

FAMILY SUPPORT ENTITIES IN THE MIGRATION SITUATION OF ITS MEMBERS

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Abstract. Nowadays, we are dealing with a large wave of emigration from Poland. Two factors contributed to this: the high unemployment rate in Poland at the turn of the last centuries and the ease of movement of individuals and groups after Poland's accession to the European Union. The overlap of these two factors meant that many Poles, not infrequently fathers or mothers of families, made decisions about finding a job outside the borders of their homeland. Although economic emigration contributes to improving the conditions of the family's existence, which is undoubtedly its positive effect, it nevertheless has many negative consequences: social, environmental, psychological... If emigration disturbs the system of family functioning, there is a need for broadly understood support of the emigrants' families in order to minimize its negative effects. It is primarily about support that maintains social relations that take a specific form in the family and without which the family becomes dysfunctional. The most important entities that provide such support are: the closest family, state institutions, religious organizations.

Keywords: Emigration, consequences of emigration for the family, supporters of the emigrants' family, family policy.

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Introduction

Migration, understood as spatial mobility, has always been an important dimension of the functioning of societies. For the nomadic peoples, it was even a condition for their survival. Over time, and especially when national states were established, migration began to take the form of emigration, understood as leaving the country of origin. This form of migration often saved the lives of individuals and even whole communities. The Polish community can be a good example here. It is quite possible to attempt a thesis that Poles more often emigrated than other nations. It was related to both economic and political factors. The first contributed to emigration in search of better living conditions; the second resulted from

political reasons. The latter were the result of persecution of the Russian invader after the fall of the November 1830 and January 1863 Uprisings. Similarly, Poles living in exile after the Second World War, could not return to the country for fear of persecution of the communist regime. Also recently, we are dealing with a large wave of emigration from Poland. Two factors contributed to this: the high unemployment rate in Poland at the turn of the last centuries and the ease of movement of individuals and groups after Poland's accession to the European Union. The overlap of these two factors meant that many Poles, not infrequently fathers or mothers of families, made the decision about looking for a job outside the borders of their homeland. Among the many negative consequences of emigration is the fact that emigration causes the separation of family members, which quite often results in the weakening of family ties. Because of emigration, a new category of incomplete families emerges - families with the temporary absence of one or sometimes even both parents. As noted by S. Urbańska, families of the emigrants are legally complete families, because temporary separation does not deprive them of the family status, however, due to the absence of one or both parents, these families function as incomplete families (*Urbańska, 2008:76*). Every migration, especially emigration, has a significant impact on the functioning of the family. Although economic emigration contributes to improving the conditions of the family's existence, which is undoubtedly its positive effect, it nevertheless has many negative consequences: social, environmental, psychological... (*Bejma, 2016:117-120*).

If emigration disturbs the system of family functioning, there is a need for broadly understood support of the emigrants' families in order to minimize its negative effects. It is primarily about support that maintains social ties in the family, without which the family becomes dysfunctional. Such a family accumulates negative traits, inconsistent with the principles of social life... As a consequence, "the dysfunctional families can not fulfill their parental functions well enough, can not meet the duties and tasks of their children and other family members and successfully pass through crisis stages" (*Bejma, 2017:56*). In this case, there is a great need to act for the integrity of the family. This support should be provided by all entities offering help to the family. In the literature on the subject, three types of such entities can be distinguished: members of a close and extended family, in particular grandparents; institutional - a state implementing social (family) policy and at the local level (territorial self-government, courts, County Family Assistance Center, family counseling centers, religious denominations, school), parishes and mass media. The type of support depends on the type of entity that provides it. Any form of support is helpful. However, it should be adequate to the existing problem and difficulties. This stipulation should be emphasized regardless of the fact that the problems of emigrants are always similar. Their minimization by support entities is constantly needed.

Family entity: grandparents, close and extended family

The first subject of support of the émigré family is always the nearest and extended family: grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins. This kind of support seems to be exceptionally functional and needed in a situation of emigration of the parent, and especially of both parents. In this situation, it can even be said that the child is temporarily orphaned. And the task that supporters face is to uphold family ties. In the case of emigration of one of the spouses, it is about preventing the breakdown of marriage and the family; it is maintaining bonds that grow on the basis of multiple form of relationships between family members, and which are the guarantee of family group integrity. A well-established family bond effectively

protects the family from disintegration. Consequently, the deeper and stronger the bond that connects the spouses, despite their temporary separation, the less harmful to the family are the effects of émigré absence. This applies to both short and long term separations. The situation is similar when it comes to parenting relationships; grandparents appear as the first support entity. When one parent emigrates, the other takes care of children, often assisted by grandparents; in the case of emigration of both parents, usually the grandparents take care of the child, and more rarely other family members such as relatives or adult siblings. If necessary, grandparents are also most frequently the legal guardians of the child (*Tarka, 2014:174*). In addition, grandparents in interpersonal relations, especially in parental relations and grandparents-grandchildren relations, remain a valuable link in the chain of fulfillment of needs in an émigré family. Five main needs are mentioned in the literature:

- the need for security, when satisfied, gives inner peace, the feeling that not only someone is next to the child, but the child can count on a close person. Then the tensions and fears that may accompany the child are avoided;
- the need for a sense of value that is responsible for the child's self-esteem and recognition from the environment;
- the need to belong - is satisfied by closeness and belonging to grandma or grandfather;
- the need for love expressing the presence of a loved one, who loves and experiences mutual love;
- the need for being understood, to be in touch with others, to share successes with friends, to be helped in difficulties... (*Młyński, Szewczyk, 2012:145*).

The first subject of support in the émigré family, are grandparents. The participation of grandparents in caring for grandchildren is of less importance when fathers leave and definitely more important when their mothers leave. In addition, their role increases in a situation of prolonged time of emigration (from 6 to 12 months); in such a situation they become relatively more important guardians than the father remaining in the country. This means that the structure of care in an émigré family is conditioned by the temporary length of migration (short-term / long-term) (*Walczak, 2014:23*).

Grandparents are usually an important element of the family structure. They participate in the functioning of the family, share difficult moments with their grandchildren, but also experience joy with them, they are an example and an authority for grandchildren. It is also worth adding that the roles of grandparents, although they belong to the so-called roles ascribed, i.e. not achieved, are very important (*Namysłowska, 2000:23*). Grandparents and grandchildren connect blood ties. As a consequence, grandchildren usually have good contacts with their grandparents, and moreover, emigrating parents also have more confidence in their parents than in other people even those belonging to the family. In the case of parents' emigration, the role of grandparents takes on a new dimension - they become the first, after parents, guardians of children (grandchildren). Usually, grandparents, with a mature philosophy of life, have a lot to offer their grandchildren, especially when they take on guardianship roles.

Undoubtedly, the support offered to an émigré family does not apply only to its children. Sometimes grandparents and extended family support the whole family in various situations caused by emigration. Common conversations, meetings, encouragement... are among best known. The ability to talk and support in difficult situations is an extremely important element of support. The goal is always the same - to sustain live family ties (*Gizicka, Gorbaniu, Szyszka, 2010:32; Sęk, Cieślak, 2004:49*).

Institutional entities of the state as part of the social and family policy: Social Welfare Center, District Family Assistance Center, Courts, School

The state, as one of the family support entities in emigration separation, may offer its assistance at local or higher organizational level. These forms of assistance are implemented as part of social policy. It follows from the very definition of social policy that it is the activity of the state and other social entities responsible for shaping the living and working conditions in order to meet the most important needs (individual and social) of citizens (*Rajkiewicz, 1979:27*). The analysis of the phenomenon of emigration after 2004 in Poland leads to the conclusion, that there were two main reasons for emigration: the lack of work on the homeland market and the desire to improve the family's economic condition. The shaping of the policy that determines the proper functioning of the family should have a reference to specific conditions. This means that in order for this support to be real and effective it must be based on the diagnosis of emigrant needs and families remaining in the country. Moreover, the assessment of these needs should be a reference point for family policy. It is about the most effective way of supporting the needy by the state. Most often, this applies to large families. The 500+ program currently being implemented, extended with the Home+, and Senior+ programs, may also constitute the bases of family policy with regard to émigré families. Currently, due to the growing return of emigrants to the country, continuing this form of assistance seems to be exceptionally functional.

A review of literature addressing the issue of emigration leads to at least a few areas of the social system that require the support of families in the situation of emigration separation. The first form of support for émigré families is a government initiative on the coordination of social security, understood as a system of benefits, which citizens use in various circumstances and conditions defined by law (*Podoski, Turnowiecki, 2003:125*). Activities concern the insurance of persons and their families. This type of benefit also includes those who have been employed within the European Union. As noted by Z. Kawczyńska-Butrym and M. Kruk, the following main services are foreseen in the directory of services: assistance in case of illness, maternity, invalidity; support for members of the deceased host family, for accidents at work or illness, and benefits for the unemployed (*Kawczyńska-Butrym, Kruk, 2015:213*). This type of social security is very important and gives the people the sense of security and stability as the full citizens of Europe.

Because of emigration, the scale of orphanage caused by this factor also increased. This situation forced the undertaking of some activities, formalized by the state administration. Among other things, the Ministry of National Education initiated a number of activities to support the family in separation. One of them is a telephone helpline for children and youth in cooperation with the Ministry of National Education and the Nobody's Children Foundation; information brochures are issued in cooperation with the Board of Education, actions are undertaken to protect children's legal rights and information campaigns on how to deal with children whose parents went to work abroad (*Pawelec, 2015:97*). An appeal to the local government, which is the closest to the inhabitant, seems also to be very important. In Poland, since 1999, there is a three-level self-government structure: voivodeship, county and commune. At the level of the commune, closest to the individual's living environment, it is easiest to notice the difficulties and needs of the families. The first thing to be done is making

a diagnosis. One of the institutions supporting families in separation at the municipal level are social assistance centers with professionally prepared and competent social workers, support centers and crisis intervention centers. "The great advantage of communal social assistance centers is their direct contact with those in need. Their spatial closeness allows us to see the needy, assess their situation and meet the needs as much as possible" (*Majkowski, 2015:54*). Recently, the role of assisting an émigré family by a family assistant has been increasingly emphasized. Although its role is usually associated with inefficient families, poorly educated and disturbed in social functioning, it also offers assistance provided to émigré families in terms of satisfying their needs. According to research conducted by D. Gizicka, J. Gorbaniuk and M. Szyszka, about 40% of emigrant families have benefited from this kind of assistance. The help offered to them is connected mostly with childcare. As part of these services are: community day rooms, provided classes in day centers, family counseling, family therapies. Elements of the latter include psychological, pedagogical and social help (*Gizicka, Gorbaniuk, Szyszka, 2010:143*).

At this point, the role of the commune should also be emphasized as a support entity for seniors and people with disabilities. In a family that is in separation, this benefit is extremely helpful. Help itself is offered in various centers and forms ranging from activities for physical activity and social activity of seniors within the framework of Third Age Universities, Senior Clubs, Senior Citizens' Councils and volunteering. J. Isański refers to this form of activity when he writes: "increasingly frequent elements of the landscape of Polish cities are senior clubs, open-air gyms and a rich offer of activities for the elderly" (*Isański, 2016:143*). These forms of support for family members offered by the local government at the local and over local level when the children remain abroad, are extremely important and needed (*Chabior, Fabiś, Wawrzyniak, 2014:77-80*).

As part of the support provided to families in separation, the role of County Family Support Centers should also be emphasized. The émigré family can expect support in the form of family counseling, family therapy provided by a psychologist, as well as assistance in the form of daytime attendance, care or upbringing. These activities are undertaken in accordance with the acts, which include, among others, the County Self-Government Act, which clearly defines public tasks of a supra-municipal nature. These include social assistance, family support and foster care as well as pro-family policy. Of course, this help is provided depending on the demand for it. The task of County Family Support Centers is not only to protect individuals and families from high-risk groups, but also to provide care and education to children who are deprived of their parents' care. This is the purpose of adoption and care centers, care and educational centers and centers providing information on the rights of citizens.

Courts are another institution located in the area of support for the émigré family. Assistance from the court is a deep interference in the family situation and the relationships occurring in it. Most often, it involves the establishment of curatorial care for children at risk of demoralization and the request for denial or limitation of parental rights when there is no possibility of contact with biological parents. This instance decides to place the child in a foster family or in care and educational centers (*Gizicka, Gorbaniuk, Szyszka, 2010:143*). Usually, parents who travel abroad for a long period of time, should establish a legal guardian. In practice, the grandparents usually play the role of the supervisor. It is very important to regulate the legal protection of a child, especially when a parent, who only has parental responsibility, leaves. This issue is regulated by Article 149 of the Guardianship and Educational Code. Establishing a legal guardian is especially important when it is necessary to

make important resolutions like health, healing, behavioral or educational decisions (*Ślusarczyk, 2014:80-81*).

Among entities supporting the migrant family, it is worth paying attention to school being the first place where a parent, pupil and teacher meet. This is valid particularly, in the dimension regarding the fulfillment of formal duties, related, for example, to legal protection. In any case, the educator and teachers first recognize the difficult situation of the child, they also first diagnose the causes of these state of affairs and signal them to the right people. At school, these people are: director, psychologist, educator and catechist, and priest. A few years ago, Educational Curatories in Poland carried out research in the field of identifying parents' migration issues. The research showed that in Malopolska Voivodeship, in almost 1,800 cases, no parents, who emigrated to work abroad, reported such a fact and no guardian was provided for remaining their children.

Research carried out by the aforementioned authors (B. Walczak, D. Gizicka, J. Gorbaniuk, and M. Szyszka) prove that the school is a direct place to meet with children of immigrants (*Walczak, 2014:13*). The role of the teacher and educator is invaluable. It involves not only noticing problems related to the development of children, social functioning, disorders, but also providing help in the field of studies, assistance of specialists (e.g. speech therapist), arranging extra-curricular activities, trips, free time, running interest groups (*Gizicka, Gorbaniuk, Szyszka, 2010:142*). In the situation of disturbing phenomena threatening the proper functioning of the child or behavior indicating addiction, the teacher will quickly notice that something bad is happening, and his reaction can effectively affect the fate of the child and family (*Łoskot, 2011:39*).

Considering the above, it is not surprising that in the catalog of tasks of the school, in which children of migrants are in the area of parental risk, emphasizes: supporting the student in his development, supporting the educational role of the remaining parent, adapting the content, methods and organization of teaching to his psychological abilities, ensuring pedagogical and psychological help, shaping attitudes and protection against threats (*Pawelec, 2015:100*). At this point, it should be noted that every environment, institution, and even specific people have the possibility to support the family in various ways. Combining their efforts brings positive results not only for socially disadvantaged and poorly educated families, but also results in the building of environmental ties (*Ciczowska-Giedziun, 2017:84*).

Denominational entities: church, parishes, specialist clinics

Among the entities that have influence on the upbringing of the child are also religious associations. Their role stems from the fact that the parents, deciding on the religious upbringing of the child, assign the part of their rights to the church. Since the Catholic religion is the most widespread in Poland, it is obvious that the Catholic Church has an important role to play in this regard. This role is not limited to instruction, but - as a charitable institution - to support families in various situations. Emigration is one of them. The role of the Church in this area is directed both at those family members who emigrate as well as those who remain in the country and function in incomplete families.

For those who leave, church institutions provide support that aims to serve the emigrant in obtaining the necessary information: useful addresses, telephones for Catholic missions and pastoral centers, information about the hours of Holy Masses, meetings of countrymen (*Scheffer, 2010:18-44*). A component of such support is the organized Scientific

Family Counseling Courses in Polish Catholic Missions in the West of Europe. Their aim is to prepare young people for marriage, responsible parenthood and to provide other forms of assistance in the field of family counseling. A good example of such support are courses organized for Polish emigrants. So far, they have taken place in several European countries where there are large groups of Poles: in Germany, Great Britain, Scotland, Spain and France. The author of the program is W. Szewczyk (*Szewczyk, 2011*). Another form of help is to provide prayer books, folders, and even more practical help like getting a credit card or other facilities.

In relation to those who remain in the country, the parishes, taking into account the difficulties associated with bringing up children and caring for children and elderly people, undertake compensatory activities in this area, such as organizing summer holiday camps, oases, winter camps, sports camps... These forms of support are of a socio-economic nature. The church institution established for this purpose is the parish Caritas. In addition, the Church meets the needs of families who are socially disadvantaged.

At this point, the counseling centers and other support centers run by the Catholic Church should also be mentioned. Such, for example, are Specialist Clinic "Ark" and Telephone Trust in Tarnów. These centers perform their mission in five cities (Tarnów, Bochnia, Dębica, Mielec and Nowy Sącz) of the Diocese of Tarnow. Support is provided especially for marriages in crisis, children with educational problems, addicts, seeking legal and spiritual support. Among them more than half of the beneficiaries are married couples and families in emigration separation. In 2011-2015, almost 19,000 of them benefited from specialist help and marital therapy (*Młyński, Szewczyk, Zięba, 2017:51*). (See figure below!)

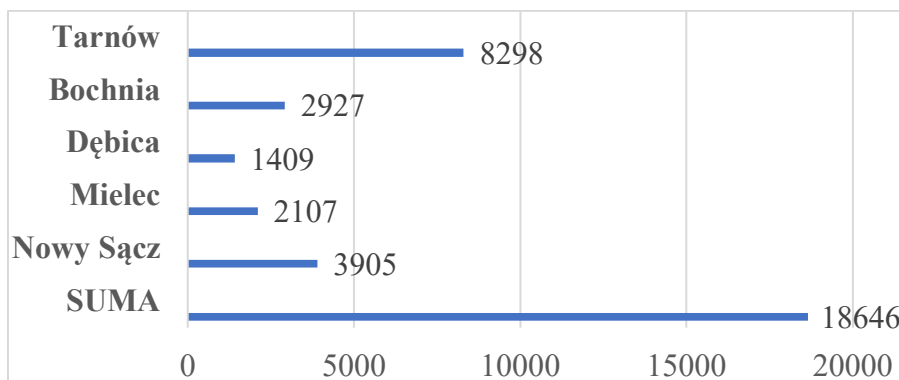


Fig. 1. Number of advice provided at the Specialist „Arka” Center in Tarnów in 2011-2015

Source: own study

Mass media

An indirect form of supporting families in a migration separation is to appeal to mass media. Their goal should be to provide reliable and true information, taking into account the opportunities, but also dangers associated with working and living abroad. Although their specific activities are difficult to assess, some of their forms are important for emigrants. It is about access to services such as: Polish press, telephone numbers, Internet and social networking sites, which make possible to be in touch with family and children. Currently,

global access to Internet networks eliminates the limitation of the communication process, enabling quick contact between countries and even continents. There are no borders or even geographical distances in this area. In the era of information technology development, the traditional written word ceased to play a leading role in the communication process (*Dekker, Engbersen, 2014:403*). In studies conducted by D. Heidrich, A. Łukaszewicz and J. Nakonieczna-Bartoszewicz, it was stated that "migrants use various mobile applications. Those of them with whom interviews were conducted indicated Facebook as the application used in the migration situation most willingly" (*Heidrich, Łukaszewicz, Nakonieczna-Bartoszewicz, 2016:10*). This type of communication serves not only for the transmission of information, but also for the exchange of photos in the wider circle of family and relatives. In keeping up the marital and family ties in the situation of emigration, Skype becomes exceptionally useful, making it possible to see people and talking almost face-to-face. A mother or a father in emigration, using the indicated communicator, has the chance to talk to children in the evenings, read stories, do their homework, talk about school, church and even pray with them. The report carried out 10 years after Poland's accession to the European Union structures shows that over half of the students surveyed from transnational families (54%) used video calls via Skype (*Walczak, 2014:57*).

Conclusion

This article is an attempt to analyze the support entities of the émigré family. This analysis leads to the conclusion that currently there are multiple forms of support for émigré families provided in various forms and at different levels. Undoubtedly, the need to support these families is very high, taking into account their internal diversity, as well as the diversity of situations in which they are living. Family, state, local self-government, School, Church are the basic support and care entities in the situation of marital and parental risk caused by emigration.

In practice, it is difficult to say unequivocally that support provided to families affected by emigration is adequate and sufficient. There is a need for in-depth research on how far the separation caused by emigration becomes the cause of disintegration of families and how effective is the assistance of various entities carried to these families. What is beyond discussion is the need to support families affected by separation due to emigration.

The world of émigré families is unequivocal. On the one hand, emigration leads to the economic stability of the family, on the other weakens the family ties and even causes the break-up of the family. That is why the role of family support entities seems to be invaluable. However, regardless of whether the family experiences the problem of separation or functioning "at home", one element of family life seems to be of special importance - being together. There is no doubt that "spending free time in family and with family, regardless of the form it takes, is of great importance for mental health and even physical integrity" (*Majkowski, 2006:394*), and affects her sense of happiness and quality life.

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