

## Features of a migration region – an analysis using the example of the Opolskie Voivodship

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**Abstract.** The authors of the article develop the concept of a migration region. The experiences of the Opolskie Voivodship in the sphere of external migration function as a field of reference. The issues connected with the factors preconditioning the formation of such a region are of utmost interest to the authors.

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### 1. Introduction

The notion of a *migration region* was used for the first time in relation to the Opolskie Voivodship

(1) (Heffner, Rauziński, 2003) due to the fact that it has certain interesting features characteristic of the external migration and it occupies a specific place on the migration map of the country. The research

conducted so far indicates that this area definitely belongs to the most important migration regions in the country, and it is not only because of the high level of migration, which is, in certain periods, even a mass-scale one (2) (Fig.1). Departures abroad, which were initially permanent and at present are rather of a temporary character, have been observed here ceaselessly at least since the 1950s, thus influencing the shape of the social processes in the region and creating certain dysfunctions in the sphere of demography and economy on numerous occasions (Fig. 2). Until recently, emigration from the Opolskie Voivodship was of a unique character in comparison with the rest of the country and applied solely to the native people of Silesia having a double citizenship (Polish and German). Since the accession of Poland to the European Union structures and the moment the European labour markets were open, the ethnic context of the phenomenon has not been that clear any more, however, the conse-

quences of migration are still most noticeable in the region in the economic and social spheres. The migration experiences allow referring them to the developing *concept of a migration region*, first of all on the basis of the circumstances facilitating the delimitation of this type of areas, as well as features characteristic of migration regions.

The problems connected with the development of a migration region in the socio-economic sense are considered from the viewpoint of migration abroad; from the spatial perspective it is an administrative division unit of a country (in Poland, on a regional level – NUTS 2 – *Voivodship*). In literature on demography, economy or regional politics a migration region is defined in various manners, within the meaning of the covered area, for example as parts of continents (e.g. South-East Asia), as individual countries (e.g. Mexico) or their parts – regions (e.g. North Rhine-Westphalia in Germany, see: e.g. Brettell, Hollifield, 2000; Geddes, 2003).

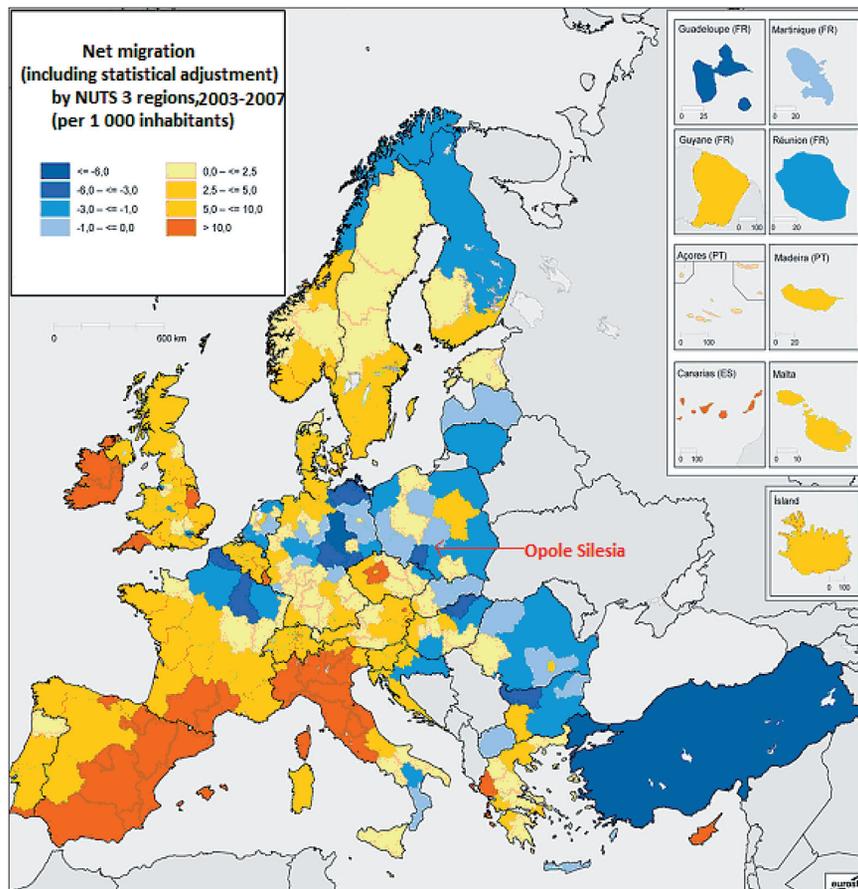
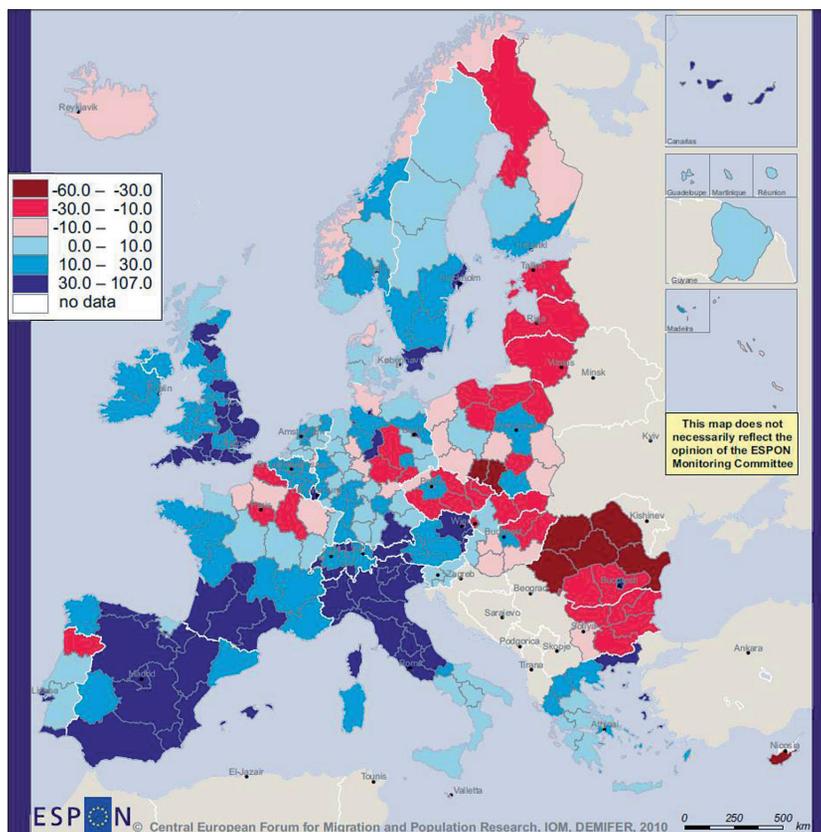


Fig. 1. Net migration by NUTS 3 regions, 2003–2007

Source: Eurostat Regional Yearbook, 2009, Luxembourg: Office for Official Publications of the European Communities. DOI: 10.2785/17776, p. 20



**Fig. 2.** Impact of migration on population in 2050 – calculated as the difference between the *Status Quo* and *No Migration scenarios* in percentage of the population in the *No migration scenario*

Source: Impact of migration on population change. Results from the ESPON DEMIFER Project, [http://www.espon.eu/export/sites/default/Documents/Projects/AppliedResearch/DEMIFER/demifer\\_PB\\_migr\\_impact.pdf](http://www.espon.eu/export/sites/default/Documents/Projects/AppliedResearch/DEMIFER/demifer_PB_migr_impact.pdf)

Here, a migration region is defined as a regional unit (usually NUTS-2) where an impact of external migration on the regional development is long-lasting and permanent, the share of migrants in the local and regional population (or regional labour market) exceeds 10%, and with remittances (money transfers) from migrants, their entrepreneurship and will to return being of significance for the demographic behaviour of the regional population and the economy of the region.

## 2. Research on external migration in regional systems

The issues connected with the influence of migration on the development of the outflow regions

have so far been raised less frequently than the studies concerning the situation of migrants in the target regions. Such a situation is due to the fact that the research of migration was concentrated on More Economically Developed Countries (MED-Cs), which were long ago transformed from emigration countries into the ones facing a problem of the excessive inflow of immigrants. In connection with the above, the issues of adaptation and integration of the foreigners were the first and foremost subjects of these analyses (Luft, 2011), sometimes also the economic aspects of immigration, and the significance of external workforce in the economy of the target regions in particular (Bauer, 1998; Leicht, 2005). The systematic increase of interest in the outflow regions could be noticed at the beginning of 1990s. Since then, there has been a constant growth in the number of elaborations

whose authors are trying to determine the importance of the earnings sent from abroad for the migrants' families, local communities and frequently the entire country as well. What is being analysed, at the same time, are the changes in demographic and labour market situations due to the fact that people leave the country for work, as well as the socio-cultural aspects of emigration. Along with the intensification of international migration of economic character, the dependencies between the development of the outflow regions and emigration are becoming more and more distinct (Entwicklung durch..., 2006/2007: 102–128). The conceptions of the regional development have been elaborated as well. It has been established that as a result of the evolutionary characteristics of migration, the fact that highly qualified people or people having specific professional experience and making use of their networks of professional contacts leave the country and then come back, may have a positive influence on the dynamics of the economic development of the outflow regions (Fromhold-Eisebith, 2002: 21–43). Consequently, the significance of utilitarian researches which include recommendations for the regional politics in emigration areas is thus growing (Massey et al., 1993: 431–466; Brettell, Hollifield, 2000).

In Poland the scientific achievements concerning contemporary external migration are quite substantial (Kicinger, Weinar, 2007). The increase in the number of research in this scope was first observed after the political and economic changes started in 1989 and then owing to the accession of Poland to the European Union (EU) in 2004. There exists an extremely wide range of issues connected with the factors shaping migration both in the international aspect and in the scope of individual reasons for migration. The analyses of this kind are frequently presented within the framework of the theory of push and pull factors, which is commonly applied in the research of migration. The research concerning economic, demographic and cultural effects of external migration, both from an individual perspective and on the level of particular regions and the entire country, is of great significance (Kaczmarczyk, 2005). The research concerning return migration of the Poles is systematically developing (Heffner, 1999: 168–205; Iglicka, 2010). The same refers to the issues connected with emigration and

multiculturalism as well as the integration of foreigners in the view of the increasing importance of the inflow of foreigners to Poland (Górny et al., 2010). Also, the migration policy, which was raised as early as at the beginning of 1990s, is a significant theme of the analyses.

There are not many regional perspectives in the series of numerous scientific analyses dealing with the issues of external migration. They concern first and foremost the traditional migration regions, which in Poland are to be found in Opole Silesia, and the Podlaskie and Podkarpackie Voivodships. These areas have a long-standing history of emigration as well as peculiar features of this phenomenon. Each of these areas is characterised by the distinct patterns of external migration, which are still maintained today although in somewhat altered conditions. It should be noted that in connection with the accession to the EU and a large scale of emigration of the Poles, the interest in the issues of external migration has increased significantly in the remaining regions. As the regional context of migration processes is gaining a new meaning, it may be supposed that the contemporary migration and its results will be a subject of a growing interest for regional politics (Heffner, Solga 2008; Zmieniająca się rola..., 2009).

### **3. Features shaping a migration region**

#### **3.1. Scale and permanent character of migration**

Migration regions are characterised by long traditions of migration and its significant scale. This leads to a permanent depopulation of these regions, which has certain social and economic consequences.

Migration in Silesia has a long history, which started as early as in the 1850s. The emigration reached a considerable size in this region, which was a direct consequence of the developments of World War II and the following determination of the new borders of Poland. The expulsions at that time, which concerned the German population living in the region, affected more than 200,000 people. Later, in 1950, the action of reuniting families was commenced thanks to which the clos-

est relatives, and later even the more distant ones, were able to leave for one of the German states. With time, this action assumed a broad character – it encompassed 6,600 people until 1955 and further 52,000 until 1959 (Rauziński, 2010). Since the 1950s, these were mainly the native people of Silesia who participated in external migration. In total, over 200,000 people emigrated by the end of the 1990s (Table 1). Presently, it is estimated that the scale of permanent and suspended emigra-

tion (definite migration of people who have not notified the authorities about the change of their address) in the Opolskie Voivodship amounts to about 105,000 people (National Census 2002), whereas external economic migration (temporary and seasonal) amounts to 115,000 (Jończy, 2010). About 34,000 people who earn their income abroad belong to the native inhabitants of Silesia with a double citizenship, while 81,000 are exclusively Polish.

**Table 1.** Permanent emigrants during characteristic phases of migration in 1950–2009

Years	A	
	a	b
1951 – 1960	60,578	25.6
1961 – 1970	25,252	10.7
1971 – 1980	50,914	21.5
1981 – 1990	37,464	15.8
1991 – 2000	27,327	11.5
2001 – 2005	20,479	8.6
2006 – 2009	15,079	6.3
Total	237,093	100.0

Explanation: A – permanent emigrants; a – number; b – percentage

Source: Own calculations based on the data of the Opole branch of the Central Statistical Office and statistical year-books

According to the estimates, migration to Germany caused a decrease in the share of the Silesian population in the total population of the Voivodship from 52.5% in 1950 to 37.6% in 1977. Over the years 1976–2008, the relation of the number of permanent emigrants to the birth rate amounted to 67.4% on average in urban areas and even 90.9% in rural areas. This concerns the birth rate of the total population of the Opolskie Voivodship. The permanent migration, on the other hand, encompassed the total birth rate of the local Silesian population – the main participant of this migration. In numerous urban and rural gminas (3) of the Opolskie Voivodship external migration significantly exceeded the birth rate (4).

The scale of migration in the Opole region was very high throughout the period of the systemic transformation. At the same time, the negative indicator of the migration balance differed considerably from the average for the whole country.

It should be stressed at this point that the level of permanent migration decreased during that time, while the number of temporary and seasonal economic migration significantly increased. A very high level of external migration (exceeding 8% of the population) is at present characteristic of numerous urban and rural gminas located in the central and eastern parts of the Opole region inhabited by the native people (5). As it is indicated by the research (Heffner, Solga, 2008a), a decrease in the number of emigrants and an increase in returning migrants may be expected for the region. However, this will depend on the economic development both in Poland and in Europe within the context of the present economic downturn. This is confirmed by the analyses of the external migration balance indicating that the present migration potential of Opole Silesia is becoming gradually exhausted (Fig. 3), which can be observed mainly in the rural areas and, to a lesser extent, in

urban areas. On the other hand, the number of emigrants from the west and north parts of the region (inhabited by the people not holding the German citizenship) increased after 2004, especially from urban areas. The conducted research indicates a different structure of emigration from these

parts of the Opole region as far as the reasons, migration patterns and social and demographic features of emigrants are concerned. Taking the above into consideration, an unfavourable development of trends concerning the return of migrants to the Opole region can be expected.

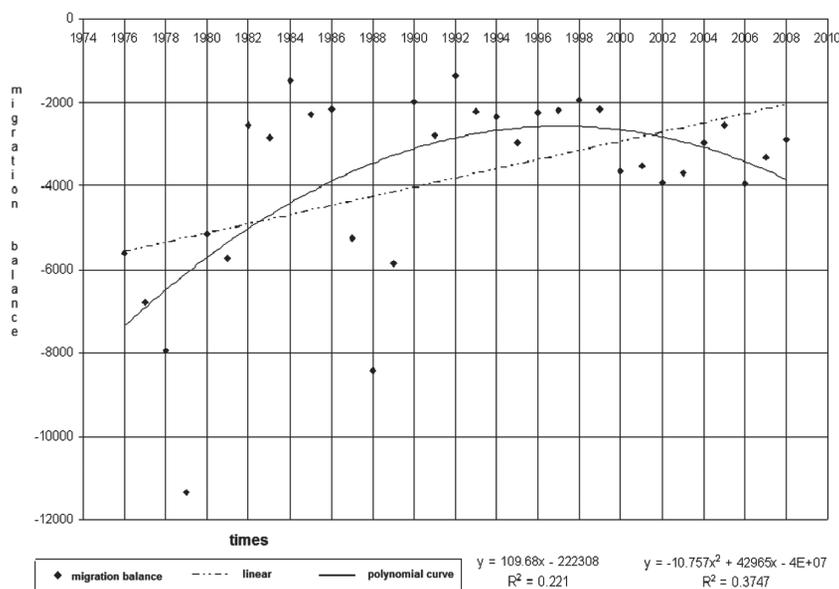


Fig 3. Migration balance for the Opolskie Voivodship in 1976–2008

Source: Elaboration and calculations P. Gibas and K. Heffner (2011)

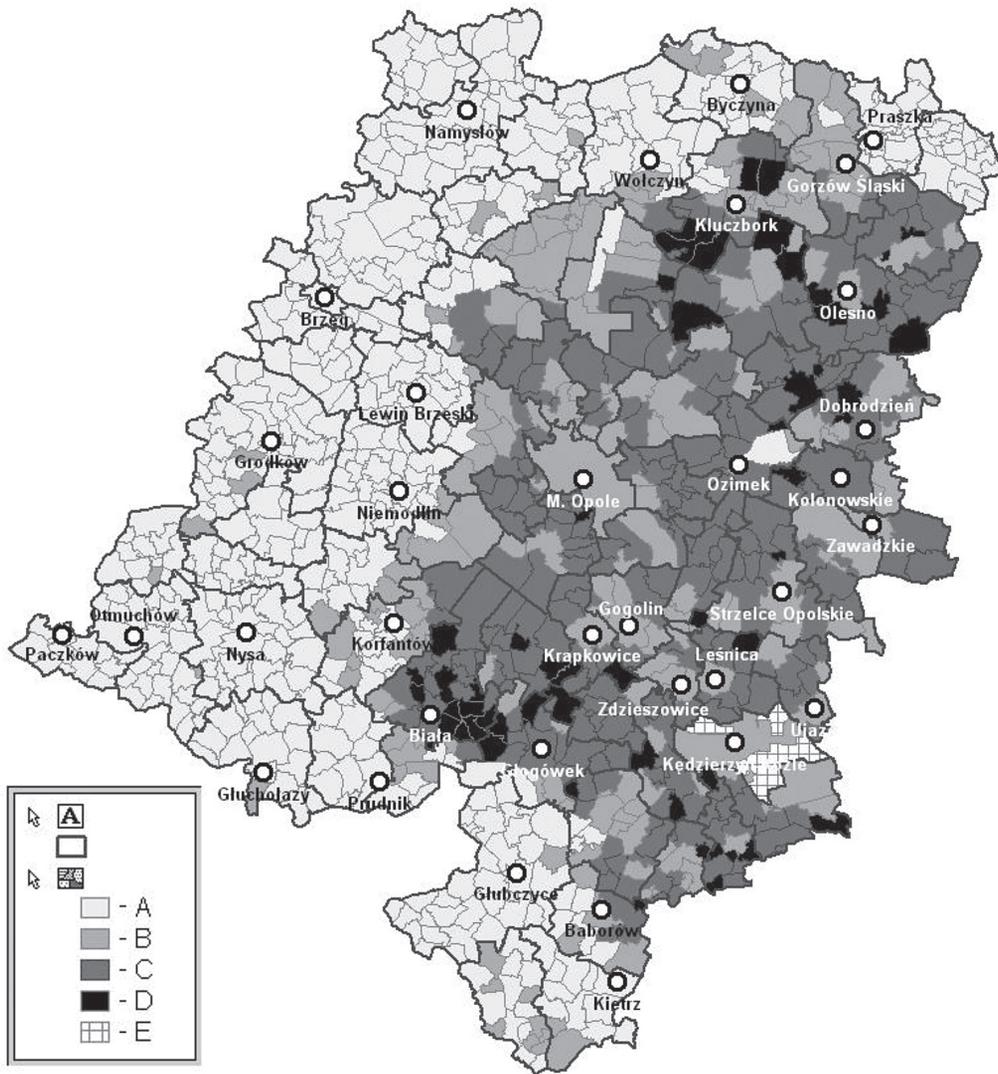
### 3.2. Conditions and traditions of migration

What underlies mass migration in a migration region is not only the typical conditionings of contemporary migration, that is the social and economic gap between the home country of the emigrants and their target destination, but also additional circumstances exerting a significant impact on the shape and scale of migration processes. Certain formal reasons e.g. the policy of the immigration country or, as in the case of the Opolskie Voivodship, a double citizenship permitting its holder to stay abroad legally, can be counted as such conditionings. Undoubtedly, well developed, dynamic and extensive migration networks, as well as long established migration tradition may also initiate and then support emigration from the region.

Such regional conditionings exist in Opole Silesia. They stem from the historical traditions con-

nected with undertaking seasonal work in Germany, post-war migration related to the expulsion of the German population living in this area, mass migration of the Silesian population, and present permanent or seasonal migration of the inhabitants of the region.

What is characteristic of external migration in the Opolskie Voivodship is the fact that since the accession to the EU in 2004, only the native Silesian population has participated in it because it has had the opportunity to undertake legal work in the countries of Western Europe. These people could work legally in Germany and in other countries of the European Union even before the accession because, under the German law, they were allowed to hold both Polish and German citizenship (Fig. 4). The particular feature of this migration was its free character and the fact that it followed the rules similar to the EU regulations concerning internal labour flows.



**Fig. 4.** Percentage of German population in the Opolskie Voivodship according to the Population Census 2002

Explanation: A - < 1%, B - 1.1 - 20%, C - 20.1 - 50%, D - > 50.1%, E - no value, M - city

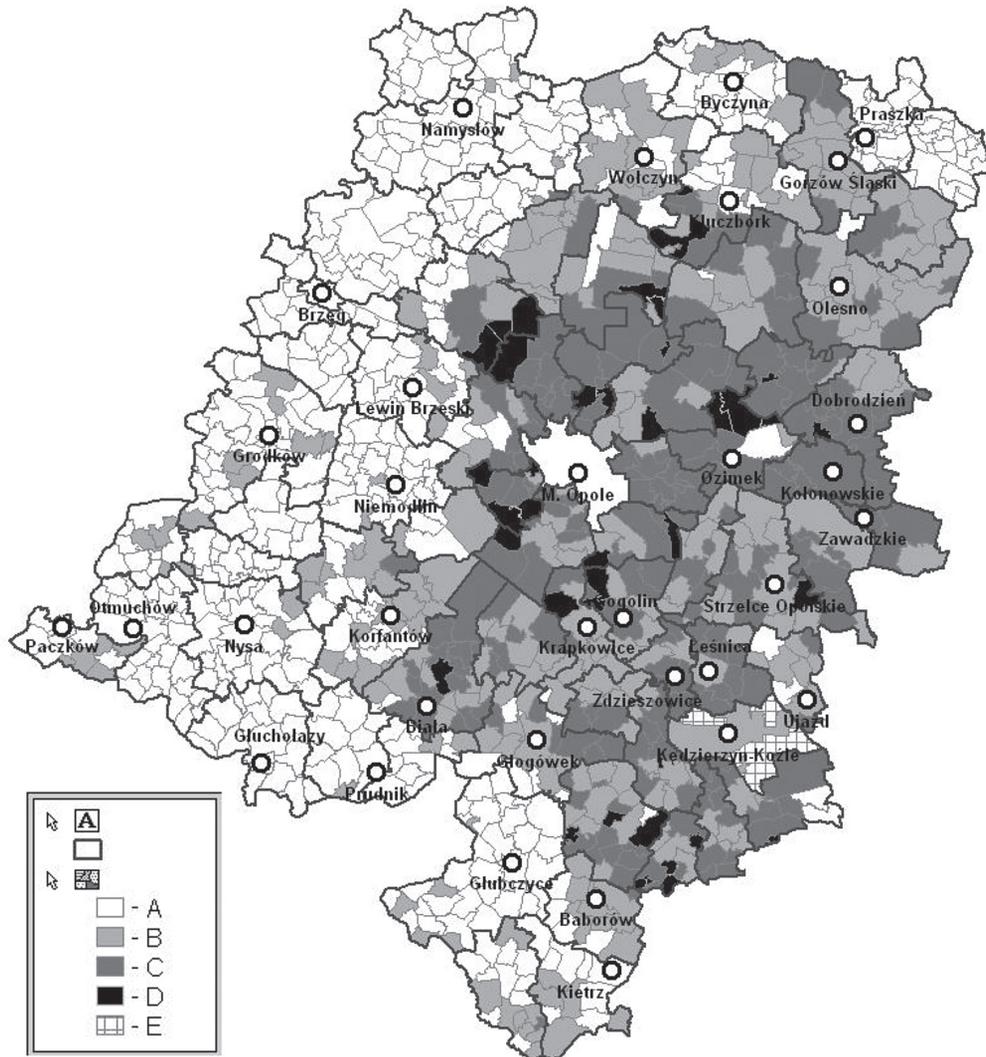
Source: Szczygielski, K., 2010: *Przestrzenne zróżnicowanie ludności województwa opolskiego w kontekście etnicznym jako potencjalne uwarunkowanie rozwoju regionalnego* (Spatial diversity of the population of Opole Silesia in the ethnic context as a potential conditioning of regional development – in Polish), Opole: Politechnika Opolska, PIN – Instytut Śląski w Opolu, p. 145

Therefore, a double citizenship is the factor that has had a significant influence on the size, character and scale of external migration in the Opole region. The data from the National Census 2002 concerning German citizenship declared by the inhabitants of the Opolskie Voivodship confirms a broad scope of this phenomenon. While the regional distribution of the population according to a double citizenship is practically regular throughout the country, the Opole region is exceptional in

this field. The percentage of people holding solely the Polish citizenship is the lowest here (858,500 people, i.e. 80.6%), whereas the share of people holding a double citizenship, i.e. Polish and of any other country, is the highest (157,800 people, i.e. 15.7%), including, first of all, those with Polish and German citizenships (154,100, i.e. 15.4%). The fact that there is a clear spatial dichotomy of the distribution of the people holding a double citizenship in the region is a characteristic feature of the

situation. Along with the gminas inhabited mainly by the immigrant population, in which the phenomenon of a double citizenship does not occur or its scale is insignificant, there are gminas where the native people holding a double citizenship constitute the straight majority. They are situated in the traditional migration region in the central and

eastern parts of the Opolskie Voivodship. This situation cannot be found in any other part of the country because only here there are villages where the number of people with a double citizenship is higher than the number of people being solely Polish citizens (Kymlicka, 2003: 195–208; Solga, 2011, 192–202).



**Fig. 5.** Percentage of long-term emigrants in the Opolskie Voivodship according to the Population Census 2002

Explanation: A – < 5%, B – 5.1 – 15%, C – 15.1 – 25%, D – > 25.1%, E – no value, M – city.

Source: Szczygielski, K., 2010: *Przestrzenne zróżnicowanie ludności województwa opolskiego w kontekście etnicznym jako potencjalne uwarunkowanie rozwoju regionalnego* (Spatial diversity of the population of Opole Silesia in the ethnic context as a potential conditioning of regional development – in Polish), Opole: Politechnika Opolska, PIN – Instytut Śląski w Opolu, p. 167

These circumstances influenced the emergence of a pattern of external migration which is of interest in the context of the entire country. It is due to the development of so called migration monoculture in the Opole region that is ethnically pre-conditioned (primarily by the immigration policy conducted by Germany towards so called ethnic Germans), almost solely unidirectional emigration of the local Silesian people which has been continuing ceaselessly and on a large scale since the early 1950s. Moreover, the outflow concerns mainly the gminas from the central and eastern parts of the Opolskie Voivodship thus influencing the characteristic dichotomous spatial pattern of migration (Fig. 5). After the accession of Poland to the EU and the opening of labour markets by the EU member states, also the group of inhabitants of Opole Silesia (immigrant population) that until then participated in migration to a relatively small degree, in comparison with the Silesian people, gained broad opportunities for finding jobs. The above situation made the ethnic context of migration in the Opole region not as obvious as it was before 2004, although still of an essential and determining character for migration processes in the region. As it was already mentioned, the new post-accession migration differs to a considerable extent from the previous one. Within this scope, an essential change took place in the structure of migrants, patterns and directions of migration as well as its most important reasons. The new, post-accession emigrants are better-educated young people without experiences related to unemployment and often without any experience on the Polish labour market (Fan, Stark, 2007: 76–87).

### 3.3. Migration networks

The networks of migration links play an important role in the process of creating a migration region. They make external migration a social process gradually embracing local communities and groupings of emigrants from these communities. Owing to the links of this type, both permanent and temporary migration become much easier than in the regions that did not form so broad and effectively functioning migration networks. Additionally, they create grounds for shuttle traffic of emigrants – former inhabitants of the region who, although

already well established abroad, have not lost the connections with the region of their origin and constitute a strong, actual or future support for further emigration.

The functioning of a migration process with a permanent and quantitatively significant character in Opole Silesia was possible, to a considerable extent, owing to the existence of a well established, effective and dynamic network of migration links, which evolved among the inhabitants of the Opolskie Voivodship and West European countries (mainly Germany) as a result of continuous emigration. The networks of migration links similar to the one present in the Opolskie Voivodship can also be found in other parts of the country (e.g. the Podlaskie and the Małopolskie Voivodships); however, they are not as well developed and wide-ranging as in Opole Silesia. It is estimated that per each 100 people living in the Opolskie Voivodship there are 120 of their relatives living in Germany. Numerous scientific researches confirm (6) that in spite of an increasing economic mobility of Poles, the inhabitants of the Opole region are still best prepared to support the permanent character of the network of links.

### 3.4. External migration as an important determinant of regional development processes

Socio-demographic and economic phenomena accompanying migration are extremely complex in a migration region, both from the spatial and political point of view. The mass and permanent character of migration brings about certain demographic, economic and socio-cultural consequences, which are both positive and negative (Heffner, 2008: 147–168). Migration and its results is one of the major factors directly influencing the developmental possibilities of such a region.

First of all, mass emigration may cause serious demographic imbalances. Such an impact may be complex and manifest itself in the reduction of the birth rate, decrease in the number of children per family, distortions of the population age and sex structure, ageing of the society, decrease in the number of contracted marriages, disintegration of families and weakening of social links. Migration

becomes the principal factor disturbing the natural movement of the population and accelerating the demographic crisis. When external migration is not compensated by the internal inflow, the permanently negative migration balance may weaken the demographic structure of a migration region, which causes escalating problems on the labour market, deformation of the regional socio-economic structure as well as a definite reduction of its developmental possibilities (cf. Rovolis, Tragaki, 2008). Therefore, this situation poses a significant threat for the further demographic and socio-economic development of such regions.

In this context, it is estimated that from the point of view of the demographic situation, Opole Silesia has reached its limit of emigration capacity. The unfavourable level of the migration balance combines with other, equally negative, demographic indicators, such as the number of children per family, fertility, gross reproduction and demographic dynamics (7). As a consequence, these problems lead to a decrease in the population of the region, which exerts an unfavourable impact on its present socio-economic development. The demographic forecasts are not favourable either in this context. It is estimated that the population size will drop by about 140,000 by 2035 (as compared to 2007) (Population forecast for the years 2008–2035). A further significant reduction of the population size of the Opolskie Voivodship makes the region face the danger of a demographic disaster.

On the other hand, mass emigration may have a positive influence on the reduction of the unemployment rate in migration regions. In the Opolskie Voivodship, from where a certain group of inhabitants (native Silesians) emigrated for many years, this influence is clearly visible in the form of a lower unemployment rate in the gminas inhabited predominantly by this population (Heffner, 2006: 259–272). It turns out, however, that the scale of external migration exceeding the level of unemployment in a region may reduce its stimulating impact, because the reduction of unemployment is not necessarily accompanied by a simultaneous increase in the employment and economic activity. The considerable engagement in migration processes on the part of the inhabitants has an adverse effect on the development of small and medium enterprises in the Opolskie Voivodship as a possibility of finding a well paid

job abroad does not induce them to take up the risk of running a small business at home. Although migration contributes to the increase in the financial potential of the population of a migration region, which in the case of the Opolskie Voivodship means mainly an increase in the investments in individual ventures improving the standard of living and social prestige, it is poorly related to the development of entrepreneurship as far as investing the emigrants' incomes in small and medium businesses (Solga, 2008: 130–139). This means that migrants in a migration region may be less inclined to take up the risk related to running an enterprise and easily accept the continuation of external temporary migration. It is estimated that in the Opolskie Voivodship, where in spite of the fact that certain positive changes in the dynamics of the number of new business entities (8) have been recently observed, the problem of low entrepreneurship still constitutes a developmental barrier. It has also emerged that a negative impact of migration on a permanent withdrawal of migrants from labour market has been confirmed in other regions (Fihel, 2004: 115–128).

Moreover, the negative impact of the migration outflow (permanent and temporary) on the economic development of migration regions within the context of human capital flight (*brain drain*) is also of significance. Emigration may concern big groups of employees specialising in certain disciplines (e.g. construction, food production, agriculture, horticulture, medicine) on local labour markets, which decisively weakens their location potential and their attractiveness for investors as a result. Such a situation may exert an unfavourable impact on the development of small and medium enterprises which lose a chance for activity and development in face of mass external migration (Krasnodębska, 2009: 50–53). It was also found out that the presence of a small (limited) labour market is the most important and structural economic determinant for the higher outflow rates of young educated inhabitants of the region (see also: Faggian, McCann, 2009: 317–333; Venhorst et al., 2011: 57–82).

The analysis of the socio-professional characteristics of emigrants as well as the size of emigration and the demographic structure of emigrants in the spatial patterns (urban and rural areas) within the Opolskie Voivodship indicates that emigration outflows play an important role on many local labour

markets reducing the supply of qualified personnel. The flight of personnel of the understaffed professions creates certain problems on the labour market and leads to lowering the quality of human capital. The excessive migration to the EU countries should therefore be considered a factor disturbing the development of a region not only within the demographic but also the economic scope.

Migrants seeking a job and leaving for a long time may experience not only loosening the family ties but also bonds with the environment of their origin and the local society in a migration region. Although migrants accumulate relatively sizeable economic capital, their cultural and social capital, which anyway is frequently restricted, becomes devalued. They often suffer from so called double marginalisation – the first at the place of their work abroad due to the problems with the integration in the new environment, which is often culturally strange, or due to insufficient knowledge of the language, and the second at the place of origin, in a migration region where they do not stay on a permanent basis.

Social consequences resulting from the separation from the family and disintegration of family ties are particularly adverse. Emigration from a migration region usually contributes to an emergence of broken families and further to cultural and social acceptance of a family model functioning in the condition of permanent separation. In connection with an increasing scale of departures the frequency at which such families as well as related problems occur is increasing. The research indicates that the problem of migration orphans in the Opolskie Voivodship applies to 10,000 children (9). In the majority of cases this arises from the absence of one parent (about 91%) but in some instances from the absence of both (under 10%).

### **3.5. Migration policy as a component of regional policy**

The adverse impact of the permanent negative balance of external migration on the demographic and socio-economic structure of migration regions calls for a need to formulate a clearly determined policy accounting for migration problems (migration policy) in such regions. Actions in the sphere of

emigration aimed at, first of all, protection of human and intellectual potential, preventing permanent emigration and, at the same time, promoting such temporary migration that enables personal and socio-cultural development of migrating people thus strengthening their economic capabilities, are of particular significance in a migration region. Activities favouring re-emigration are also important. Migrants returning to their region of origin may become an extremely important factor for the economic and social development. Advantages of re-emigration embrace human capital of individual migrants (education, qualifications, training and knowledge), financial capital and entrepreneurial potential (foreign investments, trade, money transfers, savings, investments in a new business, purchases of property and donations to charity), social capital (business networks, standards and values facilitating co-operation within various groups), and finally the affective capital (engagement and good will resulting from an emotional engagement in the country of origin).

In spite of the significance of problems related to emigration and re-emigration in the regional migration policy, the best results are achieved by means of a complex approach to creating such a policy. This means that while creating and implementing it, it is necessary to take into consideration all the elements related to the widely understood migration, i.e. not only going abroad and returning but also immigration of foreigners and potential emigration. These spheres and the related support groups determine a diversified scope of preconditions, mechanisms, solutions and problems involved. At the same time, the complexity of this type preconditions the effectiveness of such a system.

Since 2004, the problems of migration have received more and more attention in the developmental policy on the level of all Polish Voivodships. A few projects dedicated to the issues of re-emigration have been carried out recently (10). The problems related directly to external migration or its outcomes are a very important element accounted for in the developmental policy both at the regional and the local level in the Opolskie Voivodship. They can be found in strategic documents of these administrative units and in proposals of practical solutions dealing with migration problems. External migration is broadly described in the present and

updated *Development Strategy of the Opole Voivodship* both in the diagnostic and stipulation parts. It can also be noticed that external migration is an important element of the activities undertaken in an increasing number of gminas in the Opolskie Voivodship. The programme of practical undertakings entitled *Opole, I stay here* was prepared at the request of the authorities of the Opolskie Voivodship Board in 2007. It is the only regional programme so far intended to decrease the scale of economically motivated migration. It also promotes opportunities for employment and professional progress in the Opolskie Voivodship trying to create and effective counterbalance to and an intense promotion of employment abroad, especially when emigration is not caused by an economic necessity. The Opolskie Voivodship Board invites businesses, higher education institutions, schools, job offices, and education sector from the region to participate in this programme. The programme offers also a database with job offers, educational offer, support programmes for businesspeople and cultural and tourist events.

#### 4. Conclusions

We can talk about a *migration region* when in a given area a process of a considerable number of permanent, temporary or shuttle migration can be observed and a lasting migration outflow continues. A well established tradition of the migration outflow, a high number of migrations and their permanent character, as well as well developed networks of migration links in combination with various socio-political and economic reasons for these migrations are important elements determining the character of a migration region. The consequences of migration processes for individual migrants and their families, as well as at the level of opportunities and directions of regional development, should be added to this picture. In such a region, migration is a phenomenon important enough to clearly influence (in a positive or negative manner) the socio-demographic and economic processes as well as transformations of local structures (e.g. unfavourable demographic structure, low entrepreneurship, labour deficit, restricted social activity, transfer of migration capital, reduction of unem-

ployment). The depopulation of a region resulting from migration and its consequences thus become one of the principal problem areas influencing the present and future development of a region. The situation is also reflected in the developmental concepts formulated in a migration region and in the resulting strategic documents in which migration is assigned an important role. The aim of practical actions undertaken in a migration region by the entities (institutions) concerned with its development is to minimise the negative consequences of migration and maximise the advantages. The latter aspect is related to a proper preparation of a region for an effective re-emigration. The examples of return migration in many countries (e.g. Ireland and Spain) indicate that migrants most often return to the very regions they left. What it means for the decision-makers is that in migration regions attention should be paid to the fates of re-emigrants and the administration there should be prepared in particular to face the challenge. Therefore, return migration should be managed also at the regional and even local level. The relative or rising level of appropriate job opportunities in a migration region remains a key factor in retaining and attracting the inhabitants of the region.

It should be emphasised that it is extremely difficult to balance in any way the effects of emigration abroad for work in a region subjected to long-term migration as in the development of such areas the adverse effects of external migration are displayed in the first place (see also Rephann, 2004: 379–410). As a result, the situation arises in which a given migration region is covered by the rules of polarised development – it develops more weakly and slowly. The permanent outflow of the most skilled and resourceful people and the resulting negative consequences on the regional labour market, the decrease in demand connected with the depopulation of numerous local areas as well as social results (the increase in the number of divorced people and unemployed single parents depending on some other sources of income), and many others – make such areas become problematic regions requiring activities of strategic character from the outside.

It is necessary to competently control the developmental processes in a migration region, that is to adopt a regional policy directed at the identification of economic, social and political causes strengthen-

ing the patterns of the population outflow and minimising the negative consequences of the fact that people leave for work and, on the other hand, making use of the opportunities provided by migration on a regional scale.

## Notes

- (1) The *Opolskie Voivodship* is an administrative unit in Poland on a regional level (NUTS-2) and the terms *Opolskie Voivodship*, *Opole region* and *Opole Silesia* are used in the text interchangeably.
- (2) The results of the following research were used in the article: The influence of labour migration abroad on the socio-economic situation of a region. The analysis using the example of the Opole Voivodship as a migration region, the project carried out by the Ministry of Science and Higher Education, 2005–2007, the project coordinator K. Heffner; Place and significance of migration abroad in regional development, the project carried out by the National Science Centre, 2011–2013, the project coordinator B. Solga.
- (3) The term *gmina* means a unit of local self-government in Poland.
- (4) Urban gminas: Baborów, Biała, Głogówek, Gogolin, Kolonowskie, Leśnica, Ujazd; rural gminas: Biała, Bierawa, Chrzastowice, Cisek, Dobrzeń Wielki, Głogówek, Komprachcice, Krapkowice, Lasowice Wielkie, Leśnica, Łubniany, Murów, Pawłowiczki, Pokój, Polska Cerekiew, Popielów, Prószków, Reńska Wieś, Strzeleczyki, Turawa, Walce, Zębowice.
- (5) Urban gminas: Biała (10.4%), Głogówek (15.3), Kędzierzyn-Koźle (9.2), Strzelce Opolskie (9.2), Ujazd (24.8); rural gminas: Biała (11.2), Bierawa (12.1), Cisek (14.3), Głogówek (8.2), Izbicko (8.4), Murów (10.2), Polska Cerekiew (16.9), Reńska Wieś (8.2), Ujazd (9.0).
- (6) For example, the quoted research was presented in: Wieruszewska, M. editor, 2007: *Tu i tam. Migracje z polskich wsi za granicę (Here and there. External migration from Polish villages. – in Polish)*, Warszawa: Instytut Rozwoju Wsi i Rolnictwa PAN, p. 277.
- (7) *Gross reproduction coefficient* is an average number of daughters given birth to by a woman under the assumption that a woman of the childbearing age (15–49) will give birth as frequently as all women giving birth in the year for which the coefficient is calculated (unchangeable fertility coefficients). The gross reproduction coefficient is a product of the fertility rate and the indicator expressing the share of female babies in the total number of babies born alive. It amounted to 0.541 in the Opolskie Voivodship in 2009 (0.678 for Poland). *The demographic dynamics coefficient* is the ratio of the number of babies born alive during a given period (usually 1 year) to the number of deaths during the same period. It amounted to 0.975 for the Opolskie Voivodship over the years 1995–2009 (1.037 for entire Poland).
- (8) The research conducted by *Instytut Badań nad Gospodarką Rynkową (Research Institute on Market Economy)* reveals that the dynamics of businesses registered in the National Official Register of Business Entities (REGON) in 1998–2008 was significant. Owing to this index the Opole region was in the first place in the country ahead of the Świętokrzyskie, the Pomorskie and the Zachodniopomorskie Voivodships. Such an increase in the number of businesses in the Opolskie Voivodship was possible mainly thanks to a considerable increase in the number of businesses providing services in the area of real estate, lease and running a business activity, as well as entities engaged in trade and repairs. Moreover, businesses in the building sector also made a significant contribution.
- (9) The research was conducted by the Regional Centre of Social Policy (*Regionalny Ośrodek Polityki Społecznej*) in Opole.
- (10) For example, the Strategic Advisory Centre (*Centrum Doradztwa Strategicznego*) in Krakow developed two twin programmes: ‘Direction: Małopolska’ (*Kierunek Małopolska*) and ‘Direction: Lower Silesia’ (*Kierunek Dolny Śląsk*). At present, the third programme ‘Direction: Silesia’ (*Kierunek Śląsk*) is under preparation. A research unit *Grupa IQS*, on the other hand, undertook research entitled ‘Return home – psychological and social adaptation mechanisms of

re-emigrants from the Warmińsko-Mazurskie Voivodship'. There are also interesting attempts to approach migration as a tool of regional development undertaken by the Catholic University of Lublin in cooperation with about a dozen European organisations, including the Chamber of Employment in the Italian Veneto region being the target of migration from the Lubelskie Voivodship. The aim of the first of these programmes – 'Migralink' was, among others, to analyse the phenomenon of legal economically motivated migration in Central Europe, the Adriatic and the Balkans, to create an innovative system of services for migrants and management of re-emigration, as well as training for administrative employees and NGOs in Poland, Slovakia and Hungary in these fields. As a result of these activities several dozen of administration employees in the Lubelskie Voivodship obtained the specialisation of a *migration officer*. This activity was further continued within the framework of 'Migravalue' programme which, apart from the Catholic University of Lublin, was joined by the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy. The purpose of this programme was to create a model of active management of migration flows as a tool of social and economic development both in the region of origin and the target region of migration, as well as strengthening the links binding these regions by means of supporting financial and human capital created by migrants.

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