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THE ANALYSIS OF ECONOMIC INTEGRATION
OF POLISH MIGRANTS IN IRISH RURAL AREAS
IN THE PERIOD OF ECONOMIC PROSPERITY
FROM 2004 TO 2007

INTRODUCTION

The paper presents the main findings of a study carried out in 2007 which main objective was to ascertain the level of economic integration¹ of Polish migrants to rural Ireland and to identify the impact for both the home country and the recipient country. The study focused on rural areas in Ireland in the time of economic prosperity between 2004 and 2007. It employed a range of research methods to elicit the views of a wide range of stakeholders.

The first section of the paper presents the theoretical approach used by the researcher which is followed by the context of this study. It demonstrates why this study was needed at a time of unprecedented migration from Poland to Ireland since the EU 2004 enlargement. The third section presents the overall and specific objectives of the research and the empirical research design. The fourth section demonstrates key findings as they apply to the economic integration of Polish migrants in rural Ireland and non-economic aspects of integration influencing economic performance of migrants.

¹ There is no one universal definition of integration. However, the benchmarking definition of integration is a compromise between two approaches to integration: a rights-based approach promoted by the Council of Europe, and the European Commission's socio-economic approach. Authors have built the definition on the assumption that integration is a multidimensional, long-term, multi-generational and not necessarily linear process: *'a society's ability to integrate its population into new arrangements of active citizenship that ensure the long-term well-being of all members'*. (EP, 2005);

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Migration is a multidimensional phenomenon and thus Massey *et al.* (1998) proposed a flexible and comprehensive approach toward analysis of migration. In this paper I also claim that one theory does not encompass the complexity of migration. Therefore, the study has employed multiple theories in order to explain Polish migration and integration process in rural Ireland in the context of the EU 2004 enlargement. The following theories of initiation and perpetuation of migration were applied: neoclassical economic theory, New Economics of Labour Migration (*NELM*), dual labour market theory and migration network theory.

The neoclassic economic theory was applied in a critical manner focusing on the micro-level of analysis. Sjaastad proposes to treat migration as an outcome of a rational choice of individuals who treat it as an investment in their 'productivity' (Górny and Kaczmarczyk 2003). The weakness of this theory has been presented by many researchers, including Castles and Millers (2009), Portes and Rumbaut (2006) among others, and thus the limitations of this theory were considered, most of all the imperfect migrants' knowledge concerning the labour market of the host country as well as risks deriving from migration process. The New Economic Labour Market theory focuses on decision-making process by the household considering structural factors, such as instability of the labour market in a home country (Joly, 2000). It indicates that migration is not a strategy for resource poor people but it is determined by a need for a diversification of income and protection against unemployment (Kaczmarczyk 2007). The more inequality in the society, the more incentive for migration (Stark 1991).

Dual labour market theory was used to analyse macroeconomic pull factors in the receiving country, most of all structural demand for low-skilled employees for the secondary labour market in the neo-liberal economy. Migrant employees are selected for low-prestige and 3-D type of work² (Arango 2000). The liberal market powers lead to 'the occupational gap' as well as to dominant role of migrants in some sectors what in consequence leads to disadvantages for migrants' economic integration. Following Castles and Miller (2009) the value of this theory is that it enables to understand the role of structures – such as labour market – in the migration and integration process. However, the weakness of it is the focus on economic and macro-level determinants of migration. The migration network theory was exploited and the study presents how migration and economic integration with labour market is influenced by interpersonal connections between migrants in the receiving and host country. Migration network consists of interpersonal connections between migrants, former migrants and non-migrants in a country of origin and a receiving country by the use of social ties (Faist *et al.* 2004). One of

² 3-D type of work: dirty, difficult and dangerous (Martin *et al.* 2006).

the most essential characteristics of migration networks is cultural capital, which is defined by Castles and Millers (2009, p.28) as: *'information, knowledge of other countries, capability of organizing travel, finding work and adapting to a new environment'* sustaining migration and reduces economic and socio-psychological costs of a human movement (Arango 2000). In result, migration networks create 'channels for migration' – patterns of entry, settlement and return. It leads to chain migration from a particular sending country to a particular receiving country in which new migrants follow the 'beaten path' of their migrant predecessor (Stahl 1993 in Castles and Miller 2009, p. 29). Moreover, in this sense migration is self-sustaining social process. Migrants get access to social capital via participation in networks. Massey (1998, p.43) concludes: *'Network connections constitute a form of social capital that people can draw upon to gain access to various kind of financial capital: foreign employment, high wages, and the possibility of accumulating savings and sending remittances'*. Therefore, it is necessary to analyse a quality and quantity of migratory networks and their social and cultural capital in order to detect patterns of migrants' performance. This knowledge may support the creation of informed state policies of immigration and incorporation.

CONTEXT AND RATIONALE OF THE RESEARCH

Undoubtedly, Ireland has a long tradition of emigration but immigration is the phenomenon of the late 1990s due to life opportunities created by the rapid economic growth of the 'Celtic Tiger'. There has been an increasing net migration into Ireland each year during the economic boom since the mid-1990s ranging from 8,000 immigrants in 1996 to 50,500 in 2003 (CSO, 2007). Table 1 presents the correlation between the GDP and increased net migration to Ireland in this period:

Table 1. GDP and Inward migration to Ireland 1996-2003.

Year	GDP	Inward Migration
1996	57.9	39.2
1997	67.0	44.5
1998	77.6	46.0
1999	89.5	48.9
2000	103.1	52.6
2001	115.4	59.0
2002	128.0	66.9
2003	134.8	50.5

There was a dramatic increase in the number of the nationals from the New Members States of the European Union³ (here after NMS) since the enlargement in 2004 as depicted in Figure 1 (Doyle *et al*, 2006).

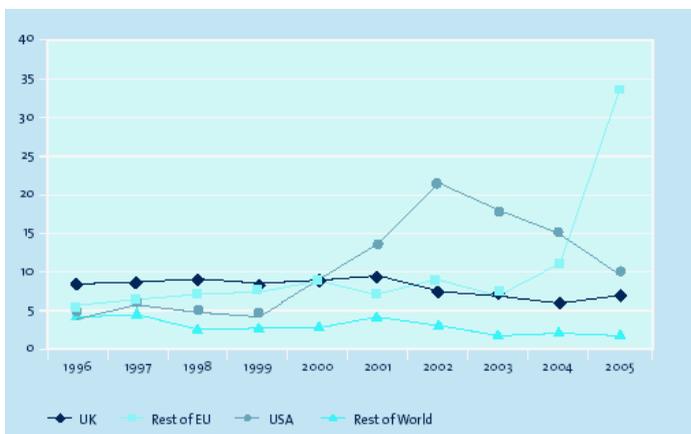


Figure 1. Migration Change in Ireland 1994-2004.

Source: NESC, 2006

The Irish gross inward migration increased from 50,500 in 2003 to 70,000 in 2005 and from 9,000-11,000 per annum in the period 2001- 2003 to 112,000 in 2005 (CSO and DSFA, 2004). This situation was influenced by the huge economic disparities between ‘new’ and ‘old’ member states and the fact that Ireland was one of only three EU member states which decided to grant an unrestricted freedom of labour movement for the nationals of the EU 10. However, the national representation of the NMS to Ireland was not equal. There has been a significant majority of Polish nationals in this immigration flow, estimated at between 50 and 60 % per annum (IOM and NESC, 2006), as presented in Figure 2:

The Department of Social and Family Affairs assessed that 241,462 Polish nationals applied for the Personal Public Service Numbers (PPSNs)⁴ by June 2007 (DSFA, 2007)⁵.

³ New Member States (NMSs) from Central, East and South-East Europe. EU10 comprises of ten member states which gained membership on 1st May 2004, namely: Czech Republic, Estonia, Cyprus, Latvia, Lithuania, Hungary, Malta, Poland, Slovenia, Slovakia; EU 2 consists of Bulgaria and Rumania which gained membership on 1st January 2007.

⁴ PPS Number is issued by the Department of Social and Family Affairs of Ireland and it is defined as: „Irish customer reference number for transactions between individuals and Government Departments” and it is obligatory for Irish and non-Irish residents to take up employment in Ireland (DSFA, 2007 and Grabowska-Lusińska, 2007).

⁵ Since the EU enlargement in 2004 to the end of 2006 more than 1,950,000 Polish nationals migrated from Poland and of this number more than 1,550,000 moved to countries of the European

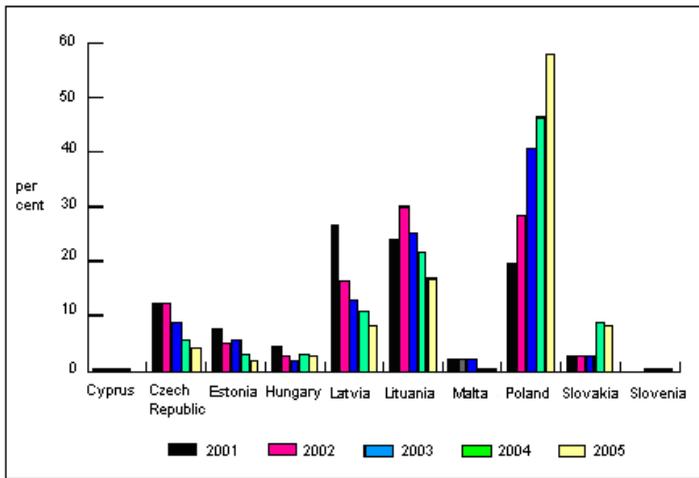


Figure 2. Percentage of PPSN issued to the NMSs, by nationality, 2001-2005.

Source: DSFA, 2005

It was a consequence of a complex constellation of push and pull factors, most of all disadvantageous socio-economic conditions in Poland at the time of the EU enlargement in 2004. Despite the fact that Polish GDP has been increasing slowly since the 1990s, there was still a huge gap between Poland and Ireland in 2004, as presented in Figure 3:

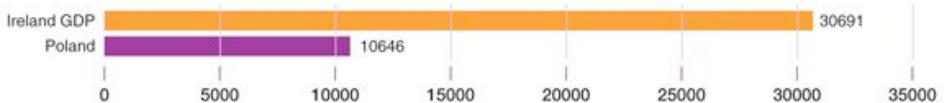


Figure 3. GDP per capita 2004: Ireland and Poland.

Source: Groningen Total Economy Database/OECD (NCC: <http://www.forfas.ie/ncc>)

These differences were reflected in the rates of national minimum wage. The Irish guaranteed wage was 7.00 Euro per hour in 2004, protected by the National Minimum Wage Act (DETE 2007). In Poland monthly minimum income per person was 824PLN/ 179.1Euro in 2004, which is approximately 0.93 Euro per hour⁶ (Ministry of Labour and Social Policy 2007). The unemployment rate in Ireland

Union (GUS, 2007). However the number of Polish migrants in Ireland is uncertain as Central Statistic Office of Ireland (2006) in the Quarterly National Household Survey reported that there were 63,090 Polish migrants

⁶ Assessed for 40 working hours per week.

was at 4.4 % in 2004 and it was gradually increasing in Poland since the 1990s to reach 19.1%⁷ in 2004 (GUS, 2005). However, an unemployment rate varied considerably throughout the country rating from 15 to 30%, as presented in Figure 4:

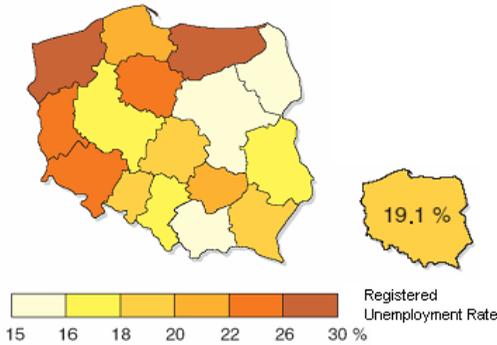


Figure 4. Regional diversity of registered unemployment rate in Poland in 2004.

Source: CSO/GUS, 2007

Finally, approximately half of unemployed Polish nationals were less than 44 years of age (CSO/GUS, 2006), so they were flexible enough to migrate and for some the migration could be perceived as an investment (Barrett and Bening [in:] Fanning, 2007)

Intensive immigration had a multidimensional impact on Ireland. This impact has been largely positive as Ireland was ‘the largest gainer from EU movements’ in terms of the GDP increases (Barrett *et al.* 2007). The research conducted by Barrett and O’Connell (in Zimmermann, 2007) suggested that immigration to Ireland created a win-win situation as both Irish and non-Irish nationals comprised a highly skilled human capital which was easily absorbed by the rapidly developing economy. However, the economic impact of immigration has changed in times of economic turmoil due to the increased unemployment among migrants and their participation in the welfare programmes (Barrett *et al.*, 2008, The Times, 2008). Moreover, migration influences the demographics of Irish society, which becomes more multicultural and it is estimated that over 14 % of Irish residents (612,629 people) were born outside Ireland in 2006 (CSO, 2007). The efficient management of multidimensional integration process, including economic performance, political participation, social integration, integration within the education and health care system is a challenge for Irish decision makers but it

⁷ There were over 2.7 million unemployed in 2000 and almost 3 million in 2004 (GUS, 2005, p.150).

is also a pre-condition for social coherence and further socio-economic development of Ireland.

RESEARCH DESIGN

The overall objective of the research was to analyse challenges facing Polish migrants in the integration process in Irish rural areas, including:

- economic integration
- lingual integration
- integration within the education system
- residential integration
- social integration
- integration within health care system
- political integration (CE, 1996; EC, 2007 and IOM, 2007).

Rural settings were chosen due to the fact that 93.8% of Irish territory is classified as rural and they are inhabited by 39% of Irish population (Commins *et al.* in: NUI Maynooth *et al.* 2005). Finally the geographical distance of rural settings from the decision-making institutions and non-governmental organisations may hinder the integration process

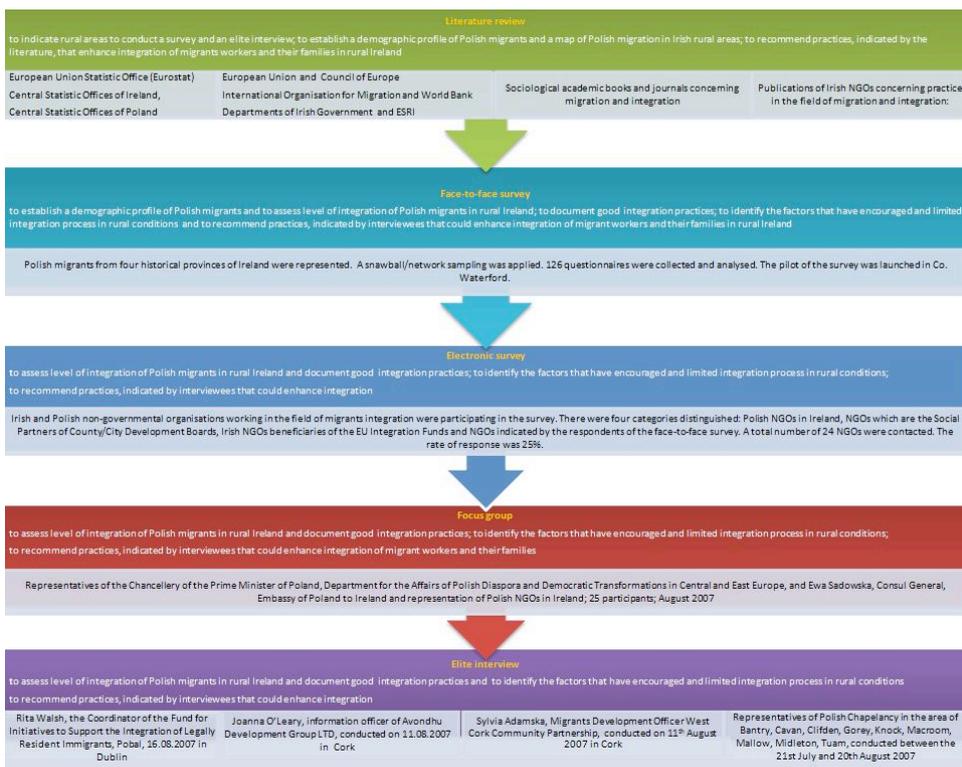
In order to achieve the overall research objective four specific objectives were established, namely:

1. to establish a demographic profile of Polish migrants and a map of Polish migration in Irish rural areas;
2. to assess level of integration of Polish migrants in rural villages and towns;
3. to identify the factors that have encouraged and limited integration processes in rural conditions;
4. to document best practice in supporting integration and societal expectations towards the integration policy which could influence the enhancement of social integration of migrant workers and their families in rural Ireland;

RESEARCH METHODS

Mix methods were used to collect primary and secondary data, as presented in Table 2.

All four provinces were included due to their socio-economic diversity and different migrants' integration experience and practice. The number of Polish migrants in each province and the study areas are presented Appendix 1 and Appendix 2 respectively.

Table 2. Research Methods

The study sought to identify the demographic profile of Poles living in rural Ireland. While some secondary information was available from publications of the Polish and Irish Central Statistic Offices and Department of Social and Family Affairs of Ireland together with reports of the IOM and NESC, it was envisaged that further data was required using primary sources to get a rich understanding of the demographic profile of the target population. The researcher carried out 135 face-to-face interviews with Polish migrants living in rural areas of five counties, namely: Wexford (24.6%), Cavan (22.2%), Cork (19.8%), Mayo (17.4%) and Galway (15.8%) (Appendix 2). All the participants surveyed were Polish citizens over 18 years of age. The respondents had lived in rural Ireland for varying periods of time, as follows:

- less than one year (38%)
- between one and two years (47%)
- between 3 and 5 years (14%)
- over five years (1%)

AGE, GENDER AND MARITAL STATUS

Over 56% of Polish migrants participating in the survey were male and 44% female. The study population varied as far as the age is concerned, as follows:

- between 18 and 23 (16.7%)
- between 24 and 40 (70.6%)
- over 40 (12.7%)

The marital status of migrants indicates the potential for further inflow. The study found that 57% of migrants are married, but this rate is higher for males (61.4%) and lower for females (51.8%) as presented in Figure 5.

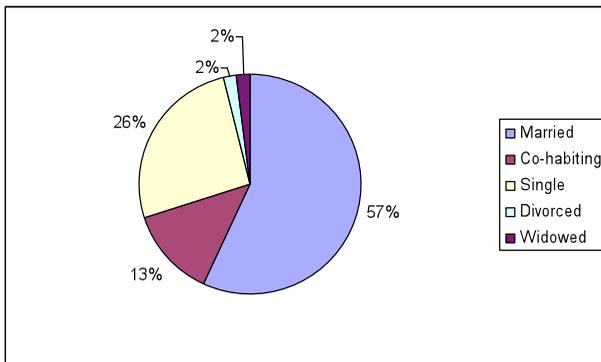


Figure 5. Polish migrants in Irish rural areas by the marital status.

There were 21% of married or co-habiting respondents whose spouses were in Poland and the majority of these (61.5%) did not intend to bring a spouse to Ireland. The analysis shows that 52% of Polish migrants have children. Children were divided into three age groups, namely:

- pre-school from 1 to 4 years olds (46%)
- school children from 5 to 19 years olds (47%)
- children over 19 years of age (7%)

Over 70% parents live with their children in Ireland and almost 20% of respondents stated that at least, one child was born in Ireland. In order to predict further migratory movement, parents who had children living in Poland were approached. Over half of them responded that they would like to bring their children to Ireland.

EDUCATION LEVEL

The education level varied in the respondent group. There were three groups of comparable representation, namely holders of the third level, vocational secondary and basic vocational education, as presented in Figure 6:

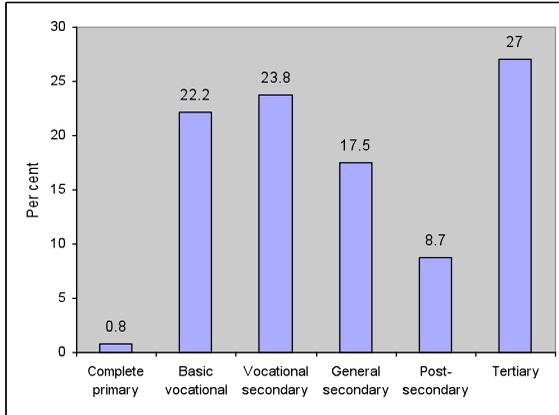


Figure 6. Education levels of respondents.

The research indicates that 77% of respondents graduated with the school leaving certificate and 27% hold the third level degree. They were graduates of very different disciplines with a majority equipped with a business diploma, as presented below:

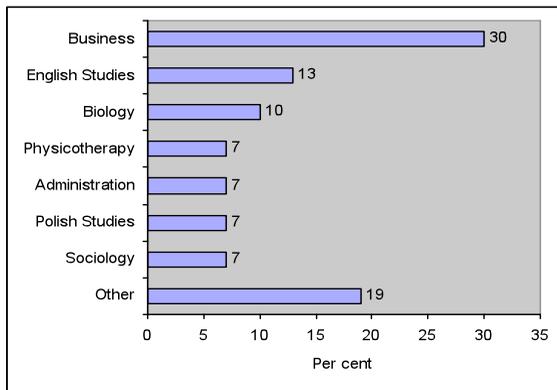


Figure 7. Polish migrant graduates of the third level education, by discipline.

The results of the EU Survey on Income and Living Conditions 2005 (Barrett and McCarthy, 2007) and the primary data acquired during the research indicate that Polish migrants are better educated than Irish nationals, as presented in the Table 3

Table 3. Comparison of educational attainment between Irish national and Polish migrants in rural Ireland

EDUCATION ATTAINMENT	IRISH NATIONALS	POLISH MIGRANTS
Less than leaving certificate	35.7	23.0
Leaving certificate and non-degree	45.8	50.0
Third level degree	18.4	27.0

Source: Barrett and McCarthy in ESRI, 2007 and the author’s research, 2007

POLISH PLACE OF ORIGIN

The research analysed the place of origin of Polish migrants and patterns of migration as indicated in the network theory. The highest rate of migrants were from Małopolskie province (25%) and Śląskie province (14%), followed by Podkarpackie (10%) and Warminsko-Mazurskie (7%) as presented in Figure 8.

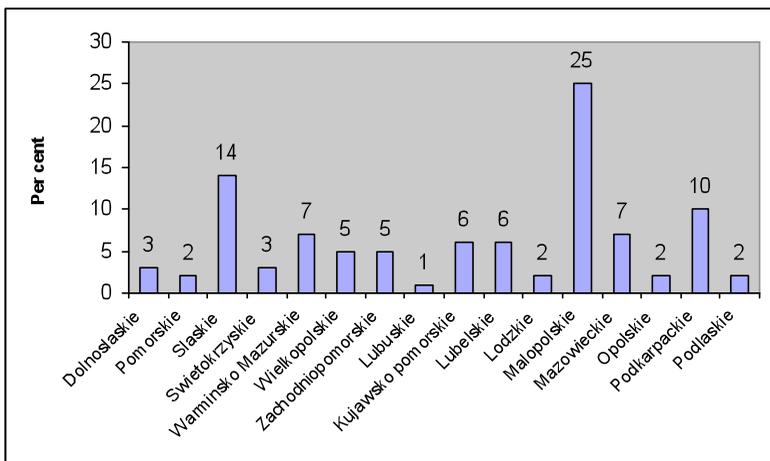


Figure 8. Place of migrants’ origin, by province.

The largest group (36%) came from rural villages. Over 22% of the respondents characterised their place of origin as a small town of less than 20,000 inhabitants

and 18% as a town of between 20,000 and 100,000. Almost a quarter of respondents were from cities of over 100,000 inhabitants.

One might deduce from this study that unemployment and poverty should be viewed as a deterrent rather than a cause of migration. This has been the case in the most deprived provinces in Poland: Lubuskie or Kujawsko-Pomorskie.

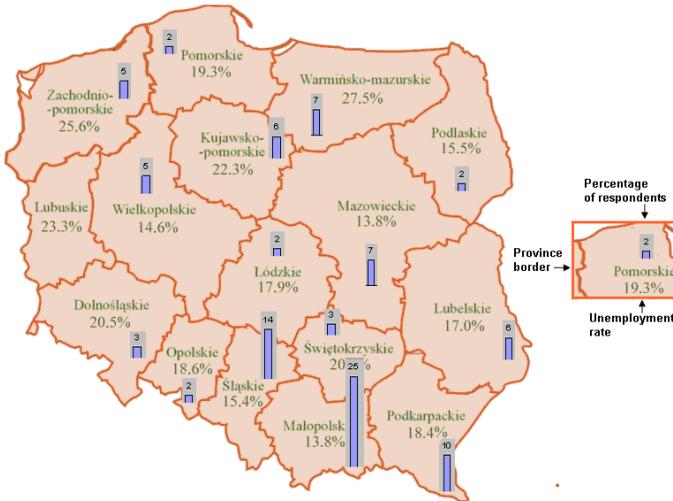


Figure 9. Polish registered unemployment rate and a percentage of migrants to Ireland, by province.

The research findings confirm the hypothesis that Polish migration to Ireland was more likely to be the choice of those with substantial financial, intellectual or physical capital. The economic determinants of migration indicated by the neo-classic economic theory, *NELM* and dual labour market theory, were strengthened by a network of Polish migrants with its' social and cultural capital. Moreover, it has been analysed that the longstanding experience of diversity and tradition of mobility in Śląsk or Małopolska had an impact on the decision on migration in the context of the EU 2004 enlargement. The 'gateway position' was also a significant factor, e.g., the proximity to the state borders and the state institutions and facilities, as airports. Finally, relatively high levels of migration in Mazowieckie is regarded as a consequence of the urban and cosmopolitan environment of the capital city and the proximity of 'country exits' encouraged migration among inhabitants of the province.

WHY IRELAND AND WHY IRISH RURAL SETTINGS?

It is necessary to consider that the decision to migrate was usually based on complex and interrelated circumstances and thus, a decision on migration requires in-depth analysis. Respondents were asked why they had chosen Ireland as a country of migration, in order to analyse the ‘country’s image’ in the eyes of migrants. However, in order to have more in-depth analysis the respondents were asked to explain their choice of Irish rural villages. Primarily, the country was chosen based on the ‘Celtic Tiger’ image and the reputation of the country of migrants’ prosperity as depicted in the Figure 10:

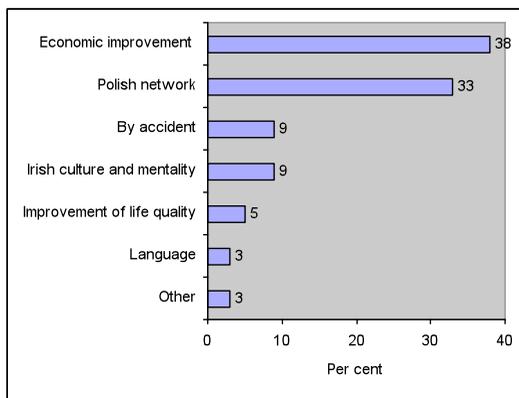


Figure 10. The reason for choosing Ireland as a destination of Polish migration.

The second largest group chose Ireland because of existing migratory networks of family and friends. The similarity of Irish culture was important for migrants as well as the language. There were three aspects how the choice of the country was influenced by language, namely: the ability to speak the official language, the opportunity to learn English and the utility of learning English.

It was interesting to discover that there was slightly different pattern when people were asked about their settlement in a particular rural village. It seems that network determinant was more important than economic one. The largest group of respondents indicated Polish networks of family and friends as a ‘migration trigger’ (44%). Approximately 53% of this group joined Polish family members and 47% Polish friends. Migration networks meant more than economic well-being of migrants as it was a source of information on opportunities, work arrangements, accommodation as well as psycho-social support. It had also a wide range of consequences for the patterns of economic integration. The employment opportunities prompted over 41% of respondents to settle in rural Ireland. Over

98% interviewed in the latter group indicated that they had provided employment when they arrived at their destination. The work places were provided either by employment agencies or Polish friends and family members. Further reasons to choose rural Ireland are presented in Figure 11:

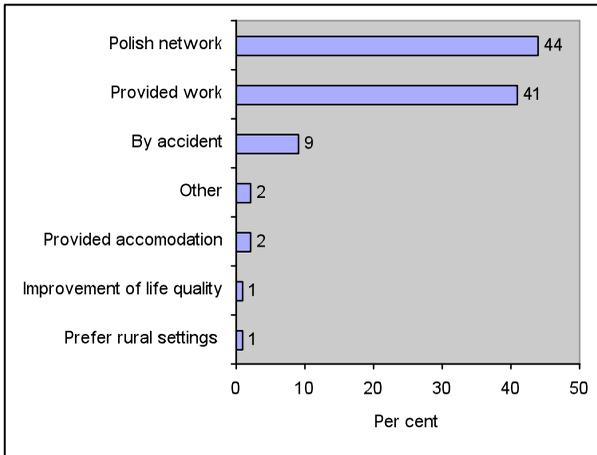


Figure 11. The reasons for choosing Irish rural areas as a destination of Polish migration.

ASSESSMENT OF ECONOMIC INTEGRATION OF POLISH MIGRANTS IN RURAL VILLAGES AND TOWNS – PERSPECTIVE OF MIGRANTS AND NGOS

Economic integration refers to the participation of migrants in the labour market, as: employees, employers, job-seekers or the economically passive (EC 2007, IOM, 2007 and CE,1996). It is related to their ability to perform in the labour market to satisfy their economic and social needs. The level of education and qualifications, language skills, physical conditions determine the ability to find employment. Integration is also influenced by the ability of migrants to change qualification following the labour demand patterns. Economic integration is also assessed by the migrants' entrepreneurship and ability to find economic opportunities in the host country, which is also dependent from the structural regulations of the national labour market of the host country. This is a very significant dimension of integration as it determines migrants' self-sufficiency in the new environment (EP, 2007; IOM, 2006). The findings presented in this part of the paper are based on the face-to-face survey with migrants, the electronic survey with civil society organisations, elite interviews as well as secondary data.

THE ALLOCATION OF POLISH MIGRANTS IN POLISH LABOUR MARKET PRIOR TO MIGRATION

It was essential to assess a professional experience of migrants prior to migration, as their assets which could be recognised and allocated in the Irish labour market. The research showed that over half of the interviewees were employed (56%) against 19% unemployed, as presented in Figure 12:

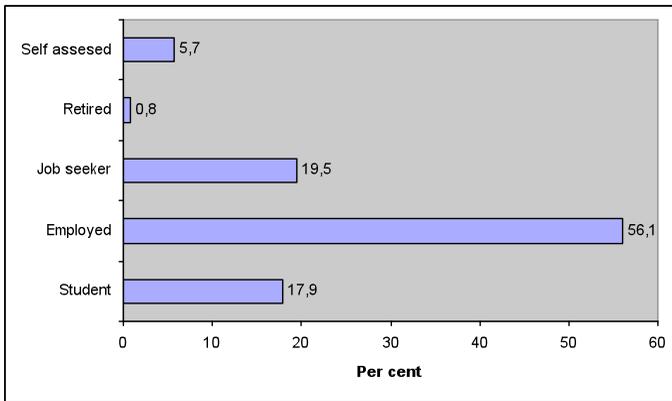


Figure 12. Employment statuses of migrants prior to migration to Ireland.

This demonstrates that study findings correlate with *NELM* theory (Stark 1981). Polish migrants who decided to migrate were not resource-poor. They had enough material, professional and educational assets to try their 'luck' in Ireland. They decided to migrate due to unsatisfactory work conditions in Poland, greater opportunities in Ireland as well as to diversify the source of household's income what could impact their life stability and security. In a bid to ascertain the extent to which migrants were utilizing their achieved competencies in Ireland the study examined the economic sectors that respondents had worked in prior and post migration.

The distribution of migrants within economic sectors in Poland prior to migration is presented in Figure 13.

The largest group of migrants was employed in the wholesale/retail sales (17.3%) and in the construction sector (18.7%). Both above-mentioned sectors developed dramatically in the time of prosperity in Ireland, creating thousands of vacant placements. Irish nationals did not want to take that jobs which were not only low-paid but also had a reputation of low social status and prestige; consequently the demand for migrant labour force was very high (FORFÁS, (2005). There was a group of Polish migrants who were employed in public administration and education prior to migration, which was described as a stable sector but

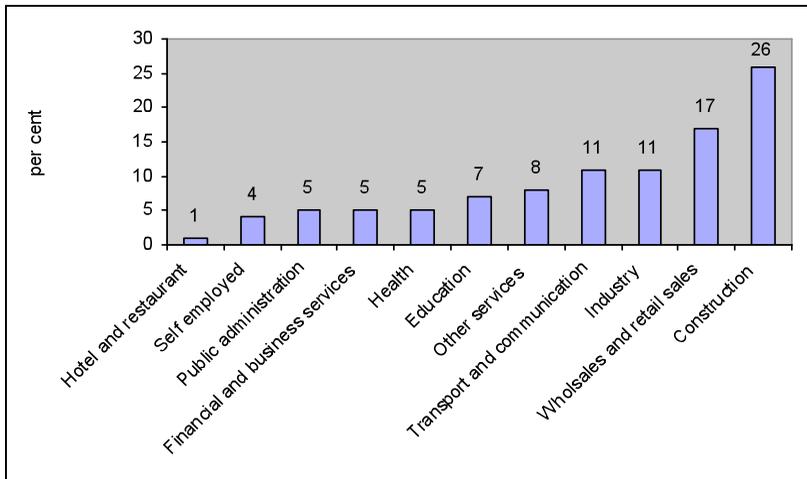


Figure 13. Employment of Polish migrants prior to migration.

largely low paid and with unsatisfactory career prospects. There was also a self-employed group of Polish migrants at 4% who claimed that they were unsuccessful entrepreneurs back in Poland due to the lack of stability of the market as well as state fiscal regulations.

THE ALLOCATION OF POLISH MIGRANTS IN IRISH LABOUR MARKET

After leaving Poland most of the Polish migrants could find employment in Irish rural areas. Over 84% were employed on the day of survey and 16% declared being unemployed. The unemployment rate among Polish migrants was much higher than Irish registered unemployment. However, Barrett and Bering (in Fanning, 2007) suggested that there was no real unemployment among migrants and the difference in unemployment rate between migrants and nationals was due to the high dynamics of migrants in the Irish labour market. Migrants, as indicated in the neoclassic theory, take rational decision concerning their opportunities however as rightly considered by the critics of this theory (Castles and Millers, 2009; Portes and Rumbaut, 2006 among others), they cannot take entirely rational decision as they do not have an absolute knowledge about the conditions in the receiving country. Based on this assumption the research findings indicated that the more knowledge and experience migrants gained in the host country the more rational decisions concerning their employment they took. It resulted in high mobility in the labour market. Furthermore, their work in the secondary sector characterised with seasonality of employment which forced migrants to look for alternative jobs throughout a year period. Moreover, the study captured the recent

arrivals who were in the process of job-seeking. Further analysis revealed that in some cases unemployment resulted from childcare responsibilities⁸ which had to be undertaken by one of the parents due to:

- the high cost of day-care facilities,
- the lack of state instruments supporting parents in employment or education,
- lack of support from relatives in childcare
- lack of knowledge about flexible employment schemes, such as job share.

Another indicator of the temporality of unemployment was the fact that only 1% of all interviewees were holders of unemployment entitlement (Jobseeker Benefit), which is lower than the Irish national rate.

The employment of migrants not always follows their previous professional experience, the level of education or expectations. It is explained by the dual labour market theory and the demand-supply allocation of placements in the neo-liberal market. There was a general tendency for Polish migrants to be employed in the semi- or un- skilled positions, estimated at the rate of 75%. The most popular industries among Polish migrants were the hospitality industry (20.2%), sales and production industries (18.3% each), construction sector (17.3%), transport. Only 11% found employment in mid- and high- skilled professions.

The research in rural Ireland shows that there was higher employment of migrants in the Irish hospitality industry⁹ by comparison with the situation prior migration (Figure 15). It may be the consequence of high labour demand in this sector, availability of employment opportunities which are regarded as low-paid and low-prestige and finally a lack of qualifications requirements for low- or semi-skilled positions. This was also the reason why more than 23% of Polish migrants with higher education were employed in this industry in unskilled positions: waiting staff (42.8 %), cleaning staff (42.8 %) or kitchen porters (14.2 %).

There was a decrease in employment in the transport industry 8.7% (from 10.6 to 1.9%), education 4.8 % (from 6.7 to 1.9%) and financial services at 2.4% (5.3 to 2.9%). The other difference in the employment allocation concerned the lack of employment in public services despite the fact that the Polish nationals could provide Irish administration with their assets, such as: ability to speak Polish and knowledge on Polish administration, which in turn could increase efficiency in provision of mainstreaming and targeted services to Poles in Ireland.

There was lack of Polish enterprises in rural Ireland. However, there were Polish migrants who were considering owning their own company back in Poland.

⁸ As presented above 47% of migrant parents (52% of respondents) have children in a pre-school age.

⁹ Another name for the hotel and restaurant industry.

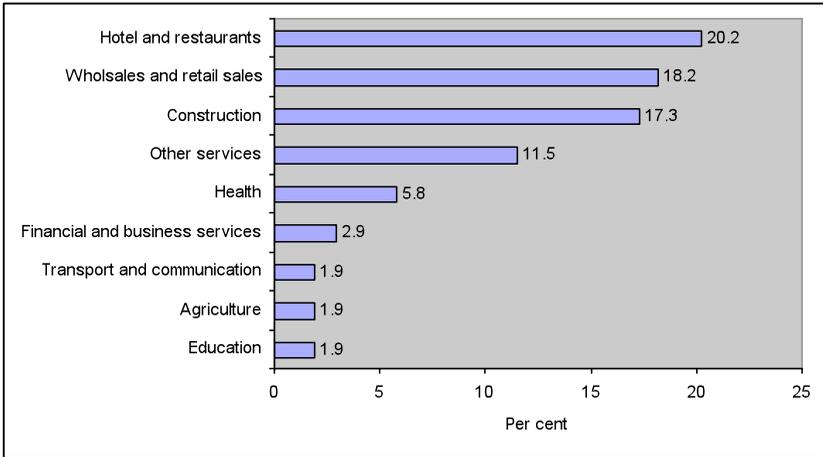


Figure 14. Allocation of Polish migrants in Irish labour market, by sector.

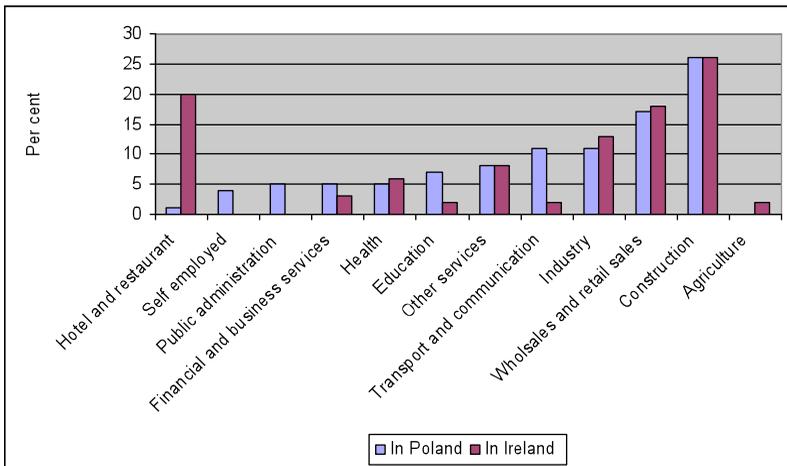


Figure 15. Accommodation of migrants in Irish and Polish labour market.

The question arises why they did not consider this in Ireland, if there were good economic opportunities. Four factors need to be considered:

- the language barrier
- lack of material capital
- lack of knowledge on self-employment and know-how of running business in Ireland
- lack of knowledge on services supporting migrant entrepreneurs
- emotional ties to the homeland.

The lack of Polish entrepreneurs in rural Ireland was also a consequence of insufficient support for migrants, most of all information, advice and guidance services (IAG services). It was also lost opportunity for Irish economy, as new Polish companies could generate employment for both migrants and Irish nationals and the taxes paid by Polish entrepreneurs would support Irish revenue.

Finally, around 2% of employed found work in agriculture. It was analysed that they had not been employed as farm labourers in Poland and they did not seek to continue their Polish occupations thus they chose less demanding jobs in Ireland.

Concluding, the employment pattern of Polish migrants in Irish rural areas was influenced by the neo-liberal market rules described by the dual labour market theory. It created an unfavourable allocation of migrant labour force between sectors and significant process of 'brain waste'. Barrett *et al.* (2007) labelled the employment pattern of nationals from NMSs as 'an occupational gap' or 'an occupational segregation'. Moreover, there was a 'glass ceiling' in employment, which means that even if they had required qualifications they have little chances to held higher positions and it does not reduce over time of employment. However, despite the fact of underemployment only 5% of Polish respondents said that they missed their jobs in Poland, mostly due to higher income which resulted in better life stability and security.

DISCRIMINATION AT WORK PLACE

The study found that 28% of respondents felt discriminated against by their employers and 33% by their colleagues. Over 40% of them indicated acts of discrimination, such as:

- lower wages than Irish colleagues,
- unfavourable task division: tasks that were unpopular with Irish workers were given to Poles,
- lack of work schedules,
- victimisation due to nationality – Poles always guilty,
- lack of lunch break or inferior food in canteen,
- a ban on speaking Polish,
- abusive comments on Polish nationals and Poland.

Almost half of respondents indicated that discriminatory accidents happened to them rarely and one fourth experienced it often or very often.

The majority of NGOs that participated in the study identified discrimination in a workplace as a problem for migrants. They suggested that it was not a problem for Polish migrants to get a job however to get employment on equal terms was a different matter. There were many examples given of wage discrimination,

exploitation and a lack of respect for the employment rights of Polish migrant workers.

Further investigation of the earnings discrimination is presented in *the Quarterly Economic Commentary* (2007). It compared earnings of migrants from the NMS and Irish nationals who attained the same educational level. It occurred that migrants with the same education earned 31% less than nationals. Moreover, this salary gap increased for those migrants who had better qualifications, and it does not tend to reduce over time of employment.

It seems that neo-liberal market regulations and the Marxists conflict theory could explain the economic exploitation and discrimination of migrants (Joly, 2000). However, it was revealed by the NGOs participating in the study that the responsibility to deal with this issue rested largely with Poles themselves. They agreed to be exploited despite legal instruments which could protect them, such as minimum wage rate. Polish nationals do not want to miss a job and so agree to work long hours for lower salaries, because they tend to be much higher than Polish ones. Finally, due to 'an occupational gap' Polish migrants created a competition for the low- and semi-skilled Irish nationals which leads to the wage damping (Barrett and McCarthy, 2007).

MIGRANTS AND THEIR IRISH COLLEAGUES IN THE WORKPLACE

The research examined the work environment given that respondents usually declared long working hours which extended over the full-time employment (38h per week). It was essential for the research objectives to establish whether migrants were satisfied from their work conditions and work environment in order to predict their future employment intentions. The study suggests that Polish migrants tended to work with other Polish migrants – a mere 21% claimed that they were the only Polish employee in the company. Over 28% of respondents work in groups varying between 2-5 Polish employees and over 21% worked in groups consisting of more than 20 Polish nationals.

The research examined the work relationships between Polish and Irish peers. To achieve this objective interviewees were asked if they met their Irish colleagues in their leisure time. One third of respondents said they did not socialise with their Irish colleagues and almost the same number claimed that it rarely happened. Polish migrants (64%) had no or limited social integration at work. Only 15% described the frequency of meetings as often or very often. A number of factors are deemed responsible for this including the aforementioned discrimination in the workplace, the language barrier and finally large Polish network in the workplace and in the local community.

Undoubtedly, better relations between employees and between employer and employees have an effect on satisfaction from employment, on the productivity and efficiency of the employees and on the economic results of the companies. A lack of diversity awareness or xenophobic and discriminatory behaviours decreases satisfaction, motivation of employees and efficiency of work. It may result in employees leaving the company and as a consequence – economic loss to employers.

LANGUAGE AND ECONOMIC INTEGRATION

Lingual integration is a fundamental area for economic performance of migrants. The ability to speak a national language is not only a medium for communication but also an asset in influencing better placement in the labour market. It has an impact on: employment, education, national institutions as well as in societal relationships (Esser, 2006).

Over 80% of NGOs participating in the research claimed that lingual integration was a huge problem and the level achieved by Polish migrants was assessed as bad or very bad by 80% of participating organisations. Ms. Rita Walsh (2007), a Pobal's coordinator in charge of the Integration Funds has also indicated that the language barrier influenced economic and social behaviour of migrants but also the educational integration for children. This may have an impact on the placement in the education system and labour market of the second generation of Polish migrants. Surprisingly, the migrants' language self-assessment was far less alarming. Only 37% of interviewed respondents agreed that there are some impediments to lingual integration.

However, when asked to estimate the level of language skills on arrival to Ireland, over 20% admitted not to be able to speak English. According to migrants this situation changed positively over time and the language progress was reported, as presented in Figure 16:

One of the reasons for unsatisfactory language progress of Polish migrants was the opportunity to use a native language both in private and professional life in Ireland. The research revealed that 89% of migrants used Polish language at work. Most of the respondents disagreed with a sentence: 'I speak English more often than Polish on an ordinary day' and only 19% answered positively. However, when asked in which language they usually read newspapers in order to get news and other information, more than half of respondents (53%) chose English and 36% Polish. It leads to conclusions that Polish migrants had a passive knowledge of the English language. It was necessary for the research objectives to analyse if migrants had an initiative to improve language skills and what were the barriers to achieve it. The research indicated that 64.8% of respondents did not participate in language classes due to:

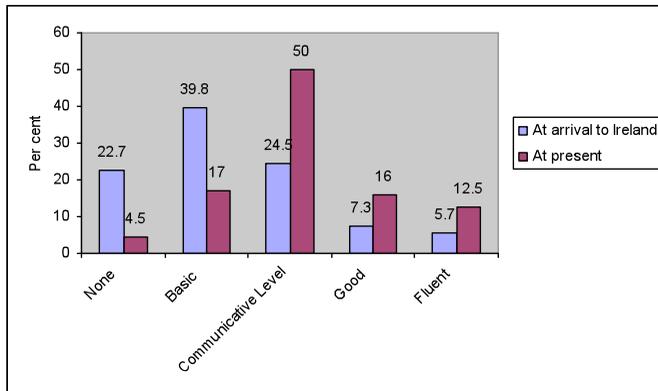


Figure 16. Comparison between migrants' language skills at arrival to Ireland and at present.

- tiredness after work (45%)
- lack of information on the course (41%)
- no money (9%)
- no time (5%)

However, the NGOs participating in the research, claimed that it was difficult for them to convince Polish migrants to attend English classes, even if a language course was provided free of charge. According to the NGOs the most important impediments to linguistic integration were:

- Polish migratory network of friends and colleagues,
- availability of Polish media,
- lack of interest in learning English,
- focusing mostly on remunerating activities, and
- low attendance rate at English classes for foreigners.

Concluding, language problems created a barrier for effective economic integration. Nevertheless, most of migrants indicated progress in English language skills. It enabled them to make their employment situation more flexible, especially during the economic downturn. Undoubtedly, language skills gained in Ireland became also a migrants' asset, which may enable them to look for future employment opportunities in the country of origin or in third countries.

EDUCATION AND MIGRANTS' EMPLOYMENT IN RURAL IRELAND

Education is an important condition for the economic integration of migrants and their children. As described above, it is necessary for working migrants to

gain language competences and to develop their professional qualification through vocational training and/or further- and higher education. As indicated in the NELM theory new qualifications increase flexibility and opportunities in the labour market of the host and home countries. It is why education is one of the principal areas of integration. The educational background of migrants and their allocation in the Irish labour market was already presented. This part examines the participation of migrants in further education and professional training.

The participation of migrants in the further education and professional training was estimated at 21% which was higher than Irish national rate. Over half of respondents undertook training relevant for secondary sectors (e.g.: construction industry, whole sale sector), namely: Safe Pass training or a fork lifting operator training. Both these educational choices correlated with the employment allocation of Polish migrants in Ireland and they contributed to the employment segregation. However, 5% of respondents participated in training courses on the entrepreneurship and self-employment but it did not lead them to set up own business in rural Ireland.

Future educational plans of migrants were covered in the survey. The results showed that 42% of respondents expressed a desire for further- or higher education in either Polish or Irish institutions. The governmental stakeholders and providers of educational services should acquaint themselves with needs of Polish labour migrants in terms of continuing education. It is especially important in the time of economic recession when the employment in migrant dominated sectors was reduced significantly, as for example in the construction sector (Barrett *et al.* 2008). Changing of qualifications may prevent increasing unemployment among migrants. Finally, newly gained qualifications may have very different impact on the future professional career of Polish migrants. For those migrants who had primary or vocational education, participating in further education and/or vocational trainings should result in better prospects in a country of migration and of origin. However, in case of those with third level degree work in the semi-skilled professions, participation in vocational trainings may result in professional regression.

POLITICAL INTEGRATION AND LABOUR MARKET

Political integration is directly linked to economic integration of migrants since it relates to the participation of migrants in the political system and civil society of the host country. Participation in political parties, non-governmental organisations or labour unions creates opportunity to impact the economic and social conditions of migrants in the host country but it also gives common space of interaction between nationals and non-nationals. Knowledge about political rights and freedoms empowers migrants and enables them to build representation

by establishing their own organisations or informal groups that can advocate on behalf of migrants and support newcomers.

Almost half of the respondents were not interested in Irish politics. Participation in Irish or/and Polish political and voluntary organisations was very insignificant. Most of the respondents (93.7%) were not members of any Irish organisation, political party or labour unions. Only 6.3% declared involvement in Irish civil society: non-governmental organisations (3.5 %), sport clubs (1.8 %) and labour unions (0.9 %). Polish organisations were even less popular: 95% of interviewees declared lack of participation in any of them. Those who did participate mentioned only one and the same organisation – the newspaper ‘Polskie Echo’. This analysis suggests an insignificant level of political participation and representation of Polish migrants in the Irish governance structures. This picture corresponds with the outcomes of the survey conducted with NGOs, which argued that political integration is at insufficient. In conclusion, a member of one of Irish organisation noticed that: ‘This [political integration] will take a bit of time as there is no room as of yet to accommodate ethnic minorities in Irish politics’.

Insignificant political or civic participation might have resulted from the fact that most of Polish non-governmental organisations were located in Irish cities¹⁰. There were several Polish NGOs active in rural Ireland, e.g.: Polish Fermoy, Bogha in Macroom, Polskie Echo, Eagles in New Ross, Polish Community Group in Tipperary and informal groups associated with the Polish Chaplaincy. Polish rural organisations had little experience and limited resources because participation of volunteers is only off-work activity. It is necessary to take into consideration that most migrants came to Ireland to undertake for profit employment and not to participate in the voluntary sector.

One of the research objectives was to analyse what Irish third sector does to improve integration of Polish migrants and economic performance in particular. It was important due to the fact that the third sector/civil society organisations are traditionally strong in rural Ireland largely due to relatively weak local authorities. There were many non-governmental organisations established to assist migrants. The research findings confirmed that a lot of state’s responsibilities with regard to migrants were undertaken by the civil society in cooperation with public administration. The research revealed a good practice in migrants’ integration, namely programmes of West Cork Community Partnership or Avodhu Development Group Ltd. Figure 17 below presents the multidimensional approach to integration implemented by the West Cork Community Partnership:

¹⁰ For example: Polish Information and Culture Centre in Dublin, Polish Social and Cultural Association in Dublin, Polish House in Dublin, My Cork Association in Cork, Together-Razem in Cork, Association of Polish Doctors in Ireland in Dublin, Polish-Irish Business Association in Limerick.

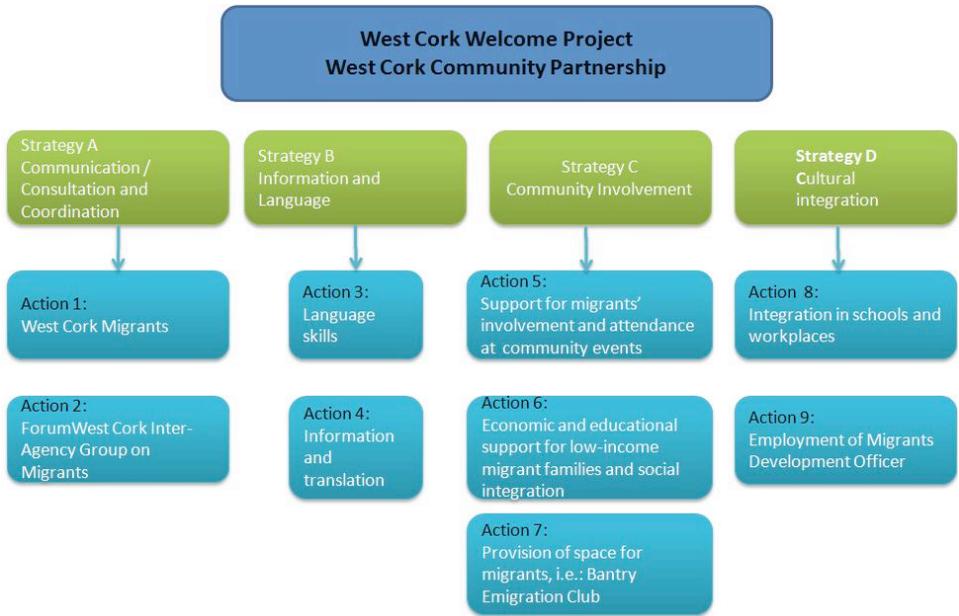


Figure 17. West Cork Welcome Project, WCCP, 2007.

FUTURE OF MIGRANTS IN RURAL IRELAND

Interviewees were asked about their plans for staying in Ireland. Over 20% considered permanent stay in Ireland against 78% who anticipated temporary migration. A temporary situation was defined very differently as presented in Figure 18:

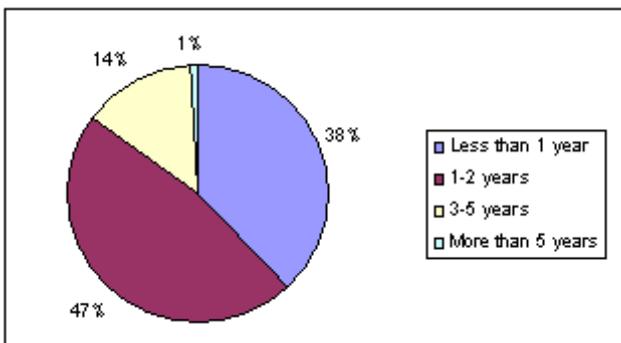


Figure 18. Maximal planned period of emigration to Ireland.

The rationale behind the indicated temporarily of migration was assessed. The answers differed from economic calculation to emotional sentiments, as presented in Figure 19:

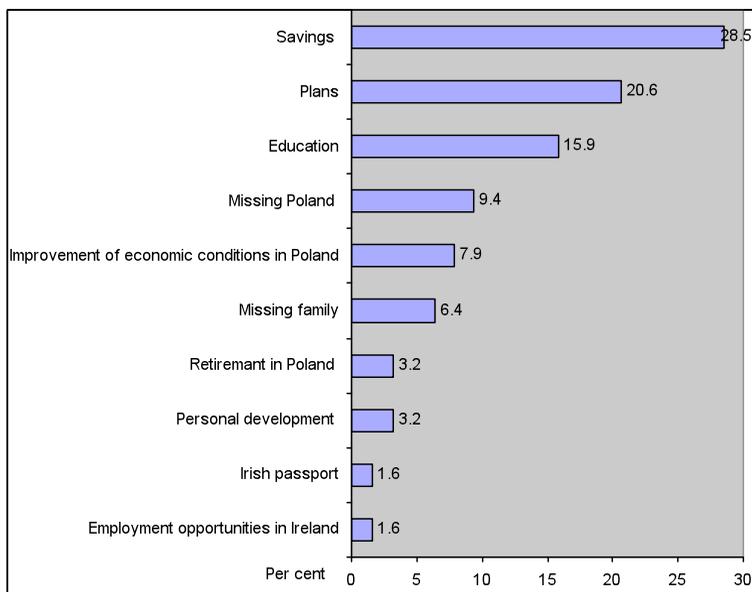


Figure 19. Migrants' reasons for the indicated length of a temporary stay in Ireland.

Most of the interviewees considered returning after accumulating sufficient savings (28.5 %) and these can be divided into three categories:

- migrants who needed money to start own business (16.7 %)
- migrants who needed money to buy or build own house (27.8 %)
- migrants who wanted to save money without outlining an aim (55.5%)

Education was cited as the main reason to return by 15.9% of respondents.

They can also be divided into three sub-categories:

- students who wished to continue their education after academic holidays
- students who wished to continue their education after one year-academic break
- parents whose children were born in Ireland or were in pre-school age but they wanted to come back to Poland to send their children to Polish school
- parents who wanted their children to finish certain level of education in Ireland and then come back

Over 20% would follow their 'future plan', which was set prior to migration. Emotional reasons such as missing family (6.4%) and missing Poland (9.4%) were also cited.

Some respondents indicated that positive macroeconomic changes in Poland and improvement of the economic situation for individuals (7.9%) would influence their return. There were also three groups of respondents whose rationale was based on personal development (3.2 %). Finally 3.2% wanted to work in Ireland until retirement when they planned to return to Poland.

WHY ARE POLISH MIGRANTS ENCOURAGED TO STAY IN IRELAND?

Respondents were asked to give three reasons encouraging them to stay in Ireland.

The majority (71%) stayed in Ireland for the high income and further 8% due to a type of work they had. The quality of life was the most important factor for 6% of respondents and most of them mentioned that life in Ireland was ‘easier’ than in Poland. It is linked directly with another respondents group (2%), who indicated stability of life and social security as a main advantage. Furthermore, over 80% of respondents agreed that they had better quality of life in Ireland than in Poland and over 90% of respondents indicated that they had more material security and stability of life in Ireland.

The political situation in Poland was a reason for 4% of interviewees to stay in Ireland and particularly the lack of political stability and public trust.

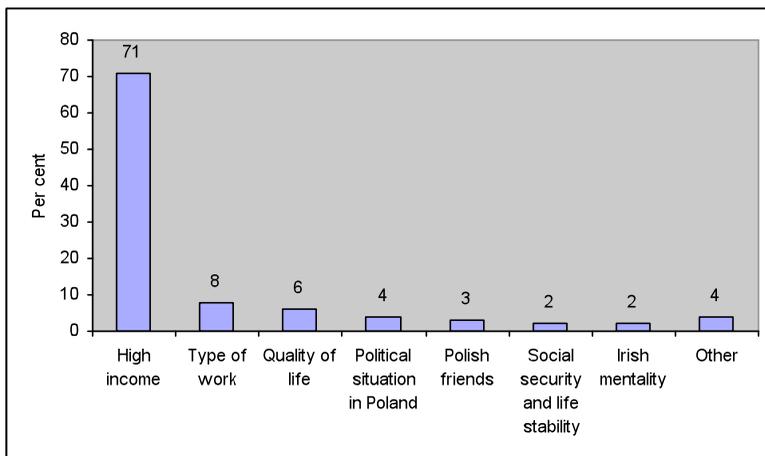


Figure 20. Factors that encourage Polish migrants to stay in Ireland.

This issue was reinforced during the meeting of Polish NGOs in Ireland with representatives of the Chancellery of Prime Minister of the Republic of Poland,

Department for the Polish Diasporas' Affairs and Democratic Transformations in Central and East Europe, on the 20th August 2007. Some participants mentioned that the main problem was lack of prospects in Poland due to the constant debate on the communism era. It was suggested that political efforts should concentrate more on the future socio-economic development of Poland and Polish population.

CONCLUSIONS

To conclude the main findings are summed up concerning the extent to which economic integration of Polish nationals in rural Ireland has taken place and in addition the main non-economic determinants of this process are mentioned.

Most Polish migrants could find work in Ireland in the prosperity time between 2004 and 2007. The most significant problem with economic integration was not about quantity but quality of employment which was impacted by the neo-liberal regulations of the labour market and limited intervention from the Irish government. The analysis of education and employment backgrounds of Polish migrants showed that it was 'a brain waste' situation in Ireland. It means that a considerable number of Polish migrants were employed in low- and semi-skilled professions, which are usually below their educational background and professional qualifications. It created an occupational gap and an occupational discrimination for migrants influenced by the market demand. Furthermore, there was a significant influence of Polish migratory networks on the pattern of employment. The first migrants created 'beaten path' for the others by providing their family members, friends and colleagues with information on the employment or even employment itself. Due to the strong Polish networks in rural Ireland it was difficult for an individual to find alternative way of living and working. Finally, for those who did not have provided work, the time of job hunting was a significant determinant. Migrants did not have enough savings to be able to wait for more suitable positions for which they are qualified. The semi-skilled jobs did not require special qualifications and good command of English. Hence those with third-level education and poor English skills could find placement in semi-skilled professions. Those migrants who had sound educational and employment background so as language skills could take advantage of the employment opportunities created by the Celtic Tiger however they often faced 'glass ceiling' and wage discrimination which has not deteriorated over time.

The research indicated that Polish migrants were employed but not self-employed due to multiple reasons, from the language barrier to the lack of information. However, if Irish stakeholders had provided institutional support for migrant entrepreneurs, by information on enterprise legislation or tax system and schemes

for small and medium enterprises, it would have brought benefits for both Irish and Polish nationals.

Finally, the relations between Irish and Polish at work were not satisfactory as they rarely socialise, mostly due to language problems, strong ties with members of Polish diaspora and discrimination incidents. A language support and better social integration between Irish and Polish nationals could have increased the efficiency of work and the level of employment satisfaction. It would also demand an improvement of awareness, knowledge and skills in the area of the multicultural management of the core management personnel as well as personnel providing the information, advice and guidance services (IAG).

Migrants rarely thought about personal development at work because they concentrated on earning a living and their return to Poland. Few migrants participated in courses providing them with employment opportunities or promotion at work. Those migrants who have improved language skills and gained new qualifications, have obtained new assets which will bring new career prospects both in Ireland, in Poland and elsewhere in the EU. Finally, a situation of a few years low- and semi-skilled underemployment may result in employment regression of migrants.

However, one would ask if it is necessary to continue a debate on economic integration in the time of economic downturn when the influx of migrants has been significantly reduced and the return migration has started. The research findings suggest that it is important in the situation of economic recession to focus on the economic integration of these migrants who decide to stay because it is more difficult for them to find proper placement in the labour market. A lack of proper economic integration would result in the increase of unemployment among migrants and their participation in welfare programmes and in consequence may lead to social conflict. Therefore, integration of migrants in Ireland is necessary for social coherence and further socio-economic development of Ireland.

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INTERNET SITES

WEBSITE	ADDRESS
Central Statistic Office of Ireland	www.cso.ie
Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform (DJELR)	www.pobail.ie/
Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment (DETE)	www.entemp.ie/
Department of Social and Family Affairs (DSFA)	www.welfare.ie/
FAS	www.fas.ie/en
Główny Urząd Statystyczny	www.gus.gov.pl
Immigrant Council Of Ireland	www.immigrantcouncil.ie/
International Organisation for Migration	www.iom.ie
Pobal	www.pobal.ie
World Bank	www.worldbank.org

Appendix 1. Number of Polish migrants participating in the Census 2006 by the provinces.

Province	NUMBER OF POLISH	%
Leinster	35,487	56.2
Munster	18,180	28.8
Connacht	7,239	11.5
Ulster	2,184	3.5
Total	63,090	100

Source: CSO, 2006

