of evidence of a strong correlation between the number of emigrants and family break-ups. In many cases emigration is just a simple, straightforward explanation for the cause of family break-ups.

Another issue that needs to be verified is the phenomenon of "euro-orphans". The name of this category originated in a research report and has been imprinted on public minds thanks to the mass-media. "euro-orphans" is a category name given to children, one or both of whose parents have emigrated. The children are left in a home country with one parent, grandmother/grandfather, uncle or aunt and in some cases they are left in orphanages. Some children go abroad with one parent and do not take part in the educational system of the receiving countries. In "The Politics" one can find a long report about the phenomenon of the "euro-orphans". In "The Common Weekly" the problem is discussed in the context of a letter to members of the Catholic Church written by archbishop Alfons Nossol, who points out the costs of emigration on family and local community life. The debate on "euro-orphans" caused moral panic in educational institutions. Many of them made an effort to estimate the number of "euro-orphans". According to the statistics there are around 15,000 of "euro-orphans" in Poland. In some press articles this number has been magnified even to 150,000. Euro-orphans, in the opinion of many experts quoted in the press articles, experience huge psychological difficulties: they are reserved, often aggressive, they have very low self-esteem and are socially unfit. Those children who have been left with no parental control quite often are in danger of various kinds of pathology, such as alcoholism, drug abuse, prostitution or depression that might even lead to suicide. The reason for the emergence of "euro-orphans" is, in the opinion of the authors, the lack of one or both parents who have emigrated. The problem of "euro-orphans" seems to be a typical example of creating a "media fact". The psychological difficulties of children brought up in one-parent family or with no parents are the same in families where parents live separately in one country and families where parents live separately in two different countries. Lack of contact between parents and children might be even more significant in the case of a family in which both parents work long hours and have no time for their children. So the psychological problem of children living in Polish families should be analysed in a much wider perspective. Of course, the fact of emigration has an impact on children's well-being, but emigration cannot be the only explanation of pathology in Polish families. The issue of migrating women have become quite popular within migration studies. It is discussed within transnational paradigm. According to gender perspective of Sylwia Urbańska, female migration in

many cases could be an individual strategy of escape from symbolic male power and a pressure on the traditional rule of motherhood. From this perspective the media pictures of migrating mothers are seen as stigmatizing female migrants and a debate on “euro-orphans” is a classical example of moral panic.<sup>16</sup> The issue of mother-migrant stigmatisation is present in the narratives of migrants themselves analysed by Paulina Pustułka.<sup>17</sup>

The last aspect of the press debate on the negative implications of emigration is the social deprivation of graduates from Polish universities. This category is quite often mentioned in the context of a post-accession wave of emigration. The *representation* of this category in the press is stereotypical. The description of graduates shows young people with a bachelor's or master's degree working as bar staff or kitchen porters. Most of the descriptions of this category in the articles analysed present young graduates working in unskilled, low-paid “McJobs”. The social deprivation has significant consequences on both their mental health and future professional careers. Too many young well-educated and qualified migrants, after a few years of emigration and work as bar staff, become doubly marginalized.<sup>18</sup> They are considered to be marginalized in the receiving country's society and in the home country in the case of return migration. After a few years of unskilled work, return migrants have a gap in their professional CV and cannot easily find themselves back in the home country's labour market. Most of the press articles analysed presenting job mobility focus on the examples of downward mobility (Table 3).

**Table 3.** Coverage of various kinds of job mobility in press articles

“The Politics” (pol. “Polityka”)	“The Common Weekly” (pol. “Tygodnik Powszechny”)
Upward mobility – 32% Downward mobility – 52% No change – 16%	Upward mobility – 17% Downward mobility – 66% No change – 17%

The most frequently presented cases of downward mobility are as follows:

- young graduates with no job experience (jobs below qualifications, e.g. bar staff),
- experts taking up low paid jobs mostly due to lack of language fluency,
- qualified workers taking up unskilled, low paid jobs.

The cases presented in press articles do not show young graduates in the context of upward mobility at all. Those who have moved up the social ladder are unskilled

<sup>16</sup> S. Urbańska, *Matka migrantka. Perspektywa transnarodowa w badaniu przemian ról rodzicielskich*, “Studia Migracyjne. Przegląd Polonijny” 2009, Vol. 1, pp. 61–84.

<sup>17</sup> P. Pustułka, *Polish Mothers on the Move. Transnationality and Discourses of Gender Care, and Co-Residentiality Requirement in the Narratives of Polish Women Raising Children in the West*, “Annales Universitatis Paedagogicae Cracoviensis. Studia Sociologica” 2012, Vol. 4, No. 2, pp. 162–175.

<sup>18</sup> K. Iglicka, *Powroty Polaków po 2004 roku. W pętli pułapki migracji*, Warszawa 2010.

workers who became self-employed or acquire supervisor positions. The only categories which do not experience any social deprivation are highly skilled experts (such as doctors) or skilled workers such as plumbers or nurses who work in their professions. Young professionals are presented as the main “loser” of the post-accession wave of emigration.

In the light of empirical data this picture is not generally accurate. The research indicates that 65% of Polish graduates who have lived in the UK for more than a year work in their professions.<sup>19</sup> Upward mobility is, in fact, “the norm” but only after the first few months of emigration. This time is needed to practise language skills and acquire essential knowledge of the specifics of the labour market of the receiving country. In my research based on in-depth interviews with Polish immigrants to Ireland in 2008, almost all of them (25 interviews) have changed their job within two years’ time. All of them had a master’s or bachelor’s degree from a Polish university. Nine out of twenty-five had a full-time job in their professions in Ireland. Ten worked in administrative and financial sectors as book-keepers, college administrative officers. Some of the immigrants worked as supervisors, managers, freelance journalists or graphic designers. Most of them began their professional career abroad in low paid, unskilled jobs,<sup>20</sup> but remarkable upward mobility was possible for well-educated immigrants to Ireland in years 2004-2007, before recession hit the Irish economy. Recession in Ireland had an impact on migrants’ employment and earnings but it has been not as dramatic as it is usually discussed. The study conducted by Peter Mühlau demonstrates that employment level and earnings have been surprisingly stable at the macro level of the Polish Community in Dublin.<sup>21</sup> The stereotype of a socially deprived Polish graduate working in a bar became a part of “common sense” knowledge about the direction of job career abroad. The empirical data reveals its largely mythical dimension.

## Conclusions

The analysis of press articles echoing the main topics in the public debate on emigration in Poland reveals some stereotypes and myths which have been imprinted in a “common sense” understanding of the process. The main economic effects of emigration discussed in the press debate are as follows: a decrease in surplus labour, a gap in the Polish labour market (experts, skilled workers), an inflow of skilled workers from behind the eastern border and the disappearance of the local spirit of entrepre-

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<sup>19</sup> Eadem, *Kontrasty migracyjne Polski. Wymiar transatlantycki*, Warszawa 2008, p. 114.

<sup>20</sup> M. Dzięglewski, *My i Oni. Czy istnieje tożsamość poemigracyjna?*, in: *Światy i konteksty społeczne*, ed. by G. Bryda, Kraków 2011, KSS Krakowskie Spotkania Socjologiczne, vol. 2.

<sup>21</sup> P. Mühlau, *The Employment and Earnings Mobility of Polish Migrants in Ireland in the Recession*, “*Annales Universitatis Paedagogicae Cracoviensis. Studia Sociologica*” 2012, Vol. 4, No. 2, pp. 81-94.

neurship. As the analysis indicates, whereas such aspects as surplus labour decrease and a gap in the local labour market in the case of skilled workers could be supported by empirical data, the other effects on the economy in Poland cannot be recognized as true at all or cannot be verified due to lack of empirical data. The analysis has revealed as well the main social implications related to emigration, such as family bond break-ups, the phenomenon of "euro-orphans" and the social deprivation of graduates working in low-skilled low paid jobs. The first two implications cannot be verified in the light of empirical data. The last one is a good example of a stereotype deeply imprinted in the 'common sense' understanding of the social implications of emigration, one that is patently false.

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