

EWA MARIA BĄCZYŃSKA*

Spatial Mobility as a Value. Polish Migrations in the Second Decade of the 21st Century before the COVID-19 Pandemic

Introduction

Many authors agree that spatial mobility plays an unquestionable role for societies all over the world to a greater or lesser extent.¹ Noel Cass and James Faulconbridge recognise the fact that spatial mobility turns human beings' existence into meaningful and satisfying lives.² Michael Wicki, Sergio Guidon, Thomas Bernauer et al. mention yet another issue. They emphasize a positive correlation between individuals' participation in spatial mobility and presented world views.³ However, spatial mobility seems to be of a different value for

* Ewa Maria Bączyńska, MA – PhD Candidate at the Doctoral School, Faculty of Social Sciences, The John Paul II Catholic University of Lublin, e-mail: ewa.baczynska@kul.pl, ORCID: 0000-0001-8686-0041.

¹ I.L. Degano, P.A. Lotito, *Analyzing Spatial Mobility Patterns with Time-Varying Graphical Lasso: Application to COVID-19 Spread*, "Transactions in GIS" 2021, vol. 25, iss. 5, pp. 2660–2662. DOI: 10.1111/tgis.12799; W.A.V. Clark, M. van Ham, R. Coulter, *Spatial Mobility and Social Outcomes*, "Journal of Housing and the Built Environment" 2014, vol. 29, no. 4, p. 720. DOI:10.1007/s10901-013-9375-0; H. Lübbe, *Der Globus hat kein Zentrum. Über Kulturelle und Politische Wirkungen Verdichteter Netze* [*The Globe has no Center. About the Cultural and Political Effects of Close Networks*], in: *Mobilität in der Globalisierten Welt* [*Mobility in the Globalized World*], ed. C.Y. Robertson-von Trotha, Universität Karlsruhe, Karlsruhe 2005, pp. 13–27.

² N. Cass, J. Faulconbridge, *Satisfying Everyday Mobility*, "Mobilities" 2017, vol. 12, no. 1, pp. 97–99. DOI: 10.1080/17450101.2015.1096083.

³ M. Wicki, S. Guidon, T. Bernauer, K. Axhausen, *Does Variation in Residents' Spatial Mobility Affect Their Preferences Concerning Local Governance?*, "Political Geography" 2019, vol. 73, pp. 143–146. DOI: 10.1016/j.polgeo.2019.05.002.

representatives of various generations.⁴ Ewa Ślęzak, a Polish researcher of in the field, accurately states that widely understood spatial mobility constitutes the basis for numerous changes in economy, society and politics.⁵ Worth mentioning in this context are Krystyna Romaniszyn's findings. According to her, not only the economic, demographic, political and legal issues, but also purely lifestyle aspects of migrations call for being highlighted more often.⁶ This paper puts these latter needs under scrutiny.

Zofia Kawczyńska-Butrym points out that migrations are among the most frequently analysed manifestation of spatial mobility (sometimes even equated with it).⁷ The aforementioned migratory aspect of spatial mobility makes the main subject of interest in this article. Migrations may take place between countries (international migrations), cities, rural areas or between cities and villages and vice versa (internal migrations).⁸ Choosing from among these diverse options, this study analyses the international migrations of Poles. Therefore, in the following part of this paper under the term "migration" I understand "international migrations" only. One may notice that in the 21st century, before the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, they have become a permanent feature of the lifestyle for some Poles. More precisely, at the end of 2019, the total of 2.415 thousands of Polish residents temporarily stayed abroad.⁹ Therefore, the leading goals of this article are as follows. First of all, it aims to describe the course of Polish international migrations in the years 2010–2019, socio-demographic profile of Polish migrants and the most frequently chosen destinations. What is more, in this study I make an attempt to explain the mo-

⁴ A. Masso, S. Silm, R. Ahas, *Generational Differences in Spatial Mobility: A Study with Mobile Phone Data*, "Population, Space and Place" 2019, vol. 25, iss. 2, pp. 7–10. DOI: 10.1002/psp.2210.

⁵ E. Ślęzak, *Mobilność korporacyjna. Na przykładzie Krakowa [Corporate Mobility. The Case of Cracow]*, Polskie Wydawnictwo Ekonomiczne, Warszawa 2019, p. 9.

⁶ K. Romaniszyn, *The Immigrant as a Not-Invented „Other”*, "Studia Polonijne" 2018, vol. 39, pp. 5–6. DOI: 10.18290/sp.2018.1; see K. Romaniszyn, *Belonging and Not-Belonging: Migration as a Challenge to Guest and Host Identity*, in: *Culture and Migration. The Cultural Implications of International Migrations in the Light of Fieldwork Evidence*, ed. K. Romaniszyn, Nomos, Cracow 2008, pp. 129–144; K. Romaniszyn, *Międzynarodowe migracje, a tożsamość. Zarys problematyki [International Migrations and Identity. Scope of the Issue]*, "Studia Polonijne" 2003, vol. 24, pp. 24–25.

⁷ Z. Kawczyńska-Butrym, *Mobilność i decyzje migracyjne – uwarunkowania i aktorzy [Mobility and Migration Decisions – Terms and Actors]*, in: *Migracje międzynarodowe i ekspatriacja. Perspektywa indywidualna, organizacyjna, społeczno-kulturowa [International Migrations and Expatriation. Individual, Organizational, Social and Cultural Perspective]*, ed. S. Przytuła, Difin, Warszawa 2017, p. 21.

⁸ I. Riss, *Living Systems Theory and Typology of Migrations*, "Systems Research and Behavioral Science" 2014, vol. 32, iss. 1, pp. 67–68. DOI: 10.1002/sres.2160.

⁹ GUS, *Informacja o rozmiarach i kierunkach czasowej emigracji z Polski w latach 2004–2020 [Information on the Size and Directions of Emigration for Temporary Stay from Poland between 2004–2020]*, p. 2, <https://stat.gov.pl/obszary-tematyczne/ludnosc/migracje-zagraniczne-ludnosc/informacja-o-rozmiarach-i-kierunkach-czasowej-emigracji-z-polski-w-latach-2004-2020,2,14.html> (accessed: 17.12.2021).

tives of Poles' participation in international migrations. My analysis is mainly based on the series of annual reports of Public Opinion Research Centre (next CBOS). The quantitative research to these were predominantly conducted in the years 2010–2019.

Realizing my objectives requires that this article be adequately structured. Firstly, I briefly review the source literature focusing on the selected authors who explain basic terminology and relevant typologies of migrations. Then, I introduce research methodology. The main part of this article includes the results of my analysis. I start from a description of general trends in how Poles were engaged in international migrations in the years 2010–2019. Then, I elaborate on them in the context of respondents' socio-demographic profile. I also discuss the destinations selected by Polish migrants. The last part includes a polemical discussion with selected authors and the final conclusions.

Literature review

Here, I would like to propose a definition of migrations. Then, I discuss the diversity and specificity of various migration types. Marek Okólski refers to migrations also as migratory movements. He explains that they mean movements of people between different territorial units distinguished most frequently due to their administrative division. In addition, he points out that the effect of such mobilities obligatorily has to be a permanent or relatively permanent change of the place of residence.¹⁰ The Statistics Poland (GUS) offers guidelines concerning the minimum duration of spatial mobility required to qualify it as a migration. Internal and international migrations for a temporary stay are those during which the period of residence of an individual in their destination amounts to at least 6 months. In turn, long-term migrations are those for which the intended time of changing the place of residence amounts to at least 12 months. The aforementioned data is also noted in the Regulation No. 862/2007 of the European Parliament and of the Council signed on 11 July 2007, as stated in the Demographic Yearbook published by the Statistics Poland.¹¹

¹⁰ M. Okólski, *Demografia. Podstawowe pojęcia, procesy i teorie w encyklopedycznym zarysie [Demography. Basic Concepts, Processes and Theories in an Encyclopedic Outline]*, Wydawnictwo Naukowe Scholar, Warszawa 2005, pp. 82–83.

¹¹ GUS, *Rocznik demograficzny 2020. Demographic Yearbook of Poland 2020*, Warszawa 2020, <https://stat.gov.pl/obszary-tematyczne/roczniki-statystyczne/roczniki-statystyczne/rocznik-demograficzny-2020,3,14.html> (accessed: 25.10.2020); according to guidelines of the Statistics Poland both internal and international migrations for temporary stay until 2005 included mobilities in which period of residence at the destination was at least 2 months. In turn, from 2006 to 2012 it was increased to 3 months and from 2013 to half a year.

Authors who are interested in this category of spatial mobility used to make numerous attempts to classify their diverse forms.¹² Several of the well-known typologies were established yet in the 20th century. It is interesting to note that the first researcher to distinguish migrations from wandering was Henry Pratt Fairchild. Then, he divides migrations into immigration, invasion, conquest and colonization. This American sociologist underlines that immigration, invasion, conquest and colonization are connected by one common trait. All of them constitute “reasoned movements arising after man had progressed far enough in the scale of civilization to have a fixed abiding place. That is, they are definite movements from one place to another”.¹³ Another author, William Peterson, divides migratory movements into the following key classes: primitive (a movement related to man’s inability to cope with natural forces or ecological pressure), forced (by the state or some functionally equivalent social institution), impelled (similar to forced migration, but in this case migrants retain some level of power to decide whether or not to leave), free (take place when will of the migrants is the decisive element), mass (migration perceived as a collective behaviour).¹⁴

For the purposes of this article, I would like to draw more attention to economic and lifestyle aspect of migrations underlined by contemporary authors. From the economic point of view Witold Małachowski distinguishes labour migrations¹⁵. European Commission defines an “economic migrant” as a person who leaves their country of origin purely for economic reasons in order to seek material improvements in their livelihood. These economic reasons cannot in any way be related to the refugee definition.¹⁶ Lira K. Gurieva and Aleksandr V. Dzhioev enumerate a list of economic theories which explain labour migrations. These are, amongst others, Neoclassical Migration Theory, Dual Labour Market Theory, World-Systems Theory, The New Economic Geography.¹⁷

A Polish sociologist, Romaniszyn, postulates the category of lifestyle migrations. According to her, they are characteristic for developed societies since

¹² J.P. Georgica, *Polskie migracje w świetle procesów globalnych* [*Polish Migrations in the Light of Global Processes*], Presscom, Wrocław 2018, pp. 23–24.

¹³ H.P. Fairchild, *Immigration: A World Movement and Its American Significance*, Macmillan, New York 1920, p. 2.

¹⁴ W. Peterson, *A General Typology of Migration*, “American Sociological Review” 1958, vol. 23, no. 3, pp. 259–264. DOI:10.2307/2089239; see: K. Romaniszyn, *Migracje a zmiana celowa* [*Migrations and Intentional Change*], “Studia Polonijne” 2019, vol. 40, pp. 5–6. DOI: 10.18290/sp.2019.1.

¹⁵ W. Małachowski, *Migracje we współczesnym świecie. Implikacje dla Polski* [*Migrations in the Modern World. Implications for Poland*], Oficyna Wydawnicza SGH, Warszawa 2010, pp. 39–50.

¹⁶ United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), *UNHCR Master Glossary of Terms*, Geneva 2006, <https://www.refworld.org/docid/42ce7d444.html> (accessed: 19.11.2021).

¹⁷ L.K. Gurieva, A.V. Dzhioev, *Economic Theories of Labor Migration*, “Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences” 2015, vol. 6, no. 6, pp. 101–107. DOI:10.5901/mjss.2015.v6n6s7p101.

the late 20th century. Romaniszyn explains lifestyle migration as spatial movement undertaken for other than economic or political reasons. The common trait of lifestyle migrations is a deliberate departure not only from a specific geographical place, but also from the way of life led so far. Romaniszyn adds that lifestyle migrations are usually undertaken by people, who already reached a high financial status.¹⁸ Michaela Benson and Karen O'Reilly consider lifestyle migrants even as relatively privileged.¹⁹ Henrik Emilsson and Caroline Adolfsson list specific goals of lifestyle migration such as: receiving an outstanding foreign university diploma, cultivating a cosmopolitan lifestyle, living the values typical of the migration destination place and work-life balance, exemplified by Danish *hygge*.²⁰ In turn, Benson draws attention to the British lifestyle migrants, who move to rural areas of France in order to fulfil their willingness to experience an authentic countryside.²¹

Methods

My research relies on secondary data analysis. First of all, I take into account the quantitative reports annually prepared by CBOS. The analysed data are based on surveys carried out in the second decade of the 21st century, but before the COVID-19 pandemic exerted an impact on the Polish migrations. I present them as comparative analysis of Poles' migrations patterns in the years 2010–2019. All the surveys mentioned above were conducted on representative random samples of Polish residents of a legal age. The questionnaire data was collected using computer assisted personal interviews (CAPI) or computer assisted web interviews (CAWI). The independent variables on which I put emphasis in my study are as follows:

- place of residence: village or town (less than 20,000 residents, 20–100,000 residents, 101–500,000 residents, more than 500,000 residents);
- education level: primary/lower secondary, basic vocational, secondary, higher education;

¹⁸ K. Romaniszyn, *Migracje a styl życia [Migrations and Lifestyle]*, "Studia Polonijne" 2021, vol. 42, pp. 153–155. DOI: 10.18290/sp2142.8.

¹⁹ M. Benson, K. O'Reilly, *From Lifestyle Migration to Lifestyle in Migration: Categories, Concepts and Ways of Thinking*, "Migration Studies" 2016, vol. 4, no. 1, pp. 20–33. DOI:10.1093/migration/mnv015.

²⁰ H. Emilsson, C. Adolfsson, *Dreaming of Sweden as a Space of Well-being: Lifestyle Migration among Young Latvians and Romanians*, "Nordic Journal of Migration Research" 2019, vol. 9, no. 2, pp. 206–215. DOI: 10.2478/njmr-2019-0017.

²¹ M. Benson, *Living the "Real" Dream in la France profonde? Lifestyle Migration, Social Distinction, and the Authenticities of Everyday Life*, "Anthropological Quarterly" 2013, vol. 86, no. 2, pp. 515–522. DOI: 10.1353/anq.2013.0031.

- assessment of own financial conditions: bad, average, good;²²
- professionally active groups: managers/specialists, medium-level personnel/technicians, administrative and office staff, employees of the services sector, qualified workers, unqualified workers, farmers, self-employed entrepreneurs;
- professionally unactive groups: pensioners, retired people, students, unemployed, housewives and others.

The source reports I analyse describe not only the respondents themselves, but also other members of their households. As a result, I am able to collect data about former and long-term migrants as well as those who have left Poland forever. Terminology used in CBOS questionnaires and reports refers predominantly to the, so called, labour migrations. I analyse amongst others answers to the following questions:

- Has any member of your household left the country and is currently working abroad?
- Did you work abroad during last 10 years or are you currently working there?

Nevertheless, in this paper, I use the term “migrations” instead of “economic” or “labour” migrations suggested by CBOS. The reason why results from one of this study’s goals. That is analysis of actual motives of Polish foreign migrations. In addition, I supplement my study by analysis of reports shared by Centre of Migration Research (OBM). These secondary data are quantitative and were obtained by individual in-depth interviews (IDI) conducted in the second decade of the 21st century by scientists affiliated with Centre of Migration Research.

Results

The first point to be discussed in this section is the general distribution of Polish international migrations in the years 2010–2019. It is noteworthy that at the beginning of the second decade of the 21st century the percentage of respondents surveyed by CBOS whose household members did not undertake any migration in the analysed years exceeded 90%. In 2010–2011, it amounted to 91% and in 2012 to 94%. A significant decrease was yet observed in 2013 (87%). From that time this percentage ranged yearly between 87% and 90%. Having discussed these trends, let me now have a closer look at the data concerning the respondents *per se*. Similarly to the results presented above, nearly 90% of Poles did not decide to migrate in the decade preceding the respective surveys conducted in the years 2010–2019, neither in the analysed period. In more precise terms these figures mean that the percentage of respondents

²² I do not provide remuneration per capita, because the purchasing power differs accordingly to the place of residence.

who experienced such a mobility ranged from 11% to 14% in the years 2010–2019, except 2015 (17%).²³

After above presentation of a general scope of Polish migrations, here I elaborate on the socio-demographic profile of Polish migrants. My considerations constitute a comparative analysis of the years 2010 and 2019. The independent variables I take into account include place of residence, education level, assessment of one's financial standing, and belonging to professional or professionally unactive group. In context of these respective categories, below I analyse the answers to the following questions:

- Has any member of your household left the country and is currently working abroad?
- Did you work abroad during last 10 years or are you currently working there?

In 2010 an affirmative answer to the first question was provided by about every tenth village resident. I noticed the same about residents of towns which population did not exceed 500,000. On the contrary, only 2% of residents of cities which population was higher than 500,000 declared it.²⁴ In turn, the outcome concerning respondents themselves was less diversified in terms of place of residence and amounted to approximately 10% for each of the surveyed groups²⁵. Another independent variable is education level. In 2010, a higher percentage of respondents with secondary (11%) and basic vocational (10%) education than primary (8%) and higher (7%) education declared that someone belonging to their household participated in migrations.²⁶ Interestingly, my studies showed that the declarations of respondents about themselves were slightly different. Nearly 15% of respondents who obtained higher, basic vocational or secondary education answered the question positively. Definitely the fewest were to be found

²³ CBOS, *Wyjazdy Polaków do pracy za granicę*, Komunikat z Badań nr 140/2019 [*Poles' Mobilities for Work Abroad*, Research Report No. 140/2019], pp. 2–3; cf. CBOS: *Praca Polaków za granicą*. Komunikat z Badań nr BS/160/2010 [*Poles Working Abroad*, Research Report no. BS /160/2010], Warszawa 2010, p. 9; *Praca Polaków za granicą*, Komunikat z Badań nr BS/138/2011 [*Working Abroad*, Research Report No. BS/138/2011], Warszawa 2011, pp. 1, 7; *Wyjazdy zarobkowe za granicę*, Komunikat z Badań nr BS/149/2012 [*Foreign Economic Migrations*, Research Report No. BS/149/2012], Warszawa 2012, p. 1; *Poakcesyjne migracje zarobkowe*, Komunikat z Badań nr BS/166/2013 [*Post-Accession Economic Migrations*, Research Report No. BS/166/2013], Warszawa 2013, p. 2; *Poakcesyjne migracje Polaków*, Komunikat z Badań nr 162/2014 [*Post-Accession Economic Migrations*, Research Report No. 162/2014], Warszawa 2014, p. 2; *Praca za granicą*, Komunikat z Badań nr 157/2015 [*Working Abroad*, Research Report No. 157/2015], Warszawa 2015, p. 4; *Praca za granicą*, Komunikat z Badań nr 175/2016 [*Working Abroad*, Research Report No. 175/2016], Warsaw 2016, pp. 3, 10; *Wyjazdy do pracy za granicę*, Komunikat z Badań nr 146/2018 [*Mobilities to Work Abroad*, Research Report No. 146/2018], Warszawa 2018, pp. 7–9, 14.

²⁴ CBOS, *Praca Polaków za granicą*, Komunikat z Badań nr BS/160/2010 [*Poles Working Abroad*, Research Report No. BS /160/2010], Warszawa 2010, p. 9.

²⁵ Ibidem, p. 8.

²⁶ Ibidem, pp. 9–10.

within declarations of those with primary education 4%.²⁷ The third category of the socio-demographic profile on which I elaborate here is the assessment of respondents' own financial standing. In 2010, the higher it was, the higher was the propensity to undertake migration by other member belonging to the respondents' household.²⁸ Interestingly, also in the case of the respondents themselves, those who assessed their own material conditions as bad were the least likely to take part in the discussed mobility (7%). That was 5 percentage points less than the respondents who considered their financial situation as average and 4 percentage points less than the respondents who described it as good.²⁹

The last categories I discuss is belonging to the professionally active or unactive group. In 2010 more than one fifth of medium-level personnel and technicians declared that someone else from their household participated in migration. This answer was chosen twice less frequently by services sector, administrative and office employees as well as qualified workers, and the least frequently by unqualified workers (2%).³⁰ When respondents were asked about their own experiences, I noticed that in 2010, self-employed entrepreneurs most often answered the question positively (17%). In comparison, the outcome was one percentage point lower concerning unqualified workers, and two percentage points lower regarding administration, office or services sector employees or qualified workers. As far professionally inactive respondents are concerned, I obtained the following data. In 2010, almost every tenth of the interviewed retirees (9%), 7% of pensioners as well as school/ academic students stated that someone from their household emigrated. Slightly more than one-tenth of the unemployed, housewives and other professionally inactive respondents provided the same answer.³¹ In the case of respondents themselves, the unemployed emigrated most frequently. The results concerning the other professionally inactive groups such as students, housewives, retirees or pensioners did not exceed one tenth.³²

In comparison to the 2010, the data obtained in 2019 are as follows. The first independent variable I discuss is the place of residence. The percentages of respondents distinguished according to their place of residence, who declared that members belonging to their households emigrated, differed between each category by maximally 2 percentage points.³³ It is also noteworthy that migrations

²⁷ Ibidem, pp. 2–3, 8.

²⁸ Ibidem, p. 9.

²⁹ Ibidem, pp. 3, 8.

³⁰ Ibidem, p. 9.

³¹ Ibidem, pp. 3, 8–9.

³² Ibidem, p. 8.

³³ CBOS, *Wyzjazdy Polaków do pracy za granicę*, Komunikat z Badań nr 140/2019 [*Poles' Mobilities for Work Abroad*, Research Report No. 140/2019], Warszawa 2019, p. 9.

were undertaken by the same percentage of respondents living in large cities (exceeding than 500,000 residents) as in rural areas (22%).³⁴ The second criterion which I discuss here is education level. In 2019 respondents who graduated from higher education were the least likely to declare that someone belonging to their household emigrated (10%). Such an answer was given slightly more often by those respondents with basic vocational education (11%), then secondary education (14%), and most frequently by people with a primary/lower secondary education (19%).³⁵ On the contrary, I noticed quite an opposite tendency concerning respondents themselves. By this I mean the following correlation: the higher the degree of education, the higher the probability that they experienced a migration.³⁶ Another independent variable on which I elaborate are respondents' material conditions. In 2019, the worse their assessment was, the more often someone belonging to respondent's household emigrated.³⁷ In turn, 21% of interviewees who assessed their material conditions as good participated in migration. The ones who assessed their own financial conditions as average amounted to 23%, and as bad to less than one fifth.³⁸

The last categories I discuss is belonging to the professionally active or unactive group. In 2019, administrative and office employees most frequently declared that someone from their household emigrated (20%). The same response was provided by 16% services employees, and about one tenth of self-employed entrepreneurs, managers and specialists with higher education, farmers and qualified workers.³⁹ I noticed that in case of respondents themselves yet

34% of qualified workers participated in migrations. In addition, more than a quarter of managers and specialists with higher education, services employees and technicians also declared so. In 2019, the results concerning professionally inactive people were as follows. The unemployed most frequently answered that someone from their common household has experienced such a mobility. The same answer was provided when asked about the respondents' own experiences.⁴⁰

Another important issue is the distribution of migrations' destinations chosen by Poles in 2010–2019. In 2010 respondents most frequently chose Germany (39%), the United Kingdom (22%) and Italy (11%). Less than one in ten of respondents indicated such countries as the Netherlands, Spain, the United States, France, Ireland, Belgium, Hungary, Austria and the Czech Republic. It is noteworthy that Germany and the United Kingdom were the most and second

³⁴ Ibidem, p. 10.

³⁵ Ibidem, p. 9.

³⁶ Ibidem, p. 10.

³⁷ Ibidem, p. 9.

³⁸ Ibidem, p. 10.

³⁹ Ibidem, p. 9.

⁴⁰ Ibidem, p. 10.

most frequently chosen migration destinations throughout the whole analysed period. Contrary to the above-mentioned, only in 2010 was Italy placed third in this ranking. Since the next year (2011), it noted a downward trend being regularly replaced by the Netherlands.⁴¹

Discussion

There is a number of issues which this article draws attention to. In this part, I would like to discuss only couple of them in a polemic relation to the selected texts and statistical data. As I mentioned before, CBOS reports published in the years 2010–2019 focused on the labour type of migrations. The questions asked in their surveys frequently concerned respondents or their household members experiences with working abroad. Nevertheless, I omitted the term “labour migration” in favour of the word “migration”. Therefore, at this point I would like to question the remaining assumptions about the predominant role of labour factor and raise a question about the actual state of affairs.

According to the Statistics Poland (GUS), since 2010 the vast majority of Polish migrants were people aged 20–49. Until the end of the second decade of the 21st century, their average age slightly increased. Nevertheless, the majority was still within the age bracket 30–39. In relation to participation in mobility, GUS distinguishes the following economic age groups: pre-mobility age (0–17 years), mobility age (18–44 years), non-mobility age (45–59/64 years) and post-mobility age (60/65 and more). Therefore, significant majority of migrants belong to the working age group.⁴² Moreover, the financial conditions of Poles significantly improved between 2010 and 2019. In 2019, twice as much respondents as in 2010 assessed their material conditions as good and declared that they were not worried about their financial resources.⁴³ It is also noteworthy that 2019 was the first time in the analysed decade when the percentage of Poles who possessed savings exceeded 50% (55%).⁴⁴ Another trend I would like

⁴¹ Ibidem, pp. 4–6.

⁴² GUS, *Sytuacja demograficzna Polski do 2019 r. Migracje zagraniczne ludności w latach 2000–2019* [Demographic Situation in Poland up to 2019. International Migration of Population in 2000–2019], Warszawa 2020, <https://stat.gov.pl/obszary-tematyczne/ludnosc/migracje-zagraniczne-ludnosc/sytuacja-demograficzna-polski-do-roku-2019-migracje-zagraniczne-ludnosc,16,1.html> (accessed: 11.05.2021).

⁴³ CBOS, *Materiałne warunki życia*, Komunikat z Badań nr 64/2019 [Financial and Living Conditions, Research Report No. 64/2019], Warszawa 2019, pp. 1–7; cf. CBOS, *Sytuacja na rynku pracy w ocenach i doświadczeniach Polaków*. Komunikat z Badań nr 51/2019 [The Situation on the Labour Market in the Opinions and Experiences of Poles, Research Report No. 51/2019], Warszawa 2019.

⁴⁴ CBOS, *Polacy o swoich długach i oszczędnościach*, Komunikat z Badań nr 65/2019 [Poles about their Debts and Savings, Research Report No. 65/2019], Warszawa 2019, p. 1.

to underline is the decrease in the unemployment rate in Poland. It amounted to nearly 13% in 2010 and decreased to about 5,5% in 2019.⁴⁵ Despite these facts, approximately constant percentage of Poles annually decided to emigrate in the years 2010–2019. Then, I would like to refer to the migratory destinations which I discussed in the preceding part of this paper. In the analysed period Poles most often migrated to Germany, and second most often to the United Kingdom. This leads me to the conclusion that Polish migrants did not use to commonly adapt their decisions to the fluctuating economic circumstances and those on the labour market. Therefore, scientists affiliated with the Centre of Migration Research (CMR) repeatedly elaborate on the importance of other than economic or political values. They underline the role of a socio-cultural determinants instead. The authors enumerate such incentives of migrations as the local lifestyle, cultural diversity, professional development opportunities (additional courses, languages practise), the presence of relatives, the level of the education system, the possibility of receiving social support.⁴⁶ The data presented above challenge the importance of purely economic background of Polish migrations in the analysed period.

What is more, I compared CBOS reports on migrations with the ones on tourism. I noticed that Polish migration destinations frequently coincide with tourist trips destinations. In the years 2012–2016 and 2018 Poles most frequently participated in at least two-day trips to Germany. The United Kingdom was the second most popular tourist destination in 2015, then the third most popular in 2017 and 2019.⁴⁷ According to Romaniszyn, tourist trips may play a role of a reconnaissance before a final decision to migrate. In such cases, migrations often constitute an extension of tourist trips. As I mentioned at the beginning of this article, Romaniszyn connects migrations not only with the phenomenon of tourism, but also with a certain lifestyle (lifestyle migration). She adds that the issue of lifestyle migrations appears in the literature since only about 40 years, more and more often since the beginning of the 21st century. Nonetheless, Romaniszyn underlines that they have been predominantly associated

⁴⁵ GUS, *Unemployment Rate 1990–2021*, <https://stat.gov.pl/en/topics/labour-market/registered-unemployment/unemployment-rate-1990-2021,3,1.html> (accessed: 20.12.2021).

⁴⁶ A. Jeran, M. Nowosielski, W. Nowak, *Migrantinnen und Migranten aus Polen in Deutschland – Kulturelle Aspekte. Studienbericht [Migrants from Poland in Germany – Cultural Aspects. Study Report]*, Ośrodek Badań nad Migracjami, Uniwersytet Warszawski, Warszawa 2019, <http://www.migracje.uw.edu.pl/publikacje/migrantinnen-und-migranten-aus-polen-in-deutschland-kulturelle-aspekte-studienbericht/> (accessed: 05.06.2021); B. Jancewicz, W. Kloc-Nowak, D. Pszczółkowska, *Push, Pull and Brexit: Polish Migrants' Perceptions of Factors Discouraging them from Staying in the UK*, "Central and Eastern European Migration Review" 2020, vol. 9, no. 1, pp. 101–123. DOI: 10.17467/ceemr.2020.09.

⁴⁷ CBOS, *Wyjazdy wypoczynkowe Polaków w 2019 roku i plany na rok 2020*, Komunikat z Badań nr 15/2020 [*Poles' Leisure Trips*, Research Report No. 15/2020], Warszawa 2020, p. 13.

with mobilities from the northern Europe to the Mediterranean region.⁴⁸ In turn, the considerations I conducted above led me to the presupposition that Polish foreign migrations in the years 2010–2019 could be further discussed in the scope of lifestyle migrations conditions rather than being perceived as purely labour migratory movements.

Conclusions

To sum up, the presented study has achieved my research goals. I generally described the course of Polish foreign migrations in the years 2010–2019 and made an attempt to explain its main motives. The applied methodology enabled to collect a wide array of secondary data referring to the Polish foreign migrations in the analysed period. The source materials predominantly included the selection of quantitative reports annually prepared by CBOS in the years 2010–2019. So that before the COVID-19 pandemic exerted an impact on the Polish residents' participation in international migrations. Respondents of all questionnaires constituted representative samples of Poles of a legal age. As the questions considered not only the respondents themselves, but also other members of their households, I was able to describe mobilities of former and long-term migrants as well as those who have left Poland forever.

The study kept the following structure. Firstly, I presented the general course of Polish migrations in the years 2010–2019. Afterwards, I conducted a comparative analysis between the beginning of the second decade of the 21st century and the year 2019. I took into account the following independent variables:

- place of residence: village or town (less than 20,000 residents, 20–100,000 residents, 101–500,000 residents, more than 500,000 residents);
- education level: primary/lower secondary, basic vocational, secondary, higher education;
- assessment of own financial conditions: bad, average, good;
- professionally active groups: managers/specialists, medium-level personnel/technicians, administrative and office staff, employees of the services sector, qualified workers, unqualified workers, farmers, self-employed entrepreneurs;
- professionally unactive groups: pensioners, retired people, students, unemployed, housewives and others.

Then, I described the most frequently chosen destinations of migrations. In addition, I supplemented the main part of this paper with selected results of quantitative reports shared by the Centre of Migration Research (OBM).

⁴⁸ K. Romaniszyn, *Migracje a style życia [Migrations and Lifestyles]*, pp. 153–155. DOI: 10.18290/sp2142.8.

All the observations I made above enable conclusions which I wish to outline here. In general, in the years 2010–2019 participation of Poles in foreign migrations was relatively constant. It amounted to about 10% annually, despite slight fluctuations. Simultaneously the first and second most frequently chosen destinations remained the same, i.e., Germany and the United Kingdom. In turn, the comparative analysis of Polish migrants' socio-demographic profile to the following conclusions. 2019 compared to 2010 was less diversified in terms of migrants and their families place of residence in Poland. I underlined decreasing discrepancies between the residents of towns with various population ranges, or between urban and rural areas. Moreover, in both 2010 and 2019 Poles who assessed their financial standing better or obtained higher education declared that they participated in migrations more often than other groups. I also observed that international migrations used to be part of life of all socio-professional groups to a lesser or greater extent. After the further analysis I also noted that despite the decrease in an unemployment rate in Poland since 2010 until 2019, improvement of financial conditions of citizens, and changing economic circumstances in the other countries, relatively stable percentage of Poles decided to emigrate annually to the same destinations in the whole analysed period. What is more, the usual mobility age of Polish migrants is also assessed as the working age. The state of affairs described above led me to the conclusion that Polish migrations should be considered not purely as labour migrations, but partially as lifestyle migrations too. I would suggest that Polish activity on the international job market should be more frequently studied not only as a reason of migratory movements, but also as its side effect (consequence). Therefore, in my opinion, Polish migrations should be continuously and thoroughly researched. I suggest explorations in terms of sociological and lifestyle factors in post-pandemic times, when the participation on the international job market even more often takes place online. These observations seem to be the most insightful conclusions to this study.

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Summary

Mobility is an appreciated feature of specific objects, devices, financial resources, services and so on. However, as this study is of a sociological nature, I omitted discussing the mobility of entities other than human beings. Therefore, this article is based on an example of Polish foreign migrations in the second decade of the 21st century before the COVID-19 pandemic. Mobility is being perceived here as a valuable measure to achieve selected goals. The main part of this study is a comparative analysis of a selection of reports from quantitative research performed by the Public Opinion Research Centre (CBOS). This study provides answers, amongst others, to the following questions: How did the level of participation of Poles in foreign migrations and their destinations change in years 2010–2019? What are the differences between participation in the spatial mobility of Poles from various socio-demographic backgrounds? And most importantly what motives contribute to their decisions?

Key words: migrations, migration destinations, spatial mobility, 21st century

Mobilność przestrzenna jako wartość. Migracje Polaków w drugiej dekadzie XXI wieku przed wybuchem pandemii COVID-19

Streszczenie

Mobilność jest cenioną cechą określonych przedmiotów, urządzeń, zasobów finansowych, usług itd. Ponieważ jednak niniejsze opracowanie ma charakter socjologiczny, pominięto w nim omówienie mobilności bytów innych niż ludzie. Artykuł oparty jest na przykładzie polskich migracji zagranicznych w drugiej dekadzie XXI wieku, przed wybuchem pandemii COVID-19. Mobilność jest tu postrzegana jako istotny środek służący realizacji wybranych celów. Zasadniczą część opracowania stanowi analiza porównawcza wybranych raportów z badań ilościowych przeprowadzonych przez Centrum Badania Opinii Społecznej (CBOS). Opracowanie dostarcza odpowiedzi m.in. na pytania, jak zmieniał się poziom uczestnictwa Polaków w migracjach zagranicznych i ich cele w latach 2010–2019, jakie są różnice między uczestnictwem w mobilności przestrzennej Polaków z różnych środowisk społeczno-demograficznych, a przede wszystkim, jakie motywy wpływają na ich decyzje.

Słowa kluczowe: migracje, cele migracyjne, mobilność przestrzenna, XXI wiek