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Nolka, Agnieszka; Nowosielski, Michal

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Poles Living in Ireland and their Quality of Life

Agnieszka NOLKA, Michał NOWOSIELSKI

Abstract. The economic growth of Ireland resulted in a significant number of Poles migrating to Ireland following the EU enlargement in 2004. The article explores the quality of life of Poles living in Ireland. Using data from a preliminary survey conducted in 2006, several dimensions of living conditions are analysed, including interpersonal relations, material security, health and healthcare. The study shows that evaluations of almost all aspects of quality of life improved, apart from components such as healthcare and the ability to acquire help from social organisations. Also interpersonal relations, contrary to the initial assumption, were enhanced by migration to Ireland.

Keywords: *Polish migrants, interpersonal relations, material security, healthcare, Ireland*

Introduction

Although intra-European migration is not a novel phenomenon, it has radically changed during the last few years. The accession to the EU of new countries in 2004 and 2007 has caused a new wave of migration, which has been limited by the restrictions on free labour movement of some of the member states. The phenomenon of migration itself is a very important issue in both European policies and research. There are, however, some dominating leitmotifs within European migration studies. The first seems to be the immigration policies of European countries, and their special emphasis on immigration control¹. Relatively close to this issue is another focal point of migration studies – the growing role of

¹ Harlan Koff, "Security, markets and power: The relationship between EU enlargement and immigration," *European Integration* 27 (Dec. 2005): 397-415; Christian Joppke, ed., *Challenges to the nation-state: Immigration in Western Europe and in the United States* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998).

the EU in regulating migration policies². This subject is especially important when taking into consideration the growing role of supranational institutions in framing migration strategies. The third important issue in European migration studies is the integration of migrants³. A review of the literature shows that a large part of the analyses and research is devoted to issues of migration to Europe from external states. The problem of intra-European migrations is analysed rather briefly in such debates. It seems that, to some extent, this phenomenon is not perceived as trend observed at the European level. There are however a few motifs that are well described. The first concerns an interesting trend observed from the beginning of European integration – the migration of older people, usually from northern to southern member states, where they retire⁴. The second well described issue is that of workforce flows and the differentiated politics of member states with regard to free labour movement from ‘new’ European countries⁵. It is, however, worth noticing that intra-European immigration is mostly researched as an economic phenomenon. Other approaches or interpretations are relatively rare. One example of such a noneconomic approach are the studies which interpret intra-European immigrants from new member states as a new wave of transnational labour migration⁶. Such interpretations are

² Rey Koslowski, *Migrants and citizens: Demographic change in the European system* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2000); Andrew Geddes, *Immigration and European integration: Towards Fortress Europe?* (New York: Manchester University Press, 2000).

³ Rogers Brubaker, *Citizenship and nationhood in France and Germany* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1992); Ruud Koopmans and Paul. Statham, eds., *Challenging immigration and ethnic relation politics: Comparative European perspectives* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000).

⁴ María Angeles Casado-Díaz, Claudia Kaiser, and Anthony M. Warnes, “Northern European Retired Residents in Nine Southern European Areas: Characteristics, Motivations and Adjustment,” *Ageing and Society* 24 (2004): 353-381; Vicente Rodriguez, Gloria Fernandez-Mayoralas, and Fermina Rojo, “European Retirees on the Costa del Sol: A Cross-national Comparison,” *International Journal of Population Geography* 4 (Jun. 1998): 183-200.

⁵ Julianna Traser, *Report on the free movement of workers in EU-25: Who’s afraid of EU enlargement?* (Brussels: European Citizen Action Services, 2006); Johnatan Portes and Simon French, *The impact of free movement of workers from Central and Eastern Europe on the UK labour market: Early evidence* (Department for Work and Pensions Working Paper no. 18, 2005); Michael Böhmer, *EU-Osterweiterung und eingeschränkte Arbeitskräftefreizügigkeit—Auswirkungen auf Deutschland* (EU East Enlargement and limited workforce flow – results for Germany) (Hamburg: Verlag Dr. Kovac, 2005).

⁶ Angela Coyle, “Resistance, regulation and rights. The changing status of Polish women's migration and work in the ‘new’ Europe,” *European Journal of Women's Studies* 14 (Feb. 2007): 37-50; Mirjana Morokvasic, “‘Settled in mobility’: Engendering post-wall migration in Europe,” *Feminist Review* 77 (2004): 7–25.

rather rare. These are spheres that are not encompassed by analyses and in-depth studies. For example, studies on the new wave of intra-European migration usually underestimate the problem of political representation of immigrants' interests, and their modes of influence on the activities of public authorities. To a relatively small degree do they focus on the everyday life of intra-European immigrants. In the search for quantitative tools that would allow effective descriptions, and above all comparison, of intra-European migrants' lives, we would like to pose a question: is the quality of life research procedure an appropriate tool in migration research? The aim of this article is to present a description – based on the example of Poles living in Ireland – of the use of such a research tool and its evaluation.

Looking at the specific example of Poles living in Ireland, one has to notice that although there is a very strong tradition of migration from Poland, it is only recently that Ireland has become a popular migration destination for Poles⁷. Traditional destinations for Polish emigrants include countries such as Germany, France, Great Britain, the USA, and Canada⁸ – and Ireland itself was traditionally the source, rather than the destination, of migrants. Until the 1990s, about 0.2 per cent of the Irish population left the country annually for economic reasons⁹. But Ireland's economic boom in the late 1990s and the beginning of the twentieth century reversed these tendencies. A growing number of employment opportunities brought about increasing immigration¹⁰. The greatest flow of migrants appeared following the European Union's enlargement in May 2004,

⁷ Izabela Grabowska, "Changes in the international mobility of labour: Job migration of Polish nationals in Ireland". *Irish Journal of Sociology* 14 (2005): 27-44.

⁸ Marek Okólski, "Mobilność międzynarodowa ludności Polski w okresie transformacji: przegląd problematyki," (International mobility of Polish nationals during the systemic transition: the review of research issues) in *Ludzie na huśtawce. Migracje między peryferiami Polski i Zachodu (Men at the swing. Migrations between peripheries of Poland and the West)*, eds. Ewa Jaźwińska and Marek Okólski (Warsaw: Wydawnictwo Naukowe Scholar, 2001); Dariusz Stoly, "Międzynarodowa mobilność zarobkowa w PRL" (International earning mobility in People's Republic of Poland) in *Ludzie na huśtawce. Migracje między peryferiami Polski i Zachodu (Men at the swing. Migrations between peripheries of Poland and the West)*, eds. Ewa Jaźwińska and Marek Okólski (Warsaw: Wydawnictwo Naukowe Scholar, 2001)

⁹ Piaras MacÉinri and Paddy Walley, *Labour migration into Ireland* (Dublin: Immigrant Council of Ireland, 2003), 15.

¹⁰ Nicole Doyle, Gerry Hughes, and Eskil Wadensjö *Freedom of movement for workers from central and eastern Europe. Experiences in Ireland and Sweden* (Stockholm: Swedish Institute for European Policy Studies, 2006).

and Poles are now the largest group among the 'new Europeans' in Ireland¹¹.

The special economic – and in many cases temporary – character of Polish immigration means that the typical sociological tools usually used in Polish diaspora research¹² do not seem to be sufficient. The idea of using a quality of life research methodology¹³ came from the hope that it may provide new inspiration, and help to include issues other than identity and nationality. The term 'quality of life' is by its nature multidimensional – satisfaction with life consists not only of economic components such as income level or material resources, but also incorporates other dimensions, like relations with significant others, health, work, esprit de corps, safety, etc. When the research tends to be more objective, the evaluation of those factors can be done using statistical data. But apart from secondary analysis, it is also possible to conduct survey research which is intended to deal with more subjective appraisals of life. The quality of life methodology is rather rarely implemented in migration studies, although there are a few exceptions¹⁴.

Research on the subjective evaluation of living conditions seems to grasp some of the relevant factors in new wave of intra-European immigration. The basic problem addressed in our preliminary research that has been performed here is whether the economically based migration of Poles to Ireland brings about an improvement in their quality of life in all its aspects. We advanced the

¹¹ Katarzyna Kropiwek and Rebecca Chiyoko King-O'Riain *Polish Migrant Workers in Ireland* (Dublin: National Consultative Committee on Racism and Interculturalism, 2006).

¹² Krystyna Iglicka, "National paradigms of migration research in Poland" in *International migration. A multidimensional analysis*, ed. Krystyna Slany (Cracow: AGH University of Science and Technology Press, 2005).

¹³ John C. Flanagan, "A research approach to improving our quality of life," *American Psychologist* 33 (1978): 138–147; Barbara Wejnert, "Badania jakości życia—konceptje i metodologie" (Quality of life research – conceptions and methodologies), in *Jak żyć? Wybrane aspekty jakości życia* (How to live? Selected aspects of quality of life), ed. Anna Wachowiak, (Poznań: Wydawnictwo Fundacji Humaniora, 2001); Jens Alber, Tony Fahey, *Perceptions of living conditions in an enlarged Europe* (Luxembourg: European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions, 2004).

¹⁴ Elham Foroughi, Rose Misajon, and Robert A. Cummins, "The influence of migration, social support and social integration on quality of life," *Behavior Change* 18 (2001): 156–167; Wendy L. Kennedy, Robert A. Cummins, "Ethnic identity and subjective wellbeing: Connections and possibilities," *International Journal of Diversity in Organisations, Communities and Nations* 7(2007): 107–116. Extensive quality of life bibliographies can be found in Robert A. Cummins, *Bibliography on quality of life and cognate areas of study* (Melbourne: School of Psychology, Deakin University, 2007) and at Australian Centre on Quality of Life <http://www.deakin.edu.au/research/acqol/instruments/index.htm>.

hypothesis that most aspects of the immigrants' quality of life were enhanced (mainly because of bettering material conditions), with the exception of interpersonal relations, which we expected to worsen.

Data and design

Quantitative research concerning immigrants – especially temporary immigrants or those recently settled in the host country – is particularly difficult. Respondents are hard to reach, reluctant to participate, and sometimes distrustful. For this reason the use of a survey and interview questionnaire technique may be seen as a rather adventurous project. But such techniques are the only ones that allow quality of life research, including index analysis. The representative sampling procedure is difficult because of a lack of sufficient knowledge about the population. Although the data of the Irish Department of Social and Family Affairs, based on the Personal Public Service Number (PPSN), are available, they can be only taken as an estimation, because not all Poles living in Ireland have a PPSN. We can precisely estimate neither the number of Poles in Ireland nor their demographic characteristics. This is why we have decided to use one of the most purposeful sampling procedures – snowball sampling. As this procedure does not ensure representativeness, the results of the study should be treated not as material for generalisation, but rather as a description of the actual population.

This preliminary research was conducted in the summer of 2006 in Ireland, using the snowball sampling procedure on 102 respondents who declared that they had lived in Ireland for at least six months.

The overall evaluation of the quality of life of Polish immigrants in Ireland is composed of six components: health and healthcare; material security; interpersonal relations; satisfaction with the possibilities of self-development, self-realisation, and work; satisfaction with environment; and leisure time and entertainment. For each component, respondents could assign a score from one – 'Definitely dissatisfied', to five – 'Definitely satisfied'.

Results

Health and Healthcare Component

The health and healthcare component has three subcomponents: the

respondent's satisfaction with their own health, treatment possibilities, and satisfaction with healthcare available near their place of residence.

The mean value of this component among respondents was 3.42. The lowest rate was achieved for the satisfaction with healthcare available near their place of residence component, for which the mean value was 2.95. Treatment possibilities were better evaluated, with a mean score of 3.08. These two subcomponents lowered the value of both the health and healthcare component and the overall quality of life index, and they were the two spheres that were evaluated lowest among the others.

In contrast, respondents evaluated their health quite highly (4.22). Only 30 per cent of those surveyed had not felt completely healthy at some time during the last 30 days. More respondents (38 per cent) felt exhausted and lacked energy. The reason for such a relatively high proportion of exhausted respondents may be both that their work demands much physical and mental effort, and the necessity of working and living in a relatively new environment causes migration stress. There are some statistical relations between malaise, the feeling of sadness, and the discomfort of staying abroad.

Comparing the evaluation of health and healthcare subcomponents before and after settlement in Ireland (see table 1), one may notice that they were generally better in Poland, and worse in Ireland.

Table 1. The change in evaluation of health and healthcare subcomponents

Health and healthcare subcomponents	Evaluation in Ireland	Evaluation before move to Ireland	Difference *
Satisfaction with one's health	4.22	4.25	- 0.01
Satisfaction with treatment possibilities	3.08	3.73	- 0.63
Satisfaction with healthcare available near place of residence	2.95	3.79	- 0.95

* The mean value of the differences between individual observations, rather than the difference between the mean values. Positive values means that the evaluated aspect had higher value in Ireland than in Poland.

Material Security Component

The material security component consists of evaluations of 13 different indicators. This was the most detailed index, because the described wave of migration had been mostly economic – 75 per cent of respondents declared that the most important reason for their move to Ireland was economic factors. The overall value of the index is rather positive, and amounts to 3.99. See table 2 for the subcomponent values.

Table 2. Values of subcomponents of material security

Subcomponent	Value
Ability to satisfy food needs	4.53
Satisfaction with material situation	4.35
Satisfaction with housing conditions	4.32
Ability to regularly pay rent and bills	4.30
Ability to cover extra expenditure, without needing to reduce current expenditure	4.29
Satisfaction with owned furnishings and material goods	4.26
Satisfaction with income	4.25
Ability to receive help from family	4.02
Ability to make larger household purchases	3.94
Material situation	3.91
Satisfaction with social services	3.84
Ability to save	3.71
Ability to get help from friends	3.64
Ability to get help from appropriate institutions	3.12
Ability to get help from non-governmental organisations	2.98
Material security index	3.99

The ability to gain help from social organisations has a relatively low value, which seems to result from the fact that respondents usually do not have sufficient

knowledge about help available through nongovernmental organisations. Another possible reason might be the strong perception that there is a lack of such organisations – especially Polish immigrant organisations – in Ireland. Among those of respondents who declared that they see a need for the development of Polish immigrant organisations, 36.5 per cent justified it by citing the necessity for accessible institutions to provide Poles with help and advice, concentrating in the areas of legal problems (29.1 per cent), work (11.4 per cent) and social help (7.6 per cent).

The main income sources of those surveyed were single-workplace jobs (77.5 per cent). Only 11.8 per cent of respondents worked in a number of places, and at the same time merely 8 people declared that they did not have a job, and must be supported by their family or partner. It is worth emphasizing the fact that among the people surveyed there were none who admitted to living off social help. This is especially important when we take into consideration that at the beginning of this intra-European immigration, many of the potential host societies feared that their social help system would become overloaded by the flow of immigrants. The example of our respondents shows that in this case those fears were not realised. It seems that Poles prefer to work than to take benefits (other than Child Benefit).

The material situation of those surveyed depends on the length of their stay in Ireland – 65 per cent of those of respondents who had been in Ireland for longer than a year evaluated their material situation as high. Inversely, 69 per cent of those who had stayed in Ireland for a shorter period of time perceived their material situation as medium. This may result from the fact that a longer stay usually brings a better job and more possessions, which are crucial in evaluating one's material situation.

Another subcomponent of material security is satisfaction with housing conditions. In many cases (59.6 per cent), the respondents declared that they lived with acquaintances. When we take into consideration the fact that all but 13.1 per cent declared that they lived with strangers, we see three quarters of the respondents lived with unrelated people. This is justified as a normal strategy of labour migrants – living with acquaintances and other unrelated people in jointly rented flats and houses is cheaper, and is a survival strategy. Of course, after a longer period of time migrants tend to prefer to live with their families or separately.

When compared to some of the subcomponents of the material security index before and after the move to Ireland (see table 3), it is obvious that the move positively affected this aspect of immigrants' quality of life.

Table 3. The change in evaluation of material security subcomponents

Material security subcomponents	Evaluation in Ireland	Evaluation before move to Ireland	Difference *
Satisfaction with housing conditions	4.32	3.64	0.71
Ability to satisfy food needs	4.53	3.99	0.54
Satisfaction with material situation	4.35	2.74	1.64
Satisfaction with social services	3.84	2.72	1.07

* The mean value of the differences between individual observations, rather than the difference between the mean values. Positive values means that the evaluated aspect had higher value in Ireland than in Poland.

Clearly the largest change is in the respondents' material situation. The evaluated difference is 1.64. Before their move to Ireland, they perceived their material situation as rather poor – they were somewhat dissatisfied with it. After settling in Ireland, the respondents' evaluation radically changed to 'definitely satisfied'. Only 7.9 per cent of the surveyed did not find their material situation better in Ireland. The rest (92.2 per cent) perceived it as better, among whom 60.8% said that this improvement was significant. This of course affected other subcomponents – more money also means greater satisfaction with housing conditions, and greater ability to satisfy different kind of material needs.

Interpersonal Relations Component

The interpersonal relations component consists of subcomponents which evaluate marital relations and relations with family and friends. This is vital issue, especially taking into consideration the risks of weakening relationships and falling out of contact with family and friends that migrants are prone to. On one hand, immigrant's relations with their friends and family that stayed in Poland radically

change – direct contact is reduced to a minimum. Yet on the other hand, in Ireland the immigrant becomes embedded in a new social environment and meets new friends – sometimes Polish, and sometimes from other ethnic groups. This radical change might have brought about, in our initial assumption, relatively low evaluations of this sphere of life. Yet the data shows that the value of the interpersonal relations index is high, reaching 4.09 (see table 4). Apart from that, it seems that this component has the greatest influence on the overall value of the quality of life index¹⁵.

Table 4. Values of subcomponents of interpersonal relations.

Subcomponent	Value
Satisfaction with marriage	4.54
Satisfaction with family relations	4.37
Perceived attitude of Irish people toward oneself	4.32
Satisfaction with relations with friends	4.26
Satisfaction with relations with one's children	4.25
Satisfaction with relations with Poles living in Ireland	4.04
Satisfaction with relations with neighbours	3.73
Feeling of loneliness from living in Ireland	3.45
Interpersonal relation index	4.09

The lowest evaluated subcomponent is the feeling of loneliness from living in Ireland – as many as 24.5 per cent of respondents stated that they often feel such loneliness. Some of them (12.8 per cent) stated that missing their relatives who remained in Poland was the greatest disadvantage of emigration. Apart from that, 35 per cent of those surveyed who declared that they would like to return to Poland claimed that the most important reason for their return would be this

¹⁵ The Pearson coefficient is 0.9; $\alpha=0.05$.

feeling of longing. Usually loneliness is negatively correlated with length of stay in Ireland. The longer they stay, the less lonely they feel. It may go to show that a longer stay in a host society involves embedding in existing social networks – which usually reduces the feeling of loneliness and longing.

Marriage is the sphere of interpersonal relations that brings the greatest satisfaction. Most of the married respondents declared that they lived with their spouse. This shows that most of these respondents come to Ireland with their spouse, which may suggest that most of the married couples plan to stay for a longer period of time in Ireland.

Another important aspect of family life is relations with one's children. Satisfaction with such relations is relatively high (4.25). This is especially interesting when we take into consideration the fact that – unlike with the case of marriage – only 50 per cent of respondents' children live with them in Ireland, not counting cases where the children's age makes it unlikely.

The loneliness and the awareness of absence of relatives and friends is reduced by frequent contact. Most respondents – 79.4 per cent – declared that they communicate with relatives at least once a week. Only one of the respondents said that they had completely broken off relations with relatives in Poland.

The subcomponent concerned with the perceived attitude of Irish people towards oneself scored highly (4.32), and is worth analysing. Most respondents declared that Irish people's attitude toward them is positive. Respondents generally perceive the Irish as friendly, even though contact with natives may not be very intense. Most of the surveyed only rarely spent their time in Irish company (58.8% per cent), and only one quarter had frequent contact with Irish people.

The perception of the attitude of Irish people towards Poles may be related to another factor – the experience of discrimination. However most of the surveyed (75 per cent) claimed that they had not meet with any form of discrimination. The other 25 per cent happened to have experienced some form of discrimination, mostly at work and in public places like shops or offices.

Respondents established more intense relations with other Poles – 51 per cent of respondents stated that there are definitely more Poles among their friends than any other nation, and 14.7 per cent stated that they have only Polish friends. This is mostly connected with their relatively poor English language skills. Some of the respondents have developed more cosmopolitan relationships during their stay in Ireland. About a quarter of respondents stated that they had relations with

people of other nationalities, such as Spanish people, English people, Italians, Slovaks, and Czechs, but also Venezuelans, Japanese, and Peruvians.

Interesting conclusions can be drawn from the fact that the surveyed evaluated their contact with Irish people better than that with other Poles (4.06). This may be caused by more intense and more frequent contact within the relatively limited Polish social networks. The evaluation of relations with compatriots living in Ireland worsens with time – the longer respondents stayed in Ireland, the worse were their evaluations. Perhaps those of the respondents who embedded more firmly in Irish society became more independent, and felt that they did not need further assistance or support from their ethnic group.

The changes that affected the subcomponents of the interpersonal relations component of quality of life are mostly positive (see table 5), apart from satisfaction with relations with friends. It seems that the move to Ireland, perhaps surprisingly, did not negatively affect the social relations of respondents.

Table 5. The change in evaluation of interpersonal relations subcomponents

Interpersonal relations subcomponents	Evaluation in Ireland	Evaluation before move to Ireland	Difference *
Satisfaction with relations with children	4.25	4.21	0.04
Satisfaction with marriage	4.54	3.95	0.59
Satisfaction with relations with family	4.37	4.15	0.24
Satisfaction with relation with friends	4.26	4.79	- 0.49
Satisfaction with relations with neighbours	3.73	3.64	0.10

* The mean value of the differences between individual observations, rather than the difference between the mean values. Positive values means that the evaluated aspect had higher value in Ireland than in Poland.

Self-development, Self-realisation, and Work Component

The component describing self-development, self-realisation and work has 14 constituent variables. The overall value of the index, at 3.68, is average. See

table 6 for the data.

Table 6. Values of subcomponents of self-development, self-realisation, and work

Subcomponents	Value
Satisfaction with colleagues	4.36
Satisfaction with job security	4.22
Satisfaction with job	4.18
Satisfaction with employer relations	4.17
Satisfaction with future prospects	4.14
Satisfaction with life achievements	3.96
Liking one's job	3.85
Feeling that the job pays adequately	3.80
Satisfaction with working	3.68
Satisfaction with possibilities of further training and education	3.40
Stressfulness of job	3.39
Attempts to change one's job	3.26
Chances promotion	3.24
Agreement of job and vocation	2.97
Self-development, self-realisation, and work index	3.68

The analysis of more detailed data shows that about the same number of respondents worked in positions which accorded with their qualifications, as worked in positions which were not connected with what they previously did in Poland. It seems that the popular thesis that most of the migrants need to take jobs inconsistent with their earlier experience cannot be confirmed. This may be connected with the fact that in Poland most of the surveyed had been manual office workers (30 per cent). Other groups were students (17.6 per cent), specialists with higher education (14.7 per cent), and workers (11.8 per cent). Far less numerous were managers (4.9 per cent). Only 3 per cent of respondents had been jobless before their move to Ireland, which clearly shows that this move was a choice taken by people who actively search for ways to better their lives, and not only by searching for a job.

At the same time it is worth noticing that the component of the overall index measuring agreement of one's job with one's vocation has the lowest value,

amounting to only 2.97. This obviously comes from the respondents' feeling that their education has lost some of its value after moving to Ireland. It frequently happens, for example, that engineers work in technicians' positions; their diplomas are not recognised, and their level of English does not allow quick promotion. Yet to a certain extent, relatively higher salaries compensate for this loss.

When analysing the changes that occurred in the subcomponents of this self-development, self-realisation, and work component on moving to Ireland (see table 7), we see that the most significant change concerns satisfaction with job security, which amounts to 1.61. Generally it seems that Poles living in Ireland feel more secure and more comfortable at work. The only aspect that was evaluated as worse in Ireland than in Poland was the possibility of further training and education. Perhaps this is a result of linguistic barriers that prevent respondents seeing the possibility of attending courses or universities in Ireland.

Table 7. The change in evaluation of self-development, self-realisation, and work subcomponents

Self-development, self-realisation, and work subcomponents	Evaluation in Ireland	Evaluation before move to Ireland	Difference *
Satisfaction with job security	4.22	2.76	1.61
Satisfaction with job	4.18	2.93	1.31
Satisfaction with own life achievements	3.96	3.51	0.43
Satisfaction with possibilities of further training and education	3.40	3.91	-0.50

* The mean value of the differences between individual observations, rather than the difference between the mean values. Positive values means that the evaluated aspect had higher value in Ireland than in Poland.

Satisfaction with Environment Component

The fifth component, concerning satisfaction with environment, is composed of three subcomponents: satisfaction with place of residence (4.26), with the level of accessible public goods and services (4.07), and also the feeling of safety in the place of residence (4.32). This part of the overall quality of life index was evaluated the highest of all components.

As can be seen in table 8, the evaluation of the changes in these subcomponents is positive, but not very high. In respondents' opinions, Poland seems to be less safe and less comfortable. For example, the move to Ireland usually entails living in a higher standard house or flat, and in a better neighbourhood than they could afford in Poland.

Table 8. The change in evaluation of satisfaction with environment subcomponents

Satisfaction from environment subcomponents	Evaluation in Ireland	Evaluation before move to Ireland	Difference*
Feeling safety in the place of residence	4.32	3.60	0.77
Satisfaction with level of accessible public goods and services	4.07	3.64	0.45
Satisfaction with place of residence	4.26	4.01	0.25

* The mean value of the differences between individual observations, rather than the difference between the mean values. Positive values means that the evaluated aspect had higher value in Ireland than in Poland.

Leisure Time and Entertainment Component

The final component measures the satisfaction felt with the amount of leisure time, and ways of spending it, as well as with the possibilities of cultural consumption. The overall mean value of this component is not very high, and amounts to 3.87. Table 9 shows the details.

Table 9. Values of subcomponents of leisure time and entertainment

Subcomponent	Value
Satisfaction with ways of spending leisure time	4.01
Ability to satisfy one's cultural needs	3.87
Satisfaction with amount of spare time	3.75
Leisure time and entertainment index	3.87

The relatively low satisfaction with the amount of spare time may come from the often considerable overtime worked. This, however, does not seem to strongly affect the quite high satisfaction with ways of spending time. This, again, may be connected with the relatively high salaries that enables Poles to entertain themselves well.

The comparison between rates of leisure time and entertainment subcomponents before and after the move to Ireland, presented in table 10, shows that although Poles in Ireland seem to have more leisure time, they generally evaluate this sphere of their life as less satisfactory than in Poland.

Table 10. The change in evaluation of leisure time and entertainment subcomponents

Satisfaction from environment subcomponents	Evaluation in Ireland	Evaluation before move to Ireland	Difference *
Satisfaction with amount of spare time	3.75	3.32	0.42
Satisfaction with ways of spending leisure time	4.01	4.09	-0.08
Ability to satisfy one's cultural needs	3.87	4.09	-0.10

* The mean value of the differences between individual observations, rather than the difference between the mean values. Positive values reveal that the evaluated aspect had higher value in Ireland than in Poland.

Conclusion

Analysing the evaluation of overall quality of life made by the Poles that participated in the survey shows that the quality of life after the move to Ireland is perceived as somewhat satisfactory (3.68), and generally surpasses the value in Poland. The fact that the best values, and the highest changes, were obtained in the material situation subcomponent is not surprising. The earnings and living standards seem to reach almost all the migrants' expectations. Unexpectedly however, it appears that interpersonal relations are also generally rated more highly in Ireland than in Poland. This observation shows that the hypothesis put forward at the beginning of the study

was false. A possible interpretation might be that the improvement in the material aspect of their quality of life results in a reduced number of potential sources of conflict and frustration. Apart from that it's worth noticing that the surveyed often migrated with their families, which lessened the discomfort of breaking off important social relations. Modern means of communication and relatively cheap transportation additionally help to keep close contacts with the home country and with relatives. This is one of the reasons why this new wave of intra-European migration is a fine example of transnationality.

The worst grades were ascribed to health care, the ability to acquire help from social organisations, the agreement of jobs with vocations, and the possibilities of promotion. However it is worth noticing that those subcomponents mostly concern adaptation to the formal structures of the new environment – the labour market, the health system, and social services. One can expect that gradually Poles who have migrated to Ireland will evaluate these spheres more positively, as they acquire the increased competences, especially linguistic, necessary to feel at home in Irish society.

When trying to characterise the profile of the intra-European migrant of the new wave described in this research, what stands out is that it agrees with popular descriptions of migrants from the 'new' EU member states – they are often young (most of the respondents were below 30) and well educated. Rarely, however, did they make the decision to migrate immediately after finishing their studies. It seems that usually they waited a few years, which may show that the move to Ireland is their final attempt to improve their career and quality of life.

The data gathered does not give a final answer to the question of whether the respondents are planning to return to Poland. This is again one of the symptoms of transnationality – no decision is made, and moving back to Poland is as easy as staying in Ireland or moving to another country. The decision can be made in the twinkling of an eye. For the moment, life in Ireland has no serious disadvantages (apart from maybe the bad weather, which surprisingly is perceived as the most important fault of Ireland), but in the future this situation may change.

Another interesting observation can be drawn from the fact that – unlike the popular image – the new intra-European migrants do not only want to accumulate money and quickly return home, but they also relatively rarely provide money for their families in Poland. It seems that for some of those surveyed, emigration is not a way of improving their life in Poland, but rather a mean of improving their life in general.

There is however one remark concerning more general issues that needs to be made. The quality of life methodology proved to be an interesting and effective research tool in migration studies. We believe that it is especially applicable to the new waves of labour migrants which are still embedded in their homelands while living in new places that may never become a 'new homeland'. It enables us to grasp issues hitherto passed over by some studies – especially qualitatively. Conducting further more representative – and above all, comparative – studies would surely contribute to more a precise description of the phenomenon of the new wave of intra-European migration. Moreover, seizing a broad range of aspects of quality of life enables not only the description of intra-European immigrants' lives, but also acts as a source of important immigration policy recommendations. Diagnosis based on such surveys can show which of the spheres of immigrants' lives ought to be improved, which should be more controlled, what are the incentives for their immigration, etc. These issues are of crucial importance when it comes to establishing immigration policies. If there were more comparative intra-European research using quality of life methodology, the results would surely bring numerous advantages.

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