

The Effects of International Economic Migration on the Family as seen by Lithuanian and Polish Students

Małgorzata Szyszka

The John Paul II Catholic University of Lublin, Poland, mszyszka@kul.pl

Abstract. The main aim of the article is to examine young people's opinions concerning international economic migration. The analysis is based on a study that was conducted by the author and involved 198 students of selected degree programmes at two universities: in Lublin and in Vilnius. The first part of the article describes the students' countries of origin, i.e. Poland and Lithuania, while the second one gives an analysis of the empirical data. The students' opinions on the reasons for migration and their assessment of migration, are discussed. Furthermore, the article presents the negative and positive effects of the parent's migration on the family. Finally, it indicates what conditions, in the view of respondents, help to reduce the negative consequences of economic migration.

Keywords: *economic migration, reasons for migration, family, effects of migration on children.*

Introduction

Economic migration is a phenomenon that has become a permanent feature of today's economic and social reality. It is undertaken mainly for financial reasons such as a desire to earn higher wages, difficulties in finding a job in one's home country, better career opportunities or higher standard of living abroad (International migration of population, 2013, 54). Economic migration is usually undertaken by young people, who are not afraid of challenges, changing their living environment, or of the temporary separation from their families. Migration networks (Massem, 1987; Faist, 2000) play an important role in the decision to relocate abroad by providing the migrant with information, as well as

with the emotional and instrumental support (practical help and social contacts). Moreover, today migration is treated as “an integral part of human life. The so-called culture of migration is perpetuated. Despite people’s awareness of its negative consequences, migration is tolerated or even considered desirable” (Danilewicz, 2010, 94).

The article focuses on how international economic migration is perceived by young people. It aims at presenting students’ opinions about the consequences of economic migration for the family and children. It is crucial to get to know what members of the young generation think of this issue because in future they may also decide to migrate in search of ‘a better life’, and at the same time they face important decisions about starting their own families. The article presents the results of a study carried out among students of selected degree programmes at two universities: in Lublin and in Vilnius. So how do young people assess the influence of migration on the functioning of the family? What positive and negative consequences of migration do they see? Is it possible, in their opinion, to avoid the undesirable effects of migration? Have they had any experience of migration so far? The first part of the article describes the students’ countries of origin (Poland and Lithuania) with reference to selected indicators. This is followed by the profile of students who took part in the study. Finally, their opinions on the effects of international economic migration on the family are examined.

Poland and Lithuania as countries of emigration

The issue of international economic migration concerns almost every country in the world. In Europe, migration between countries is facilitated by visa-free border traffic following from the membership in the European Union and the Schengen zone. As a result, thousands of Europeans migrate every year.

Likewise, Poland and Lithuania have a high net migration rate; both countries struggle with a huge population loss due to international economic migration. In 2013, 32.100 economic migrants left Poland (The size and structure of population..., 2016, 167), and 38.800 people left Lithuania. In 2012, the migration rate for Poland stood at -0.2 / 1,000 inhabitants, while for Lithuania it was as high as -7.1 / 1,000 inhabitants (Wołkonowski, 2014, 442–443). Furthermore, both countries experience ‘waves’ of international migration. In Lithuania, two such waves have been observed: the first one in 2005 (just after Lithuania’s accession to the EU) and the other in 2010, after the financial crisis in 2008 and a considerable GDP drop in 2009. Following the improvement of economic situation in the years 2011–2013, the number of emigrants has been slowly decreasing, but it has still been of a double-digit value (Wołkonowski, 2014, 442–443). In Poland, the number of emigrants has been steadily increasing since 2004, i.e. since Poland’s accession to the European Union. A slight decrease in emigration was observed in the years 2008–2011, which was connected with the improvement of the country’s economic situation. How-

ever, since 2012, the number of migrants has been on the rise again (Information on the size and directions..., 2015, 3).

Another tendency that is observed in both countries is a decreasing birth rate. In 2014, the birth rate in Poland stood at 1.33, while in Lithuania it was 1.29. The trend of having fewer children is typical for all Europe. Both Polish and Lithuanian women decide to have their first child later (when they are over 27), have fewer children, and postpone getting married. These changing patterns in marriage and family life are reflected in the lack of simple generation replacement and in the population decrease in both countries. According to the 2011 census, Lithuania's population stood at 3.043 million people. In April 2012, it dropped to 3 million and in early 2013 it was just 2.980 million. In 2014, Lithuania was inhabited by 2.922 million people, while in May 2015 by 2.908 million people (<http://kurierwilenski.lt>). The population of Poland, on the other hand, was estimated at 38.538 million in 2011, 38.533 million in 2012, 38.496 million in 2013, 38.479 million in 2014, and 38.437 million in 2015 (The size and structure of population..., 2016, 167). In both countries, the number of inhabitants has fallen considerably, though this drop has been much higher in Lithuania given the fact that it is almost five times smaller than Poland.

Population ageing is still another equally undesirable trend nowadays. It stems from a change in the population structure, especially in the youngest age group between 0–14 and the elderly – 60 and 60+, or 65 and 65+. These worrying changes take place both in Lithuania and Poland. In 1989, children aged 0–14 years accounted for nearly 23 % of Lithuania's population, whereas those over 60 and over 65% constituted respectively 15.7 % and 10.7 % of the country's population. In 2011, this proportion was almost reversed, with children accounting for only 14.7 %, those of 60 and 60+ for nearly 23.5 %, and those over 65 constituting 17.8 % of the total population (<http://kurierwilenski.lt>). A similar, though not as dramatic situation, can be observed in Poland. In 1990, children aged 0–14 accounted for 24.4% of Poland's population and the elderly (65+) constituted 10.2 %, whereas in 2011 these rates were 15 and 14.2 %, respectively (in 2015, 15 and 15.8 %) (The size and structure of population..., 2016, 167). The data clearly show a numerical imbalance between generations – Polish and Lithuanian societies are ageing. The number of elderly and very old people (80+) is increasing due to rising life expectancy.

Another important factor that drives economic migration (or in fact, constitutes its determinant) is the situation on the labour market, or more specifically the level of unemployment. Poland and Lithuania are similar also in this respect. In the 1990s, both countries saw a sudden and dramatic increase in the number of unemployed, which was connected with transformation processes. Since 2000, the number of unemployed people have been fluctuating. In 2003, the unemployment rate was 14.4 % in Lithuania, in 2008 it fell to 3.8 % only to reach 18 % in 2010. In 2014, it was estimated at 9.9 % (Wołkonowski, 2014: 444). Similar trends are observed in Poland. In 2005, the unemployment rate reached 17.6 %, in 2010 it fell to 12.4 %, whereas in 2014 it amounted to 11.4 % (Statistical

Yearbook published by GUS, 2015). The employment rates in both countries are also at a similar level (63.7 % in Lithuania in 2013, 60 % in Poland, Eurostat, 2014). Therefore, both countries face the problem of high unemployment and the lack of job opportunities encourages people to take a decision to migrate abroad.

The analysis of the migrant profile also reveals analogies between the two countries. Both Polish and Lithuanian migrants are mainly young people who completed secondary education (Lithuanian migrants are usually aged between 20 and 29, and those from Poland between 25 and 34). They differ, however, in marital status. Poles who migrate are more often married, whereas the majority of those migrating from Lithuania are single (although, not more than 15 years ago, the majority of Lithuanians who left their country were married) (Wołkonowski, 2014, 447; Information on the size and directions..., 2015, 1).

The analysis of selected indicators relevant to the data interpretation shows similarities between Poland and Lithuania. Both countries face the same contemporary social problems: declining birth rates, ageing population, high unemployment and many young people leaving abroad in search of work or a better life. Poland and Lithuania are also similar in terms of their history and culture, as well as geographical location. In view of all this, will there be differences in how migration and its consequences are perceived? Will opinions held by Polish students on how migrant families function differ from those held by their peers from Lithuania?

Research methodology and profile of university students

The aim of the study was to get to know the opinions of a selected group of young people (students) on the effects of international economic migration on the family. The issue analysed is of relevance and great importance for at least two reasons. Firstly, international migration is easy and takes place on a massive scale, which is connected with the fact that both Poland and Lithuania are the EU members. The second reason concerns the study group itself. It consists of young people, who are just forming relationships and starting their own families. Would they decide to leave their countries to work abroad in the future? Are they aware of the consequences of such a decision and its influence on other family members? What consequences of moving abroad do they see and how do they assess them?

The study involved students of sociology and social work at the John Paul II Catholic University of Lublin and students of sociology and social pedagogy at the Lithuanian University of Educational Sciences in Vilnius. It was conducted at the end of 2015 and

beginning of 2016 and made use of the auditorium questionnaire. Purposive sampling was used¹.

The study involved 198 students (101 from Lublin and 97 from Vilnius). In the research sample, there were more women (81.8 %) than men (18.2 %), which is connected with the specific nature of humanistic studies. The average age of respondents was 24.14 years. Most respondents were not married (73.2 %), 44.1 % were in some informal relationship and 17.9 % were married. 70.7 % of the respondents were religious (including 10.1 % of deeply religious). Half of them (49 %) described their financial situation as good, 45.5 % as average, and 5.6 % as bad. Generally, students from Lublin were more likely to assess their financial situation as good than those from Vilnius (56.4 % vs. 41.3 %). On the other hand, students from Vilnius more frequently described their financial situation as average (49.5 % vs. 41.6 %).

Most of the young people participating in the study (both Polish and Lithuanian) do not have the experience of economic migration (75.3 %). Only every fourth student has been abroad for the purpose of employment (24.5 % of the respondents from Lithuania and 25 % from Poland). However, they know families in which one or both parents have worked abroad for over half a year. Nearly 43 % know many such families (more often students from Lublin than those from Vilnius – 46 % as compared with 39.4 %), while almost one in three knows such families, though only a few of them (31 % of the Polish students, and 31.9 % of the Lithuanian respondents).

Table 1. Knowing the families in which one or both parents have worked abroad for over half a year by the city/country of origin

Do you know any families in which one or both parents have worked abroad?	Lithuania (Vilnius)		Poland (Lublin)		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
I know many such families	37	39.4	46	46.0	83	42.8
I know some such families, but not many	30	31.9	31	31.0	61	31.4
I know only one such family	8	8.5	8	8.0	16	8.2
I do not know any such families	19	20.2	15	15.0	34	17.5
Total	94	100.0	100	100.0	194	100.0

* Source: the author's research.

This may influence the students' own decisions to migrate abroad in search for work (Fig. 1). More than half (53.3 %) would decide to undertake work away from their home country, with slightly more students from Lublin (56.5 %) than those from Vilnius (50.0 %).

¹ The data presented here are diagnostic. The study sample is not representative of the whole population of university students, and thus the conclusions made can not be translated into the whole population of university students.

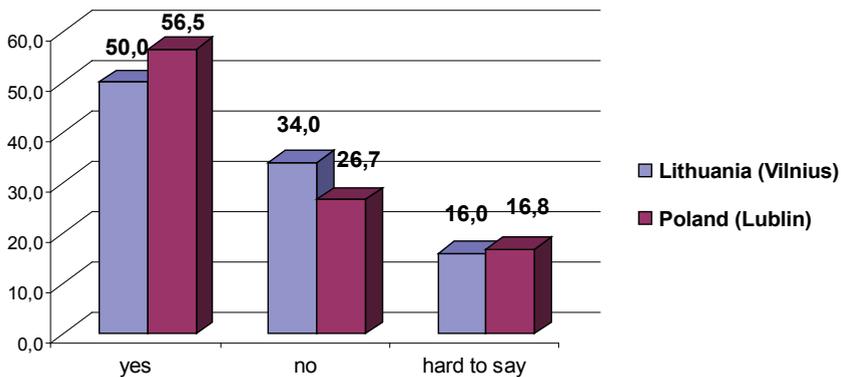


Fig. 1. Decision about the possibility of working abroad by the city/country of origin (in %, N = 198)

* Source: the author's research.

Every second respondent does not exclude the possibility of migrating for work. Given the situation on the labour markets in both countries, this is not surprising. So is it really true that the economic situation (whether your own or that of your country) drives economic migration? It turns out that this is the case. According to the respondents, economic factors are the primary driver of migration abroad (Fig. 2). These include expected higher earnings and better social welfare; this motivation is more frequently indicated by the students from Vilnius than those from Lublin (38.9 and 23.9 %, respectively). Another factor contributing to economic migration is a difficult economic and financial situation, resulting mainly from high unemployment. Likewise, this factor is more frequently indicated by the respondents from Vilnius (44.5 %) than those from Lublin (37.4 %). Providing financial stability for the family is still another economic reason for migration. When thinking about their families now or in the future, students emphasize the opportunity to provide their children with education and to ensure a satisfactory standard of living. This point is more often emphasized by the Polish young people than those from Lithuania (30.3 and 11.7 %, respectively). A few respondents connect economic migration with self-realization, i.e. improving their qualifications and language skills, or getting to know the culture of a destination country. This factor was indicated more frequently by the students from Lublin than those from Vilnius (8.4 and 4.9 %, respectively).

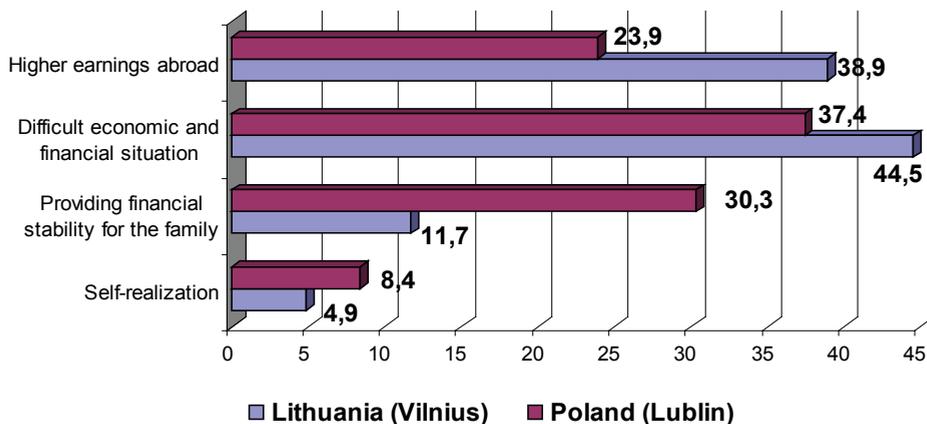


Fig. 2. Reasons for economic migration by the city/country of origin (in %, N = 198)

* Source: the author’s research. The responses do not add up to 100 because respondents could indicate two answers. It was an open-ended question.

Therefore, economic motivation is the key *push factor* behind migration, this being a result of high unemployment and difficult labour markets both in Poland and Lithuania. The respondents’ opinions are consistent with the theories explaining the reasons for economic migration, especially with the neoclassical theory of push and pull factors (Lee, 1966), which emphasises the rational character of the migrant’s decision, as well as with the theory of the new economics of migration (Stark, Bloom, 1985), which highlights the family context (including the socio-cultural context) and the feeling of relative deprivation of households. Although migration is the result of many factors, it is the economic situation of an individual or of a family that is the most important.

Assessment of the effects of economic migration on the family

There is no doubt that economic migration influences the way the family functions. The changes that take place in the family are various and depend on many factors: who migrates (a mother or a father), how long do they migrate for, how old are the children left at home, how often do they meet with the migrant parent, do they communicate and how do they communicate with each other (Danilewicz, 2006). As a result of migration, a new type of family emerges: a family separated by migration, formally complete but functioning as incomplete, a family temporarily incomplete, or as Danilewicz puts it, a family in a structural or emotional breakup (Danilewicz, 2010). Both in Poland and

Lithuania, there are increasingly more such families. Changes in the family take place with a varying intensity and at different levels. When analysing these changes, one can apply the criterion of their influence (positive or negative) or the criterion of the level of family relationships (husband–wife, children–parents relationships) (Gizicka, Gorbaniuk, & Szyszka, 2010, 19). In this analysis, the criterion of the influence of migration on the family situation was used.

On the basis of media reports, one may get an impression that migration has only negative consequences for the family. On the other hand, psychological and pedagogical literature points out not only negative, but also positive aspects of migration. And how is the influence of migration on the functioning of the family perceived by the students surveyed? Their opinions vary (Fig. 3). Half of the students from Poland (50 %) notice a negative influence of migration on the family, as compared to 41.7 % of their peers in Lithuania. The Lithuanian respondents more often see both positive and negative effects of migration on the family (51 % as compared to 43 % of the Polish students). Only a few respondents pointed to the positive effects of migration. Why does every second Polish student hold a negative opinion about migration? This may result from the social discourse which has been going on in Poland and which concerns mass migration, families left behind in Poland, and abandoned children known as ‘Euro-orphans’.

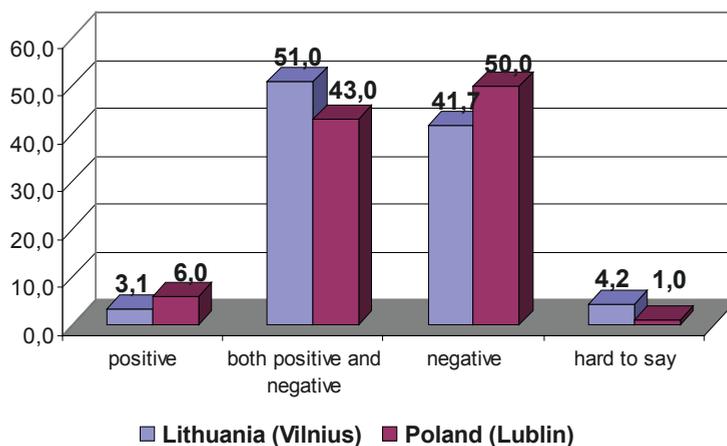


Fig. 3. Overall assessment of the influence of economic migration on the functioning of the family by the city/country of origin (in %, N = 198)

* Source: the author’s research.

On the other hand, when asked about specific positive effects of migration, students had no problems with enumerating them (Table 2). Both Polish and Lithuanian respondents see obvious benefits of the parent’s migration in economic and financial terms. They

mention the improved economic situation of a family (96 and 95.9 % of the respondents, respectively), the ability to implement plans that require much money (Lithuanian students are more likely to mention this point – 93.8 % as compared with 88 % of the Polish respondents), and to provide normal living conditions for the family (this point is more often indicated by the Polish students than those from Lithuania – 90 % as compared to 70.2 %). More than half of the university students in Poland (54%) also mention the increased social status of a family. On the other hand, this is not considered to be a positive effect by over half of the Lithuanian youth (55.8 % negative responses, only every third student in Lithuania believes that this is a positive effect). By contrast, the Lithuanian respondents are more likely to point out the fact that family members can develop their career aspirations (54.8 % as compared to 44 % of the Polish respondents).

Therefore, the students surveyed notice the positive effects of migration on the way the family functions. These benefits are connected mainly with improving living conditions of a family, which is the purpose of undertaking migration, after all.

Table 2. Assessment of the positive effects of migration on the family by the city/country of origin

Assessment of the positive effects of migration on the family		Country of origin				Total	
		Lithuania (Vilnius)		Poland (Lublin)			
		N	%	N	%	N	%
improved economic situation	yes	93	95.9	97	96.0	190	96.0
	no	1	1.0	3	3.0	4	2.0
	hard to say	3	3.1	1	1.0	4	2.0
higher social status of the family	yes	32	33.7	54	54.0	86	44.1
	no	53	55.8	35	35.0	88	45.2
	hard to say	10	10.5	11	11.0	21	10.7
ability to implement plans that require much money	yes	90	93.8	88	88.0	178	90.8
	no	3	3.1	8	8.9	11	5.6
	hard to say	3	3.1	4	4.0	7	3.6
developing career aspirations by family members	yes	51	54.8	44	44.0	95	49.3
	no	29	31.2	41	41.0	70	36.2
	hard to say	13	14.0	15	15.0	28	14.5
providing normal living conditions for the family	yes	66	70.2	90	90.0	156	80.4
	no	15	16.0	5	5.0	20	10.3
	hard to say	13	13.8	5	5.0	185	9.3

* Source: the author's research.

Obviously, economic migration of the parent has negative consequences, as well. It leads to family disintegration, it changes the way the family functions and affects rela-

tionships between parents and children. It seems to be much easier to enumerate those negative consequences than the positive ones. So what adverse effects of migration are noticed by the students and do they really believe that their range is extensive?

The negative consequences of migration listed in the study relate to the three levels of the functioning of a family and its members (Table 2). The first is connected with the parent who stays in the home country. Both Lithuanian and Polish students express the opinion that the parent left behind is overloaded with family and household duties (81.4 and 87 %, respectively). They must deal with the behaviour problems of their children (82.5 % of the respondents from Vilnius and 82.2 % of the respondents from Poland), with no support from the spouse staying abroad. This latter aspect was noted by 77.9 % of the Lithuanian students and 74 % of the Polish ones, although some of them were of a different opinion (14.7 % of the Lithuanian respondents and 21 % of the Polish ones).

The second category of negative effects is connected with the emotional functioning of family members. Over 90% of the students surveyed note that family members get emotionally detached from each other and that separated spouses, or parents and children feel a sense of longing. What is more, over 80% point to a sense of abandonment experienced by children (80.2 % of the respondents from Vilnius and 88 % from Lublin). The high percentage of such responses underlines the kind of consequences suffered – most often they concern feelings and emotional involvement of family members.

The third category of consequences refers to the durability of marriage and family as such. The students surveyed expressed different opinions on this issue. For some of them, one of the negative effects of migrating abroad in search of better economic opportunities is marriage breakdown. Students from Vilnius were more likely to give such a response (63.2 %), although nearly one in 4 (23.2 %) disagreed with this opinion. The views held by Polish students are even more ambivalent. 39% of them believe that economic migration may result in marriage breakdown, 26.9 % are of the opposite opinion, and one in three found it difficult to answer this question (35 %). Likewise, Lithuanian students were more likely to express the opinion that economic migration may lead to looking for new partners (58.4 % as compared to 31 % of the Polish respondents). On the other hand, both groups believe that migrating abroad contributes to a feeling of uncertainty about the family's future (59.4 % of the Lithuanian respondents and 54 % of the Polish ones), although not all agree with this opinion. Therefore, in the students' opinion, the durability of marriage is not necessarily put at risk by economic migration. This may be wishful and optimistic thinking of young people, or perhaps they treat economic migration as one of the possible options in the family life cycle, an option that we should adapt to.

Table 3. Assessment of the negative effects of economic migration on the family by the city / country of origin

Negative effects of economic migration on the family		Country of origin				Total	
		Lithuania (Vilnius)		Poland (Lublin)			
		N	%	N	%	N	%
behaviour problems with children	yes	80	82.5	82	81.2	162	81.8
	no	9	9.3	12	11.9	21	10.6
	hard to say	8	8.2	7	6.9	15	7.6
too many duties for the person staying in the home country	yes	79	81.4	87	87.0	166	84.7
	no	12	12.5	11	11.0	23	11.8
	hard to say	4	4.2	2	2.0	6	3.1
lack of support from the spouse	yes	74	77.9	74	74.0	148	75.9
	no	14	14.7	21	21.0	35	18.0
	hard to say	7	7.4	5	5.0	12	6.2
emotional detachment of family members	yes	91	94.8	91	91.0	182	92.9
	no	3	3.1	7	7.0	17	5.1
	hard to say	2	2.1	2	2.0	4	2.0
longing	yes	91	95.8	97	97.0	188	96.4
	no	2	2.1	3	3.0	5	2.6
	hard to say	2	2.1	0	0.0	2	1.0
feeling of abandonment experienced by children	yes	77	80.2	88	88.0	165	84.2
	no	12	12.5	5	5.9	17	8.7
	hard to say	7	7.3	7	7.0	17	7.1
marriage breakdown	yes	60	63.2	39	39.0	99	50.7
	no	22	23.2	26	26.9	48	24.6
	hard to say	13	13.7	35	35.0	48	24.6
search for new partners	yes	56	58.4	31	31.0	87	44.4
	no	19	19.8	32	32.0	58	26.0
	hard to say	21	21.9	37	37.0	58	29.6
uncertain future of the family	yes	57	59.4	54	54.0	111	56.6
	no	22	22.9	23	23.0	45	23.0
	hard to say	17	17.7	23	23.0	40	20.4

* Source: the author's research.

Overall, students notice both positive and negative consequences of economic migration for the functioning of the family. Their opinions may be influenced by their own experiences of economic migration (though only one in four has been an economic migrant), but also by observing families separated by migration (80 % of the respondents know at least one such family).

Assessment of the effects of economic migration on children

Pedagogical, psychological and sociological literature² emphasises that all the consequences of economic migration are felt particularly strongly by children. How is this issue viewed by the students surveyed? The majority believe that economic migration of parents has mostly negative influence on their children (over 60 %), and only fewer than one in three claims that this influence is both positive and negative (Fig. 4).

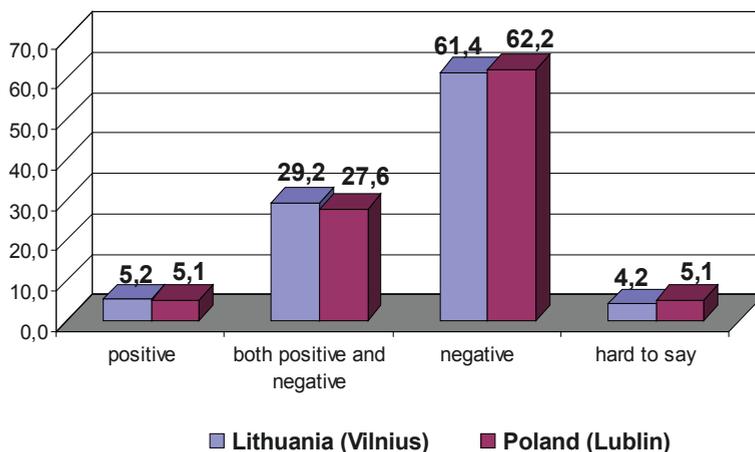


Fig. 4. Overall assessment of the influence of economic migration on children by the city/country of origin (in %, N = 198)

* Source: the author's research.

Which aspects of children's lives and functioning are negatively affected by their parent's migration (Fig. 5)? The two most often indicated consequences are obvious and inevitable: lack of care and control from the other parent (90.5 % of the respondents in Lithuania and 88 % of the respondents from Poland) and the weakening of ties with the parent who is away (this consequence was more often pointed out by the Polish students than Lithuanian ones – 82.2 % as compared to 61.1 %). They result from the direct absence of the parent.

² Danilewicz, W. (2010). *Sytuacja życiowa dzieci w rodzinach migracyjnych*. Białystok; Kozak, S. (2010). *Patologia eurosieroctwa w Polsce. Skutki migracji zarobkowej dla dzieci i ich rodzin*. Warszawa; Młyński, J. & Szewczyk, W. (2010). *Migracje zarobkowe Polaków. Badania i refleksje*. Tarnów; Szczygielska, I. (2013). *Migracje zarobkowe kobiet i ich wpływ na funkcjonowanie rodziny*. Warszawa; *Migration – a Challenge to the 21st Century*. (2008). M. Zięba (ed.). Lublin; Gizicka, D., Gorbanik, J., & Szyszka, M. (2010). *Rodzina w sytuacji rozłąki migracyjnej*. Lublin; *Problem eurosieroctwa. Wybrane aspekty*. (2011). B. Więckiewicz (Ed.). Stalowa Wola.

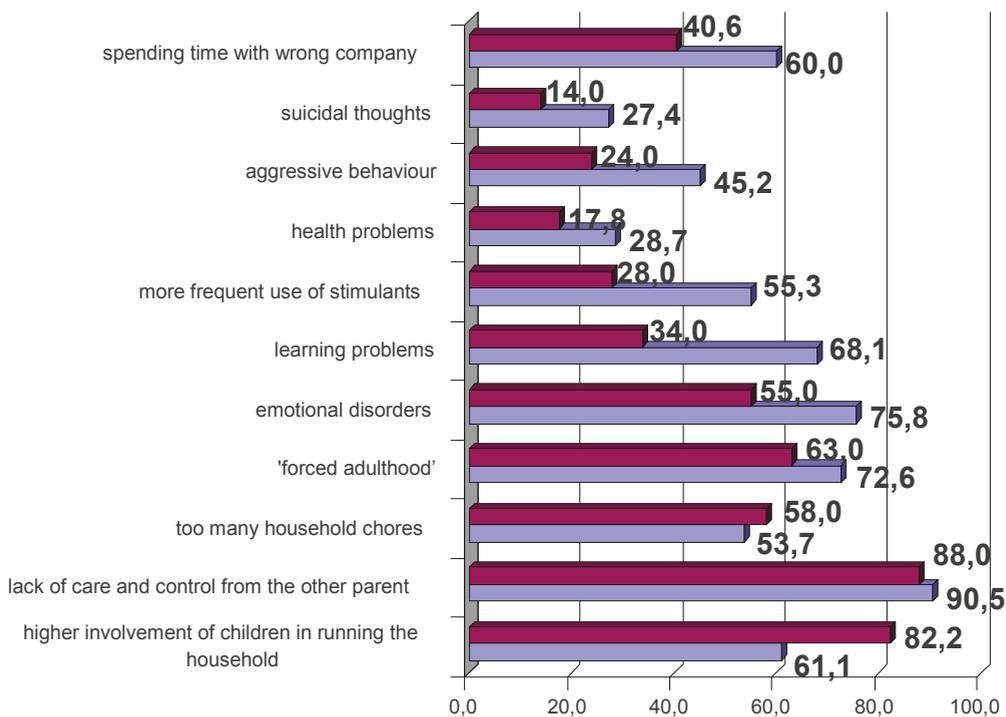


Fig 5. Negative effects of economic migration on children by the city/country of origin (%), N = 195

* Source: the author's research. The figure shows only 'yes' answers.

Other consequences, which are indicated more often by the Lithuanian than Polish respondents, follow from those two and include: forced adulthood (72.6 and 63 % of the respondents, respectively), emotional disorders (75.8 and 55 %), learning difficulties (68.1 and 34 %), spending time with wrong company (60 and 40.6 %), more frequent use of stimulants (55.3 and 28 %), being overloaded with household chores (55.3 and 58 %), and aggressive behaviour (45.2 and 24 %). On the other hand, suicidal thoughts and health problems are mentioned seldom as consequences of migration. Generally speaking, Lithuanian students are more likely to point out the negative consequences of international economic migration. Why is it so? This question is difficult to answer categorically, especially given the fact that Poland and Lithuania experienced similar waves of migration.

Despite the tendency to view economic migration only in terms of its negative consequences, students also pointed to its positive aspects. Moreover, these aspects were frequently indicated (by over 50 % of the respondents in almost every case). The most important benefits of migration in relation to children, are of a financial nature (Fig. 6).

According to the students surveyed, they include: satisfying material needs (97 % of the Polish respondents and 92.7 % of the Lithuanian students), being able to pursue expensive interests (more Lithuanian respondents than Polish ones – 90.5 and 75 %), having brand goods (65 % of the Polish respondents and 69.5 % of the Lithuanian respondents), as well as having much money for one’s own needs (more often indicated by the Lithuanian respondents than the Polish ones – 70.6 % vs. 55 %).

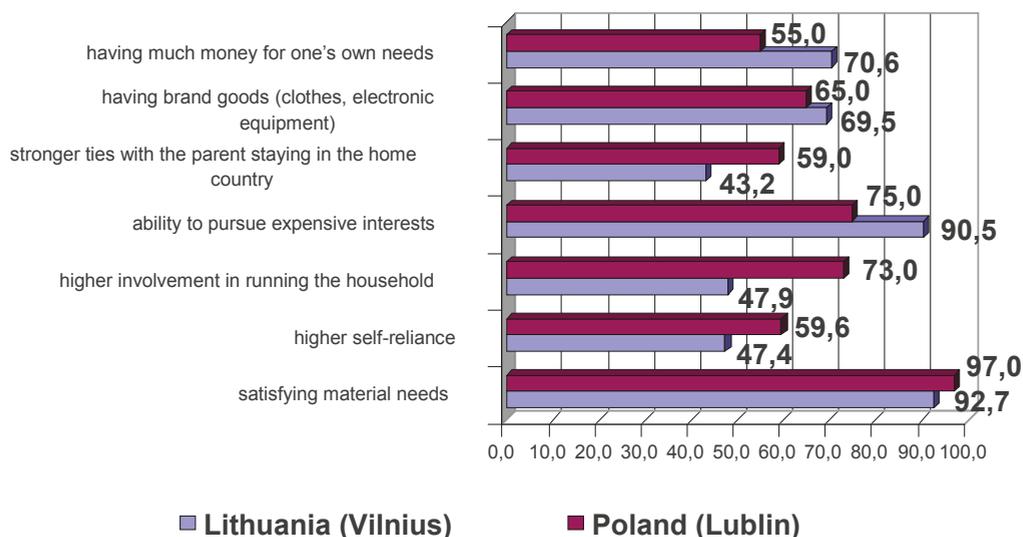


Fig. 6. Positive effects of economic migration on children by the city/country of origin (% , N = 195)

* Source: the author's research. The figure shows only 'yes' answers.

The second group of positive effects that economic migration brings about concerns the functioning of children in the family and their relationships with the parent. Students believe that the absence of a parent increases children’s involvement in running the household (Polish students are much more likely to indicate this point – 73 % as compared to 47.9 % in Lithuania), and as a result children become more independent (60 % of the Polish and 50 % of the Lithuanian respondents). Furthermore, they develop stronger ties with the parent in the home country (once again, this was emphasised more frequently by the Polish respondents than by the Lithuanian ones – 59 % as compared to 43.2 %).

The data collected show a trend that is difficult to interpret; namely, Lithuanian students are more likely to link positive effects with the economic aspect, while Polish students more often emphasize the emotional and functional aspect. Why are their perceptions of the benefits of economic migration for children different? This may be connected with the way migration itself is viewed. The purpose of economic migration

is to improve the financial situation of a family, which explains why its 'pros' concern mainly the economic aspect. But, why is this aspect more frequently emphasized by the Lithuanian youth? This may be related to cultural changes taking place in Lithuania (e.g. the growth of a consumer society) or the desire to possess goods that people find hard to afford with the money they earn in their country. The average monthly salary in Lithuania is lower than in Poland, which means that the percentage of workers earning the minimum salary is higher – 13.7 % as compared to 9.9 % in Poland (<http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics>).

An indirect attempt at interpreting the data may be made by answering the question whether students support the decision to migrate abroad if it is taken by people who have a family and a low-paid job in their country. Despite the high percentage of undecided respondents (every fourth student), many young people would consider this decision right (Table 4). Again, students from Vilnius were more likely to give a positive answer (49 % as compared with 36 % of the Polish respondents). Thus, the perception of effects of migration lies in its very nature, with the economic factor being the key driver of migration and also determining the way its consequences are viewed.

Table 4. Opinion on international economic migration undertaken in order to raise the standard of living when both parents have a low-paid job in the home country by the city/country of origin

Decision to migrate taken by parents who have a job, though low-paid, in order to raise the standard of living	Lithuania (Vilnius)		Poland (Lublin)		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Yes	47	49.0	36	36.0	83	42.4
No	24	25.0	38	38.0	62	31.6
Hard to say	25	26.0	26	26.0	51	26.0
Total	96	100.0	100	100.0	196	100.0

* Source: the author's research. The answers 'definitely yes' and 'rather yes', and 'definitely no' and 'probably not' have been combined in the table.

Is it possible to avoid the negative effects of migration? Is it possible to protect the family, especially children from the consequences of separation, or at least minimize them? These questions are of a particular importance, considering the fact that economic migration is believed to be one of the possible ways of life, and that it entails numerous risks. According to the respondents, it is possible to avoid the adverse effects of migration by having a precisely defined purpose and time of staying abroad (Table 5). Both Polish and Lithuanian students regard these conditions as the most essential for the functioning of migrant families. In their opinion, the clearly specified length of time a migrant plans to work abroad is particularly important for reducing the potential harmful consequences of separation between the parent and the child. In the second place, students noted the

importance of taking a decision to migrate together (the Lithuanian respondents were more likely to indicate this condition – 35.4 % as compared to 24.1 % of the Polish respondents) and of maintaining frequent contacts between family members (43.7 % of the Lithuanian respondents and 29.3 % of the Polish respondents). In the third choice, they indicated the importance of frequent contacts, either indirect (by telephone, e-mail) or direct (visits).

Table 5. Conditions necessary to avoid the negative effects of economic migration by the city/ country of origin (in %)

Which of the following conditions do you think are the most important to avoid the negative effects of migration?	1st choice		2nd choice		3rd choice	
	Lithuania (Vilnius)	Poland (Lublin)	Lithuania (Vilnius)	Poland (Lublin)	Lithuania (Vilnius)	Poland (Lublin)
	N = 94	N = 101	N = 87	N = 99	N = 85	N = 97
clearly defined purpose of migration	33.0	39.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
precisely defined time of staying abroad	30.9	32.7	10.3	16.2	0.0	0.0
joint decision regarding migration	20.2	15.8	24.1	35.4	2.4	8.2
frequent contacts between family members (by telephone, e-mail)	11.7	6.9	43.7	29.3	20.0	32.0
frequent mutual visits	3.2	2.0	17.2	9.1	43.5	26.8
shared responsibility for the upbringing and education of children	1.1	0.0	3.4	5.1	17.6	12.4

* Source: the author's research. Percentages do not add up to 100, as the respondents could choose multiple answers.

The conditions necessary for mitigating the negative effects of migration can be expressed in terms of 'obviousness'. If they were not fulfilled, families would undoubtedly be more affected by the consequences of migration. However, it is important to note that young people look at migration, as it were, from the other perspective – noticing not only its consequences, but also how these consequences can be minimised.

Final remarks

With economic migration so widespread as it is today, it is extremely important to be aware of its effects. Are students – young people facing decisions concerning both future career and family – aware of them?

The study carried out shows that they are; young people see both the negative and positive effects of migration on the family. The study also reveals some differences in

their perception depending on their country of origin. Lithuanian respondents are more likely to point out the negative consequences of migration (especially for children). On the other hand, students from Lublin more often notice positive consequences of the parent's migration in terms of emotional and functional aspects, rather than the financial one. Both Polish and Lithuanian students define the factors that help reduce the negative effects of migration on the family. This demonstrates that they perceive economic migration not only in the light of possible benefits it may bring, but also its threats to the family.

Both groups under study do not exclude the possibility of migrating in search of better economic opportunities, with the economic factor being the main reason for their possible migration. This conclusion provokes the reflection on how to 'keep' young people in their home country? Needless to say, this is the task for the governments of both countries, and it looks as though it is a difficult and long-term task.

References

- Danilewicz, W. (2006). *Sytuacja życiowa dzieci w rodzinach migracyjnych*, Białystok: Trans Humana.
- Danilewicz, W. (2010). *Rodzina ponad granicami. Transnarodowe doświadczenia wspólnoty rodzinnej*. Białystok: Trans Humana.
- Eurostat. (2014). *Employment (main characteristics and rates) – annual averages*. Source: <http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat>
- Faist, T. (2000). *The Volume and Dynamics of International Migration and Transnational Social Spaces*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Gizicka, D., Gorbaniuk, J., & Szyszka, M. (2010). *Rodzina w sytuacji rozłąki migracyjnej*. Lublin: Wydawnictwo KUL.
- Information on the size and directions of temporary emigration from Poland in the years 2004–2014*. (2015). Warsaw: Central Statistical Office of Poland.
- International Migration of Population. The 2011 National Census of Population and Housing*. (2013). Warsaw: Central Statistical Office of Poland.
- Kozak, S. (2010). *Patologia eurosieroctwa w Polsce. Skutki migracji zarobkowej dla dzieci i ich rodzin*. Warszawa: Difin.
- Lee, E. S. (1966). A Theory of Migration. *Demography*, 3(1), 47–57.
- Massem, D. (1987). The Ethnosurvey in Theory and Practice. *International Migration Review*, 21(4).
- Migration – a Challenge to the 21st Century*. (2008). M. Zięba (Ed.). Lublin: Wydawnictwo KUL.
- Młyński, J. W., & Szewczyk, W. (2010). *Migracje zarobkowe Polaków. Badania i refleksje*. Tarnów: Biblos.
- Problem eurosieroctwa. Wybrane aspekty*. (2011). B. Więckiewicz (Ed.). Stalowa Wola: Wydział Zamiejscowy w Stalowej Woli.

- Stark, O., & Bloom, D. (1985). The new economics of economic migration. *The American Economic Review*, 75(2), 173–178.
- Statistical Yearbook*. (2015). Warsaw: Central Statistical Office of Poland.
- Szczygielska, I. (2013). *Migracje zarobkowe kobiet i ich wpływ na funkcjonowanie rodziny*. Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego.
- The size and structure of population and vital statistics by territorial division in 2015*. (2016). Warsaw: Central Statistical Office of Poland. Source: www.stat.gov.pl.
- Wołkonowski, J. (2014). Przyczyny i struktura emigracji obywateli Litwy w okresie 2003–2013 (p. 348, 437–448). In *Polityka ekonomiczna: Research Papers of Wrocław University of Economics*.
http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Minimum_wage_statistics/pl [access date 20.09.2016].
<http://kurierwilenski.lt/2015/05/13/litwa-w-zastraszajacym-tempie-wyludnia-sie/> [access date 25.07.2016].

Ekonominės migracijos pasekmės šeimai: Lietuvos ir Lenkijos studentų požiūris

Małgorzata Szyszka

Jono Pauliaus II katalikiškas universitetas, Lublinas, Lenkija, mszyszka@kul.pl

Santrauka

Straipsnio tikslas – ištirti jaunimo nuomonę apie ekonominę migraciją. Analizė grindžiama autorės atliktu tyrimu, kurio metu buvo apklausti 198 studentai pagal pasirinktas studijų kryptis dviejuose universitetuose Liubline ir Vilniuje. Pirmoji straipsnio dalis skirta emigracijos situacijai Lenkijoje ir Lietuvoje aptarti, antroji dalis – empirinių duomenų analizei. Tiriama studentų nuomonė apie migracijos priežastis, pateikiamas bendras ekonominės migracijos vertinimas. Pristatomi neigiami ir teigiami migracijos padariniai šeimai, kurie atsiranda išvykus šeimos nariui (tėvui / motinai) dirbti į užsienį. Analizuojamos sąlygos, kurios, respondentų manymu, mažina neigiamas tėvo / motinos išvykimo dirbti į kitą šalį pasekmes vaikams.

Esminiai žodžiai: *ekonominė migracija, migracijos priežastys, šeima, migracijos pasekmės vaikams.*

Gauta 2016 11 30 / Received 30 11 2016
Priimta 2017 01 12 / Accepted 12 01 2017