

**THE PHENOMENON OF FOREIGN MIGRATIONS
AND SELECTED ASPECTS OF THE DEVELOPMENT
OF HUMAN CAPITAL**

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A b s t r a c t

Certain regions or countries attract and succeed in retaining the existing demographic potential. Others undergo stagnation or even regress, which in extreme situations can lead to depopulation. This issue is important, as it is the inhabitants of given territories that initiate and create certain activities, values and changes in their environment. Today, attracting, retaining, developing and maintaining employees present a particularly difficult challenge, with migrations making it even more difficult.

The paper addresses the issues of selected aspects of the development of human capital in the face of foreign migrations with Poland as an example. Human capital is shaped by multiple factors. It is a complex process. The aim of this paper is to show the effects of foreign migrations in the practice of human resource management. On the one hand, management theoreticians and practitioners emphasize an increasing importance in the use of human capital; on the other hand, its waste can be seen in many situations.

**ZJAWISKO MIGRACJI ZAGRANICZNYCH A WYBRANE ASPEKTY KSZTAŁTOWANIA
KAPITAŁU LUDZKIEGO**

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Słowa kluczowe: migracje zagraniczne, zarządzanie talentami, kapitał ludzki.

Abstrakt

Określone regiony bądź kraje przyciągają i potrafią zatrzymać istniejący potencjał demograficzny. Inne podlegają stagnacji lub nawet regresowi, co w skrajnych sytuacjach prowadzi wręcz do wyludnienia. Ten problem jest ważny, ponieważ to mieszkańcy danych terytoriów inicjują oraz kreują pewne działania, wartości i zmiany w swoim otoczeniu. Przyciąganie, zatrzymanie, rozwijanie i utrzymanie pracowników obecnie jest szczególnie trudnym wyzwaniem, a migracje sprawiają, że to wyzwanie jest jeszcze trudniejsze.

W artykule podjęto tematykę wybranych aspektów kształtowania kapitału ludzkiego w obliczu migracji zagranicznych na przykładzie Polski. Kapitał ludzki kształtuje wiele czynników. To złożony proces. Celem artykułu jest ukazanie skutków, jakie w praktyce zarządzania zasobami ludzkimi niosą migracje zagraniczne. Z jednej strony teoretycy i praktycy zarządzania podkreślają coraz większe znaczenie wykorzystania kapitału ludzkiego, a z drugiej w wielu sytuacjach obserwuje się jego marnotrawstwo.

Introduction

Migrations are a form of satisfying needs that involves a change in the place of residence. They emerge and take place under the influence of phenomena and events that are referred to as migration factors (JĘDRZEJCZYK 2016, p. 67). According to D. JĘDRZEJCZYK (2016, p. 67): „(...) combinations of migration factors are the driving force for relocations through people’s psyche being impacted by such information that shapes the ideas and convictions about the need to change the destination and migration route”. The authors highlighted in their paper the impact of Poland’s accession to the European Union (EU) in terms of taking decisions about foreign migrations. The paper addresses the issues of selected aspects of the development of human capital in the face of foreign migrations with Poland as an example. Human capital is shaped by multiple factors. It is a complex process. The aim of this paper is to show the effects of foreign migrations in the practice of human resource management. To achieve the formulated aim, literature analysis, source materials and statistical data presented in tables have been used.

Foreign migrations of population are defined as population relocations involving a change of the country of residence. The EU Regulation (EC) no. 862/2007 of the European Parliament (EP) and Council of 11 July 2007 contains a definition of migration that refers to it as a planned period of residing in another country for at least 12 months (Rocznik Demograficzny 2015, p. 415). Within the meaning of this definition, immigration is defined as “an arrival in a country of a person who has previously been a resident of another country with an intention to stay in it for a period of at least 12 months” (Rocznik Demograficzny 2015, p. 415). Emigration, in turn, is the “leaving of a country by its resident with an intention to stay abroad for a period of at least 12 months” (Rocznik Demograficzny 2015, p. 415).

Migrations of this type that involve a change of the country of residence for a period of at least 12 months are referred to as foreign long-term migrations (Rocznik Demograficzny 2015, p. 415).

Foreign migrations can be both a chance and a threat in terms of the development of human capital. By viewing employees in this way, attention can be focused on the key objectives of people management. These objectives include the acquisition and retention by an organisation of skilled, committed and properly motivated employees that are desired by the organisation (BARON, ARMSTRONG 2008, p. 196, 197). Appropriate management of human resources and effective use of the potential in them can transform them into the most valuable asset of a company – human capital (KRÓL 2008b, p. 119). Creation of human capital is a difficult challenge. Both an organisation and an employee play a part in it. An organisation may for that purpose train employees, for example, or relocate those employed and implement work restructuring. It may also define its motivation system, organisational culture and physical working conditions, and provide medical care. The role of employees in this respect involves their participation in training courses and self-education, as well as their physical and psychological well-being (KRÓL 2008a, p. 424). The state and society also make a crucial contribution to the development of individual human capital through the creation of a system of general and vocational education, the health system and national culture. An important role in this aspect is also played by the family (by providing support of various kinds, e.g. in the development of skills) and an individual himself/herself, e.g. through their engagement (KRÓL 2008b, p. 113). In summary, varied and complex factors contribute to the creation of human capital. On the one hand, it is of key importance to strengthen human capital both in individual organisations and regions; on the other hand however, this capital can be easily lost or its value can be reduced.

Intensity and directions of foreign migrations in the period 1999–2014

Migrations are a response to ongoing economic and socio-political processes as well as specific activities in a given territory. Residents of specific territories initiate and create specific activities, values, and changes in their environment, being subject at the same time to an impact from outside. As a result, some regions or countries attract and are able to retain the existing demographic potential, while others undergo stagnation or even regress, which in extreme situations can lead to depopulation (*Krajobrazy migracyjne Polski* 2012, p. 184, 185). Migrations can be used to shape a favourable distribution of the

labour force, among other things. However, when their scale and intensity become huge, they cause a range of negative effects (ZDROJEWSKI 2000, p. 34).

The processes of foreign migrations saw significant changes at the end of the 20th century and at the beginning of the 21st century. The European Union's policy constituted a driver of migrations in Europe, including Poland. Poles gained full access to the labour markets of selected countries of the European Union on the first of May 2004. The subsequent years saw further EU countries removing barriers to employees from Poland. Freedom of settlement and the possibility of working in EU countries resulted in the mass emigration of young Poles. On the one hand, this phenomenon was caused by difficulties in the labour market in certain areas and sectors. On the other hand, it was prompted by the desire for higher earnings, strong demand for the work performed by foreigners and more generous social security in Western European countries (*Przemiany demograficzne w Polsce...* 2016, p. 88).

Table 1 presents the scale of foreign migrations in Poland (in thousand) in the period 1999–2014. Net migration is the difference between migration departures and arrivals (JELONEK, SOJA 2013, p. 185).

Table 1
International migration in Poland (in thousands)

Years	International migration			Total net migration
	immigration	emigration	net	
1999	7.5	21.5	-14.0	-14.0
2000	7.3	27.0	-19.7	-19.7
2001	6.6	23.3	-16.7	-16.7
2002	6.6	24.5	-17.9	-17.9
2003	7.0	20.8	-13.8	-13.8
2004	9.5	18.9	-9.4	-9.4
2005	9.3	22.2	-12.9	-12.9
2006	10.8	46.9	-36.1	-36.0
2007	15.0	35.5	-20.5	-20.5
2008	15.3	30.1	-14.9	-14.9
2009	17.4	18.6	-1.2	-1.2
2010	15.2	17.4	-2.1	-2.1
2011	15.5	19.9	-4.3	-4.3
2012	14.6	21.2	-6.6	-6.6
2013	12.2	32.1	-19.9	-19.9
2014	12.3	28.1	-15.8	-15.8

Source: based on Rocznik Demograficzny 2015, p. 30, 31.

In the period under consideration, negative net foreign migration reached its peak in 2006 (-36.0). Over the final years of the period considered, a drop in immigration was observed (from 15.2 thousand in 2010 to 12.3 thousand in 2014). It was quite different from the situation connected with emigration, which recorded an increase (from 17.4 thousand in 2010 to 28.1 thousand in 2014). The net foreign migration stood at -19.9 thousand in 2013 and at -15.8 in 2014 respectively, and was the largest after 2007. Negative net migration is a concern; especially given its significant growth in the most recent years.

The following countries remain the main destinations of Polish temporary emigration: The United Kingdom, Germany, The United States, Ireland, Holland and Italy (*Podstawowe informacje...* 2015, p. 15). The year 2014 was the third year in a row in which a decrease in population took place after an earlier increase in the period 2008–2011. Nevertheless, the speed of population decrease in 2014 was -0,03%, which means that per each 10 thousand members of the Polish population, the number of inhabitants was reduced by 3 persons (in 2013, it was -0,1%, i.e. it was reduced by 10 persons, respectively). It is necessary to emphasize that the total population of the country is characterized by a natural mobility and emigration abroad (*Podstawowe informacje...* 2015, p. 1).

Foreign migrations, as a socio-economic phenomenon, are a permanent element of the modern history of Poland. The choice of the emigration country is determined by living conditions in the host country, and the attitude towards immigrants shown by residents of the host country, historical considerations, location of the country and information about the experiences of loved ones. The main reason for going abroad is the desire to take up a job, and it is estimated that around 80% of temporary emigrants from Poland stay abroad for at least 12 months. For the vast majority, this was the purpose of emigrations between May 2004 and the end of 2014. Although the vast majority of Polish emigrants stay abroad because of work, there is also an increase in the percentage of their dependants (family members) (*Informacja o rozmiarach i kierunkach...* 2015, p. 1–4).

Emigration has many positive aspects, e.g. OLEKSYN (2014, p. 543):

- mastering a foreign language,
- learning about other countries and cultures,
- acquiring skills and experience,
- learning mobility.

However, it also results in many negative changes in the demographic structure of population and shortages of labour force. If emigration involves population at the peak of their working age, the population age structure becomes distorted. This leads, for instance, to a decrease in population growth, and as a result the society ages faster (JELONEK, SOJA 2013, p. 90, 91). The

situation where there is a shortage of employees is not advantageous for a country. In such circumstances, it is difficult for entrepreneurs to create a team of employees who will meet their requirements. The society, in turn, has problems with access to the results of the work of professional groups, of which the labour market is short.

According to the findings of the report *Shortages of talents'* published by ManpowerGroup, 45% of employers in Poland struggle to find employees with competences that are necessary for a specific post. In the global ranking, covering 43 countries worldwide, Poland occupied a position in the top half. The scale of this phenomenon reached the highest level over the last 6 years, exceeding the global percentage, which is 40%. At the top of professional groups suffering from the biggest shortages of talents are qualified blue-collar employees. This professional group includes, among others, mechanics, electricians, plumbers, welders, carpenters, cooks, printers, and masons. The second place is occupied by drivers, with engineers occupying the third position. They are followed by: production/machinery operators, unqualified blue-collar workers, technicians, restaurant and hotel workers, IT department employees, doctors and medical staff, as well as sales department managers (*Rozgrzyźć niedobór talentów* 2016, p. 1, 2).

Human capital is not a constant value. It can change depending on processes that affect an individual, and migration is one of them. Migrant people possess a certain human capital that includes, among other things, education, professional qualifications, skills with human contacts, values and standards (*Společne skutki...* 2014, p. 32). A professional path depends to a large degree on human capital possessed by an individual, thus the opening of EU labour markets to Poles theoretically created the following opportunities (*Společne skutki...* 2014, p. 34):

- using abroad the qualifications acquired in Poland,
- using the capital gained abroad in a professional career after returning to Poland.

The authors of the report *Social effects of post-accession migrations of the population of Poland* stress that Poles, when they make a decision about migration, are fairly well-equipped in terms of education and professional qualifications. However, high education acquired in Poland, which is an important element of human capital, is not always relevant in another country. A migrant qualified under the Polish education system does not always have qualifications that are transferable to a foreign labour market (*Společne skutki...* 2014, p. 34).

Human capital can be increased, but it may also depreciate. Depreciation means physical and economic (moral) usage. Physical usage is the partial or complete loss of the acquired knowledge and qualifications. Economic depreci-

ation, in turn, occurs when education and skills become obsolete, and are no longer useful (KRYŃSKA, KWIATKOWSKI 2013, p. 148). Economic migrations are very important for developed countries, as workers from abroad (CASTLES, MILLER 2011, p. 297, 298):

- provide additional labour force in periods of shortages resulting from economic and demographic changes,
- perform specific types of work which domestic workers for various reasons do not want to do,
- have an impact on the maintenance of flexibility in the labour market, stimulating investments and economic growth.

According to the report *Social effects of post-accession migrations of the population of Poland*, the impact of post-accession migration also covers standards, values and behaviours which are an effect of migration. Sometimes, people with migration experiences are initiators of social changes in local communities (*Spoleczne skutki...* 2014, p. 40).

The use of human capital in the context of migration involves, among other things (*Spoleczne skutki...* 2014, p. 35):

- undertaking economic activity after returning,
- actual use of the qualifications and skills acquired abroad at the workplace and beyond,
- functioning in the local community.

This paper concerns foreign migrations based on data from Poland, but it is worth highlighting that the problem of foreign migrations does not only concern Poland. Never before have so many different nationalities, as well as professions, migrated on this scale and with this frequency. This is mainly due to the increasing integration of countries. There are however some risks to globalisation. One of them is a lack of the sense of belonging. A globalised life runs beyond borders, which for most people marked a certain community. Countries which for centuries were ethnically homogeneous are transforming into multinational countries (KUBITSKY 2012, p. 19).

Summing up, the intensity of foreign migrations is a reaction of migrants to economic and socio-political changes. The net migration rate is a concern, and it is fundamental to take actions to reduce emigration. At the same time, there is a need for a greater focus on an effective use of the potential of immigrants. This is still an important and contemporary topic due to the need to develop human capital, which is of key importance for modern organisations. Migrations can bring numerous benefits, both to individuals and the countries they affect. On the other hand, migration may bring many negative changes. However, in order to make the most of the potential of those deciding to migrate abroad, it is worth paying attention to the importance of the management of talents.

Management of talents and foreign migrations

Knowledge, skills and capabilities of individual employees comprise a value. Therefore, it is of key importance to attract, retain, develop and maintain human capital represented by such employees (ARMSTRONG 2011, p. 76). These tasks are difficult challenges for an organisation. This paper does not tackle all factors that impact the scale of this difficulty. The authors address two aspects. The first refers to selected circumstances impacting the decisions made by organisations in the area of human resource management. The second concerns the problem of an organisation acquiring desired employees.

Migrations generate various challenges, including challenges to those managing organisations. Z. Janowska stresses that economic, political and demographic transformations bring serious social consequences which impact the processes of performing work. These consequences include a reduction of labour costs, which as a rule involve employment reduction. In such a situation, human potential is not used. Care for an employee loses to the overriding idea of profit. According to Z. Janowska, the reality in the labour market is at odds with the standards of human resource management and a certain contradiction can be observed. On the one hand, there is an increasingly widespread emphasis, among other things, on the importance of developing an employee's commitment, use of talents, and balance between work and private life. On the other hand, organisations have become dysfunctionally more flexible, and employee rights are not respected as a result (JANOWSKA 2015, p. 42, 43). Varied forms of employment refer both to domestic workers and migrants. S. Castles and M.J. Miller stress however that the most uncertain posts are occupied by people who are in the least advantageous situation: unregistered employees, female immigrants, as well as ethnic and racial minorities (CASTLES, MILLER 2011, p. 298).

Emigration and immigration of employees are among factors impacting the volume and structure of labour supply (PAWLAK 2011, p. 66). It is therefore important that the labour market in Poland encourages employees to stay in the country, as well as encouraging emigrants to return. This is because we must bear in mind that emigrants may in many cases not return to the country, especially the young workers who have started families abroad. The basic changes that need to be made in order to stop labour migration include: offering jobs with potentially good pay, professional development and work promotions in the country. An incentive for staying in the home country may be the facilitation of the process of running a business activity and support for the development of entrepreneurship. Labour emigration can also be halted by taking actions to stop professional deactivation in the group of older employees; especially those in good psychophysical condition and with high

qualifications (OLEKSYN 2014, p. 543–545). It is worth stressing that in terms of migration, a fundamental role is played by social policy. It monitors its structure, conditions and consequences. It makes sure that employee rights are protected and respected, and promotes integration (*Polityka społeczna* 2013, p. 312).

It is also important that the potential of immigrants is properly used. In particular, the problem today is a waste of qualifications. It may refer to both the youth and people in adulthood, as well as culturally diversified employees and people suffering from social exclusion. Z. Janowska stresses that there is a need for a wide scientific and public discussion, backed up by interdisciplinary studies, to stop the increasing waste of human capital (JANOWSKA 2015, p. 42, 43). Organisations that are able to provide favourable working conditions attract talented employees. Such conditions include, among other things, autonomy, creation and development possibility, attractive remuneration and employment prestige. If organisations want to have the best people in the labour market, they need to make sure they are perceived as an attractive employer. Naturally, this does not mean that little known organisations do not have any chances to attract the best employees. However, if it is important for them to have good staff, they should have something attractive to offer. Nevertheless, it is worth stressing that the management of talent is not only about attracting and then retaining gifted people. It is important that they are tested in practice and assigned appropriate roles. It is also particularly important to create a wide range of activity possibilities and focus their efforts on the achievement of desired results (OLEKSYN 2014, p. 201–203). A. Baron and M. Armstrong stress that every employee of an organisation has some talent, therefore the process of talent management should not be limited to selected people (BARON, ARMSTRONG 2008, p. 124). Quiet heroes who make sure that an organisation is highly efficient are ordinary, competent employees who perform their work at a sufficiently high level all of the time (BARON, ARMSTRONG 2008, p. 124, behind: DELONG, VIJAYARAGHAVEN 2003). Meanwhile, many situations result in a waste of human capital.

Summing up, a serious problem in many organisations in Poland today is difficulty in gaining employees. New solutions to this problem are continuously searched for. The authors of the report “Shortages of talents” point out that employers may tackle such problems by performing the following actions (*Niedobór talentów* 2015, p. 5):

- developing new practices in the area of human resource management,
- encouraging employees to manage their own careers, and to care about the culture of science in their organisations,
- exploring unused resources of new talent (e.g. attracting employees from other regions),
- shaping a unique value proposition for employees.

Conclusion

Migrations are one of the most important factors of the socio-economic development of a country, its individual regions, cities and villages, as well as specific organisations. The level of knowledge, skills, entrepreneurship, creativity and health status impact the position and role of human capital. These features, as well as other desired properties of human capital, are shaped by demographic investments (investments in human beings). The quality of human resources of a given territory is thus an effect of long-term demographic transformations which are affected by numerous factors (*Przemiany demograficzne Pomorza...* 2012, p. 19).

The aim of this paper was to present the effects of foreign migrations in the practice of human resource management. They may represent both a chance and risk in the development of human capital. They teach mobility and new skills, as well as help acquire new qualifications. Skilful use of human capital, in turn, is reflected in many areas of socio-economic life. However, foreign migrations may also lead to the depreciation of human capital, which may be lost forever. It is thus important to take actions to reduce the scale of labour migration. At the same time, it is worth appreciating actions that are aimed at fully using the potential of employees. In the case of potential emigrants/emigrants, such an approach may motivate people to change their decision about emigration. In the case of immigrants, it may represent a chance for strengthening human capital.

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