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# Leave or Stay? Exploring High School Graduates' Mobility: The Significance of the Labour Market Conditions and Family Migration Experiences

## Abstract

*Many factors determine the propensity of young individuals to migrate, with the local labour market standing out as a crucial determinant due to far-reaching impact on the broader community. Equally significant are the migration experiences within families. The article seeks to assess the influence of family migration experiences on the decisions of high school graduates concerning their future place of residence within the framework of the local labour market situation. The study employed a comparative approach, examining samples of high school graduates residing in districts of the Lower Silesian Voivodeship characterized by varying unemployment rates. A diagnostic survey, complemented by statistical methods was employed for the research. Our findings reveal a substantial impact of family migration experiences on the intentions of young individuals regarding their future residence. Notably, a higher proportion of emigrants within the families of surveyed high school graduates correlates with an increased likelihood of expressing*

*intentions to migrate externally. The interaction with the local labour market context reveals compelling insights. The research indicates that the influence of family migration networks is more pronounced among young people in areas with low unemployment rates compared to those in districts facing a more complex labour market situation. These results suggest that in the decision-making process concerning youth migration, social factors, particularly those manifesting in family migration networks, play a pivotal role alongside, if not surpassing, economic considerations, such as the local labour market conditions.*

*Keywords: migration, youth, family migration networks, labour market.*

## Introduction

In the field of population migration research, several topics consistently emerge as key determinants in migration decision-making. These are economic and social factors. In the literature on migration, the role of the labour market as a factor determining migration is a constantly recurring topic (Aksu, Erzan and Kırdar, 2022, p. 132, Dolińska *et al.*, 2020, p. 8). Researchers demonstrate how variations in employment opportunities can serve as motivating or discouraging factors for migration by shaping the geographic patterns of people's movements (Jończy and Rokita-Poskart, 2017, p. 929; de Hass *et al.*, 2019, p. 888; Simson, 2022, p. 3; Dolińska, 2023 p. 97). In the literature, the allure of better employment prospects, higher earnings, or better living conditions in a different location is highlighted as a significant incentive. However, in the decision-making process for migration, it becomes evident that family factors are often equally crucial, alongside economic consideration (Chan, *et al.*, 2022, p. 14). In particular, family migration experiences constitute an essential dimension of this paradigm (Cairns and Smyth, 2011, p. 153; de Jong, 2021; Petra, de Jong and de Valk, 2023). Furthermore, economic and social dimensions frequently intersect, with economic conditions intricately interplaying with family factors. This becomes particularly salient when examining the diverse economics landscapes across various regions or districts.

Taking the above into account, in the article, we focus on the relationship within a specific demographic group – high school graduates – in the Lower Silesian Voivodeship in Poland. This region stands out as one of Poland's' most developed area, but at the same time highly diversified economically. Through a diagnostic survey and statistical methods, we examine the impact of family migration experiences on the migration intentions of these young individuals.

Our study is contextualized within the various economic landscapes of local areas, each characterized by distinct levels of unemployment. The article aims to identify whether and to what extent family migration experiences influence the high school graduates's intention to migrate, depending on the prevailing situation in the labour market. The presented material is derived from the empirical research conducted among high school graduates enrolled in secondary schools in the Lower Silesian Voivodeship in Poland, in districts with both high and low unemployment rates, and employs rigorous statistical analyses.

In the subsequent section of this article, we present the theoretical background and a comprehensive review of existing literature on the situation in the labour market and family migration experiences. Following this, we present the research methodology and employed statistical analyses. Subsequently, we present research findings on migration decisions made by young individuals from the districts of the Lower Silesian Voivodeship. Finally, we conclude the article with a discussion and the most important conclusions.

## 1. Theoretical background and research review

The multitude of migration theories, owing to their inherent complexity, necessitates a discussion of the propensity to migrate among young individuals from families with prior migration experiences based on the consideration of several key factors. These theories primarily fall within the realms economic and sociology.

The economic dimension of migration holds pivotal significance in the development of this phenomenon. Hence, an exploration of migration theories pertinent to the discussed topic should commence with a focus on economic theories, beginning with the neoclassical migration theory. According to the macro-scale perspective, population movement emerges as a consequence of unevenly distributed factors of production, leading to wage disparities across different areas (Harris and Todaro, 1970, pp. 126–142). On a micro level, individuals make migration decisions based on a personalized assessment of the benefits and costs associated with potential relocation, anticipating an additional net gain from their choice (Todaro, 1969, pp. 138–148).

Building upon the neoclassical theory of migration, a subsequent economic theory emerged, wherein a crucial assumption related to the discussed topic is that the fundamental unit making migration decisions is not an individual but rather a group of people, often constituting a household (Stark, 1978, 1991). The primary objective of (Stark, 1978) migration, according to this perspective, is to diversify family income sources by deploying labour resources in various mar-

kets in response to significant economic challenges in the household's region (Massey *et al.*, 1993, pp. 431–466; Janicki, 2007, pp. 285–304).

Referring to economic concepts, Hain de Haas writes that they “have inherent difficulties in explaining the socially and geographically differentiated nature of migration processes” (de Haas, 2021). In fact, migration decisions are limited and depend on many factors such as state structures, family, local community, and culture. Thus, one possible explanation for the causes of migration is the Culture-based Theory of Migration, which suggests that migration may be influenced by a combination of economic factors and cultural norms and values in countries of origin and destination. The theory posits that migrants may consider a range of factors, including wage levels and prevailing cultural norms, when making decisions about leaving and the direction of migration (Berlinschi and Fidrmuc, 2018).

Turning to migration theory with a sociological foundation, the theory of migration networks naturally assumes a central role in our analysis. This concept is grounded in the notion that interpersonal relationships are a critical factor in the migration decision-making process (Massey *et al.*, 1993, pp. 431–466; Palloni, *et al.*, 2001, pp. 1262–1298). The migration experiences of family members or close associates may render migration more manageable, given the supportive network of relationships (Arango, 2000, pp. 283–296). In the context of the discussed issues, it is noteworthy that the creation of a network results in the accumulation of social capital among individuals connected to the migrant. Consequently, those related to the migrant may exhibit a greater inclination to migrate, a phenomenon that can be further explored in the context of family reunification (Coleman, 1988 pp. 95–120; Arango, 2000, pp. 283–296).

In the context of the issue under consideration, social exchange theories can also be invoked, in the light of which it can be assumed that migration decisions are based on calculations of gains and losses, both material and social. The decision to migrate is influenced by a number of factors, including family relations, social status, and community membership. People often evaluate the potential social and emotional benefits or costs associated with leaving their current situation, demonstrating that migration is a multifaceted process that extends beyond a mere response to economic hardship (Homans, 1961).

The topic of the impact of migration experiences in families on the young generation's willingness to emigrate is aligned with the tenets of institutional theory, according to which, after the first migration, each subsequent wave of migration is caused by institutional connections (Massey *et al.*, 1993, pp. 431–436). According to its assumptions, various companies and institutions play an important role in migration decisions, aiming to broadly reduce the risk of in-

tended migration, including providing information or assistance in crisis situations (Hirsfeld and Kaczmarczyk, 2000, pp. 18–23).

When analysing the propensity to migrate among young individuals in relation to the existing family migration experiences, one cannot fail to mention the theory of cumulative causality, which, like the two abovementioned, assumes that migration is a self-propelling phenomenon, where subsequent waves of migration result from the previous ones, with the causes of primary migration differing from those determining subsequent waves (Arango, 2000, pp. 283–296). The assumptions of this theory point to several reasons for the emergence of secondary migration – in the context of the discussed issues, the most important is the formation of the previously described migration networks (Massey *et al.*, 1993, pp. 431–436; Arango, 2000, pp. 283–296; Janicki, 2007, p. 10).

Various factors influencing migration have been extensively studied and researched. In the article, we aim to provide an overview of two trends in the literature dedicated to the determinants of migration, particularly focus on the inclination to migrate among young people<sup>1</sup>. We begin by presenting the first trend, which addresses the extensive literature on family member migration as a determining factor in youth's migration decisions (Ivlevs and King, 2012, p. 119; van Dalen and Henkens, 2011, p. 510). Researchers persist in their interest in the role of migration networks (MacDonald and MacDonald, 1964, pp. 82–97; Mincer, 1978 pp. 749–773; Boyd, 1989; Palloni, Massey *et al.*, 2001, pp. 1262–1298; Fussell, 2010, pp. 162–177) economic opportunities and cultural norms (White *et al.*, 2018, pp. 90–107). Conducted research suggests, similarly to the theory of migration networks, that the experiences of family members who have emigrated may have a particularly significant impact on youth's migration intentions. The main reason is the intergenerational transmission of migration capital accumulated in the family as an essential determinant of future migration decisions. Ivlevs and King (Ivlevs and King, 2012, pp. 118–1290) using the study of De Jong (2000; pp. 307–319), define this concept as “previous personal migration experience and the presence of networks at the potential migrant's destination”. Migration capital plays a decisive role in creating beneficial externalities because the family is a source of information and support for potential migrants (Epstein and Gang, 2006, pp. 652–665). This facilitates the process of adaptation in the place of emigration in the context of looking for a job, place of residence, support in establishing social bonds, and emotional support (Szyszka, 2016, pp. 143–164).

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<sup>1</sup> In this article, the terms “household” and “family” are used as synonyms to refer to the people living together with the respondent. However, the authors are aware that these concepts are not always treated as identical in the scientific literature and that there are differences in their definitions.

Family migration experiences also serve as a key contextual factor relating to variations in the role of migration networks and prior personal experiences depending on various criteria (Stampini, Carletto and Davis, 2008, pp. 50–87). One of them is gender (Epstein and Gang, 2006, pp. 652–665). Global research consistently affirms that the presence of migration culture promotes the migration intentions of men, whereas women, owing to their stronger connection to their place of origin influenced by the significance of family relationship and perceptions of the woman's role in the family, may not share the same inclination (Epstein and Gang, 2006, pp. 652–665).

The second stream of research that emerges from the literature review and shows the theoretical context of the issues discussed in this article concerns the relationship between the situation in the labour market and migration intentions as interrelated phenomena. Some researchers focus on determining the effects of ongoing migration on the labour market situation in the migrants' area of origin (Aksu, Erzan and Kırdar, 2022, p. 135; Langella and Manning, 2022, p. 4). Nevertheless, our emphasis at this juncture is on presenting research that analyses the reverse cause-and-effect relationship – the impact of the situation on the labour market and migration intentions. The findings from numerous studies indicate that individuals facing unemployment are more inclined to contemplate migration as a means to pursue improved employment opportunities (Fields, 1976, pp. 407–415; Pissarides and Wadsworth, 1989, pp. 739–750). This relationship should be considered in two ways – within the framework of theory (Lee, 1966, pp. 47–57) of push and pull factors, i.e., in connection with factors related to the migrants' place of origin and destination. The push factors undoubtedly include a lower level of remuneration, lower productivity, worse employment opportunities, professional development, but also diminish the prospects of attaining the anticipated level of material well-being in the current place of residence (Kumar and Sidhu, 2005, pp. 221–232). Research shows that with every percentage increase in the unemployment rate in the area of origin, the likelihood of migration to another region or country also rises. This is particularly evident when analysing the migration patterns of young people, for whom migration is an opportunity for better employment, personal development, and a better quality of life (Bobek, 2020, p. 24–34; Hall, 2022, p. 19, Brzozowski, and Coniglio, 2021, pp. 1089–1120). As research results show, an unfavourable economic climate and, therefore, the limited prospects of securing a job aligned with their education determine the migration aspirations of young people (Van Mol, 2016, p. 1309–1314; Dolińska *et al.*, 2020, pp. 130–164; Dolińska, 2023, p. 93). Pull factors, on the other hand, concern the belief in better job opportunity in another location – in the country of origin (Oliver, 1964, p. 42–75; Schlottmann

and Herzog, 1981, p. 590–598; Langella and Manning, 2022, p. 4) or abroad (Da-Vanzo, 1978, p. 504–514; Pissarides and Wadsworth, 1989, p. 739–755) as well as higher wages level.

The analysed theoretical background and empirical evidence emphasize the importance of economic and family factors in a broader perspective of migration determinants. Therefore, we have formulated one general hypothesis:

H1. The level of unemployment observed in the area of origin affects the number of migrants in respondents' households.

In the theoretical context presented, we examine the migration plans of high school graduates studying in the districts of the Lower Silesian Voivodeship, a region marked by noteworthy variations in economic conditions. This diversity is pivotal in formulating our hypotheses, which posit that the prevailing economic conditions in the local environment play a crucial role in shaping the impact of family migration experiences on the migration intentions of young adults. Therefore, we also verify two specific hypotheses:

H2. In districts characterized by a low unemployment rate, migratory experiences within the families of high school graduates do not exert an impact on their migration intentions.

This hypothesis results from the belief that in conditions of a relatively good situation in the labour market, family migration experiences may be offset by alternative considerations, such as educational aspirations or personal aspirations that can be realized in the place of origin.

H3. In districts characterized by a high unemployment rate, migratory experiences within the families of high school graduates exert an influence on their propensity towards migration.

In districts with a high unemployment rate, migration declarations in the families of high school graduates influence their migration tendencies. In districts affected by higher levels of unemployment, the experiences of migrating family members may potentially shape young adults' decisions. We attribute this to the need to ensure stable employment, often based on family successes abroad, and we assume that family experiences will have a decisive impact on the migration tendencies of young people, especially in districts with a high unemployment rate.

## 2. Methodology

The analysed and interpreted data stem from empirical quantitative research conducted through the diagnostic survey method. The primary objective



of this research was to discern the intentions of surveyed high school graduates concerning their immediate future, encompassing considerations related to further education and/or employment. Additionally, the study aimed to investigate their intentions regarding the prospective place of residence, accounting for the prevailing conditions in the labour market within the regions inhabited by the respondents. The survey questionnaire employed for this research, beyond addressing to the topics already mentioned, included several other questions regarding, among others, the scale and directions of foreign migration of members of respondents' households. Respondents' answers to these questions allowed us to obtain important information, including the impact of migration experiences in the families of high school graduates on their tendency to emigrate.

Due to the anticipated dispersal of the target group immediately following the high school leaving exams and potential challenges in surveying them within their respective areas of origin, the decision was made to conduct the study shortly before the culmination of the high school leaving exams. Furthermore, the research cohort was specifically limited to high school graduates. This strategic narrowing aimed to mitigate the potential distortion of results caused by responses from individuals attending specialized schools, as these students often pursue studies aligned with available employment opportunities in their current places of residence.

To ensure the representativeness of the sample across various cities, all high school students in smaller centres were encompassed, while quota sampling was employed in larger centres as a measure to maintain balance and proportionality within the study.

The study was carried out in the Lower Silesian Voivodeship, which is characterized by significant disproportions in the level of socio-economic development between its center (Wrocław agglomeration) and most of the remaining area. Moreover, the strategic geographical location of the voivodeship, enabling easy access to attractive European cities, seems to be of key importance for migration decisions. To accurately illustrate the scale of the problems diagnosed in the study, it was decided to conduct it on contrasting samples, the key selection criterion of which was the registered unemployment rate. With these premises, the study was undertaken in two sets of districts. The first group encompassed three regions in Lower Silesia characterized by the lowest level of unemployment recorded in the Lower Silesian Voivodeship. In contrast, the second group comprised three districts with the highest level of unemployment<sup>2</sup>. The survey

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<sup>2</sup> Based on available statistical data, two cities with district rights were classified in the first group (the city of Wrocław and the city of Jelenia Góra) and the Lubin district, where young people studying in the following towns were surveyed: Jelenia Góra, Lubin, Wrocław. The second



was conducted in a total of 17 general high schools. It covered 815 high school graduates, of whom 59.5% were women and 40.5% were men.

To present the study results visually, we employed charts illustrating the frequency distribution of variables within the studied population. Chi-square tests of independence were conducted to validate or refute the formulated hypotheses. These tests aimed to assess the correlation between the variables under scrutiny. The chi-square test of independence, a non-parametric test, was chosen for this analysis, suitable for examining associations between two nominal variables presented in a matrix format with any number of rows and columns (Stanisz, 2006, pp 1–532; Aczel, 2000, p. 103).

In this study, the following assumptions were considered during the execution of Pearson's tests of independence:

- the independence of groups – i.e., each respondent can only belong to one group, excluding the possibility of selecting multiple answers;
- none of the expected numbers can be less than 1;
- a maximum of 20% of the expected numbers can be below 5.

Two hypotheses were formulated for each performed test:

- $H_0$  – The variables are independent of each other;
- $H_1$  – There is a correlation between the variables.

After calculating the statistic  $\chi^2$  and determining the critical value, the following criteria were used:

- If the critical value was greater than the statistic  $\chi^2$ , the null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ) was accepted ( $p\text{-value} > 0.05$ ),
- If statistic  $\chi^2$  was greater than or equal to the critical value, the null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ) was accepted ( $p\text{-value} > 0.05$ ). The null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ) was rejected in favor of the alternative hypothesis.

The calculations were carried out according to formulas 1 and 2.

Statistic  $\chi^2$  is calculated for an array of dimensions  $r \times s$ . Where  $r$  corresponds to variants of one feature and  $s$  to variants of the other feature. A theoretical value is calculated for each field in the table (formula 1).

$$\hat{n}_{ij} = np_{ij} = \frac{n_{i.} \cdot n_{.j}}{n} \quad (1)$$

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group included the following districts: Lwówek, Kłodzko, and Górowski. The study in these districts was carried out in the following centers: Góra, Kudowa Zdrój, Bystrzyca Kłodzka, Kłodzko, Lwówek Śląski, Gryfów Śląski, Rakowice Wielkie, Lubomierz.

Where:

$$\text{marginal probability: } p_{i.} = \frac{n_{i.}}{n} \text{ and } p_{.j} = \frac{n_{.j}}{n}$$

Then, after determining the theoretical numbers, assuming independence of the features, the  $\chi^2$  is calculated (formula 2).

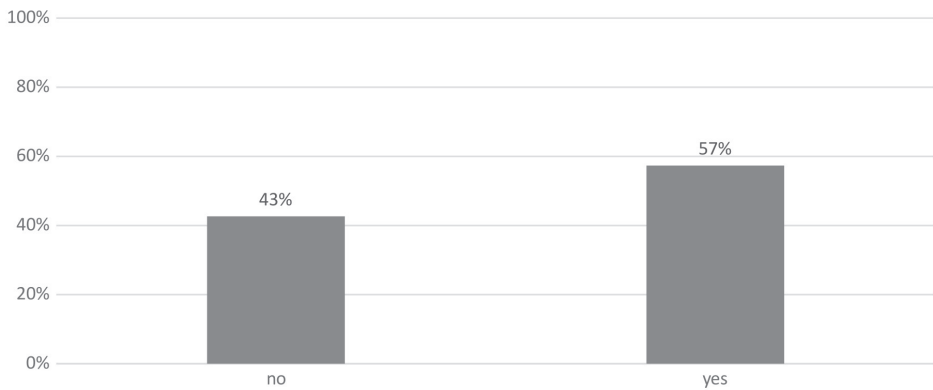
$$\chi^2 = \sum_{i=1}^r \sum_{j=1}^s \frac{(n_{ij} - \hat{n}_{ij})^2}{\hat{n}_{ij}} \quad (2)$$

The right-hand critical region is defined by  $P\{\chi^2 \geq \chi^2_{\alpha}\}$ , where  $\chi^2_{\alpha}$  is the critical value read from the distribution table  $\chi^2$  for a given level of significance  $\alpha$  and for  $(r-1)(s-1)$  degrees of freedom. If  $\chi^2 \geq \chi^2_{\alpha}$ , then the hypothesis  $H_0$  about the independence of the examined feature should be rejected in favour of the alternative hypothesis. If  $\chi^2 < \chi^2_{\alpha}$ , there are no grounds to reject the  $H_0$  hypothesis.

### 3. Identification of migration experiences and tendencies

Out of 815 respondents, 776 answered the question, allowing us to identify whether household members had or did not have migration experience. This experience was operationalized using two variables. The first concerned information about whether anyone in the respondent's family worked abroad at the time of the research or had previously worked abroad (Figure 1), the second one specified the migration experience by indicating the number of emigrants in the household (Figure 2).

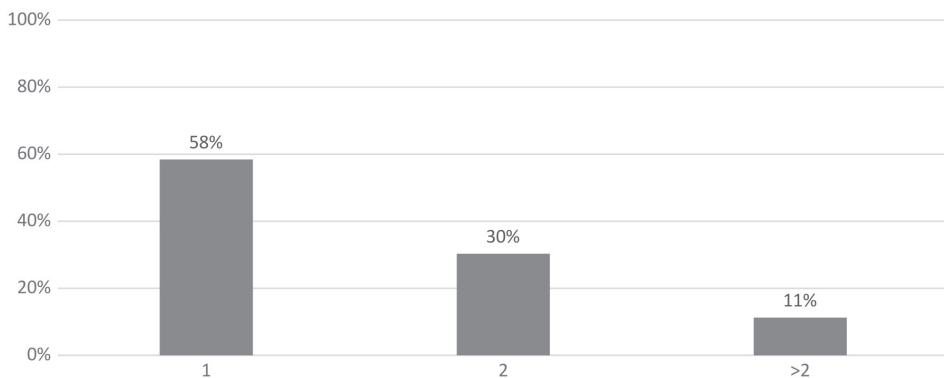
Figure 1. Percentage of respondents with and without members possessing migration experience in their household



Source: own study based on survey research

Out of the 776 respondents, 445 (57%) declared migration experiences among family members (Figure 1), while 331 people (43%) did not declare such experience. Henceforth, to streamline the analysis, we categorize households with migration experience as migrating families (households), while households lacking migration experience are denoted as non-migrating families (households)<sup>3</sup>.

Figure 2. Percentage of respondents according to the number of household members working abroad



Source: own study based on survey research

<sup>3</sup> Generally, the term “youth” is conventional and depends on the entities using it. For example, the World Bank and the United Nations adopt an age-based definition of youth aged 15–24 for statistical purposes, but regional and national definitions vary (Hall, 2022). In this study, this term will be employed to describe the transitional state between the opposite poles of childhood

In the cohort declaring migration experience in their family, 58% indicated that one person from the household worked abroad, 30% indicated two people, and 11% reported more than two individuals.

The subsequent phase of the analysis aimed to ascertain whether a correlation existed between the migration experiences of the respondents' families and the unemployment level in their district of residence. To achieve this, respondents were stratified into two groups based on the unemployment rates in their districts: those residing in districts with high unemployment rates and those in districts with low unemployment rates.

The analysis was conducted holistically, addressing the following research questions:

1. Are there any significant differences in the distribution of responses to the question regarding the number of people from the respondents' families working abroad due to residing in a district with high versus low unemployment rates?
2. Are there any significant differences in the propensity of young individuals to migrate with and without family members working abroad in districts with high versus low unemployment rates?

The responses to these research questions facilitated the validation of the formulated hypotheses. The chi-square test of independence was employed to assess the significance of differences.

The analysis investigating the relationship between migration experiences and the unemployment rate revealed that the unemployment rate significantly influences migration behaviour. Consequently, discernible distinctions in migration behaviour were observed between individuals residing in districts with low unemployment compared to those in districts with high unemployment. This is confirmed by the statistics obtained in the chi-square test, which are respectively: degrees of freedom = 3, chi-square test statistic = 18.2966 and p-value = 0.0004.

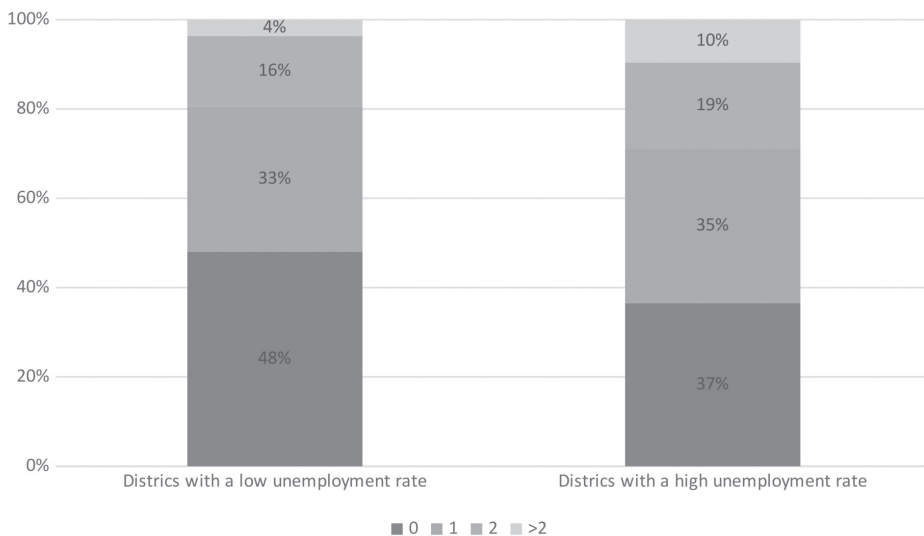
The results (Figure 3) demonstrate the difference in the scale of migration experiences among the families of respondents residing in districts with low and high levels of unemployment. It was discovered that in districts with a relatively inferior labour market, respondents were more likely to report migration experiences in their families (over 60% of respondents) compared to respondents

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and adulthood, which is equivalent to achieving economic and social independence. Throughout the theoretical section, the term "youth" will be used interchangeably with the expression "young people", "young generation", and "young individuals", while in the empirical section, it will also be used interchangeably with the terms "high school graduates" and "respondents."

from districts with low unemployment (slightly above 50%). Disparities were detected in the migration scale across groups. Regarding respondents from districts with low unemployment levels, 33% indicated that one individual from their household had been employed or had previously held employment abroad. This response was provided by 35% of respondents from high unemployment areas. Furthermore, 16% of participants from low unemployment districts and 19% from high unemployment districts denoted that two members of the respondent's household had worked abroad in the past. However, a notable difference emerged as 4% of respondents from low unemployment localities and 10% of those from high unemployment zones reported that more than two migrants. Consequently, considerable divergences in migration experience levels contingent on documented unemployment rates in residential areas can be discerned. This analysis denotes that the local labour market climate substantially impacts the scale of foreign migration.

Figure 3. Percentage indicating the number of people from respondents' families going abroad to work, broken down by residence in a district with a low and high unemployment rate

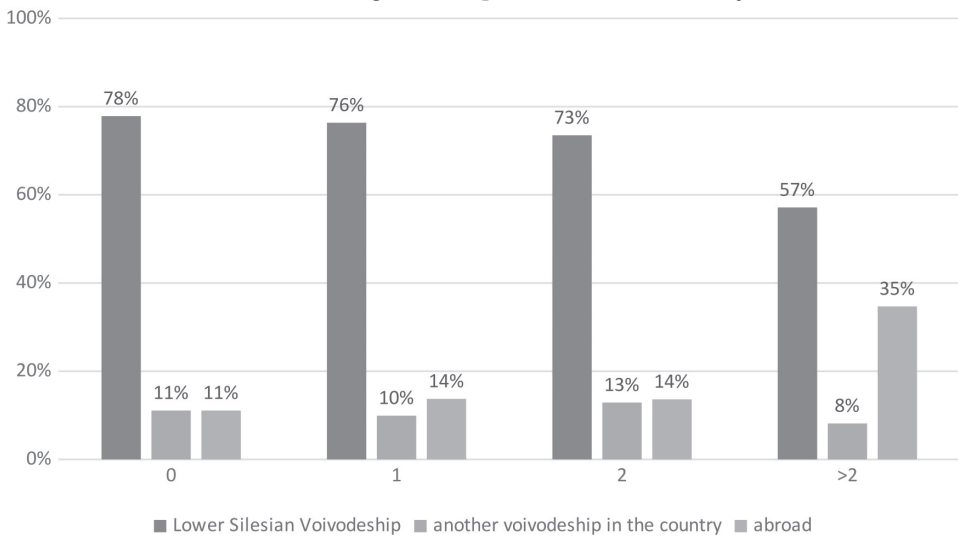


Source: own study based on survey research

Attempting to address the second research question – Are there significant differences in the migration tendencies of individuals with and without family members going abroad, accounting for the unemployment level in the inhabited districts of respondents? – the respondents' answers underwent examination

while considering the labour market climate in their residential districts. The subsequent figures illustrate the percentage distributions of responses from respondents reporting migration experience across all respondents (Figure 4), participants from low unemployment districts (Figure 5), and high unemployment districts (Figure 6). Analysis of the relationship between residence intentions and migration experiences proved statistically significant. For the aggregated data, the chi-square test statistics are as follows: degrees of freedom = 6, chi-square statistic = 85.6512, p-value = 0.0000.

Figure 4. Place of permanent residence and work declared by respondents after graduation in the context of migration experiences of their family members.



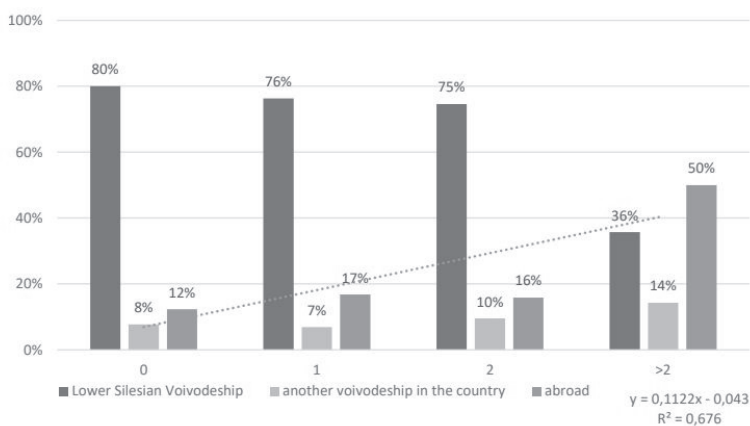
Source: own study based on survey research

Interpretation of the impact of family migration experiences on young people's intentions regarding their future permanent place of residence among all respondents (Figure 4) denotes these experiences play a pivotal role in youth decisions. This manifests distinctly in emigration tendencies: 11% of respondents from non-migrating families selected this response, while for individuals reporting 1 or 2 migrant family members, this percentage was 14%. However, if over 2 household members worked abroad, the percentage of participants intending to work/reside outside their home country in the future escalated to 35%. Therefore, it can be inferred that family migration capital accrual elevates propensity to migrate – as the conducted analysis exhibits, the penchant for foreign migration intensifies with greater numbers of migrants in respondents'

households. These outcomes intimate that family migration histories substantially influence the rate of permanent external migration.

However, upon examining the subsequent two data sets (Figures 5 and 6) delineating the influence of family migration histories on declared intentions of surveyed youth regarding their future permanent place of residence, while accounting for unemployment levels in their place of origin, it was discerned that for adolescents inhabiting low unemployment districts, such backgrounds significantly impact plans regarding the place of residence after graduation (at a significance level  $\alpha = 0.05$ ). Conversely, in high unemployment districts, this relationship is only significant at  $\alpha = 0.1$ . Additionally, for respondents in low unemployment areas, family migration experiences more substantially affect the percentage of individuals anticipating future residence abroad compared to youth from high unemployment districts. Migration precedents in low unemployment districts exert more decisive impacts on migration leanings, as evidenced by the higher slope coefficient value of the estimated regression function for low versus high unemployment districts – 0.1122 and 0.0566, respectively.

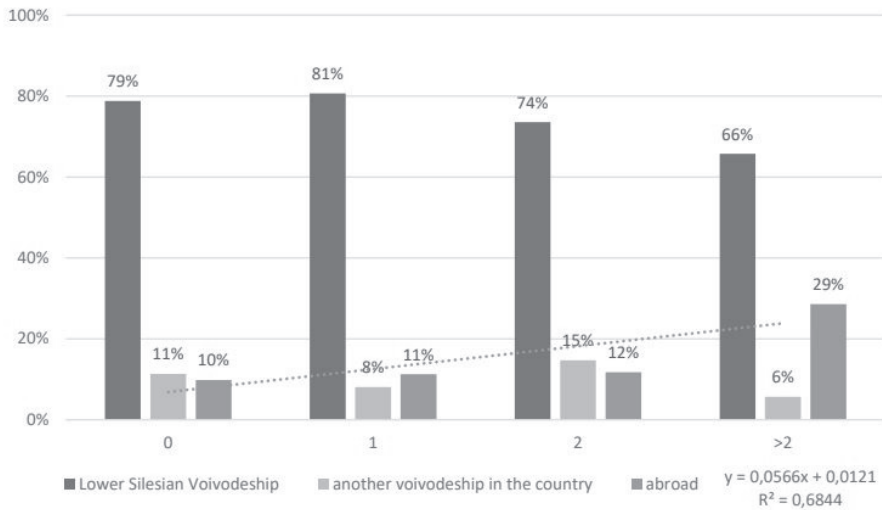
Figure 5. Place of permanent residence and work after graduation among respondents from districts with a low level of unemployment



Source: own study based on survey research



Figure 6. Place of permanent residence and work after graduation among respondents from districts with a high level of unemployment



Source: own study based on survey research

Through a nuanced interpretation of the declared future permanent residence intentions among young individuals in areas characterized by a low level of unemployment (Figure 5), considering the context of family migration experiences, notable trends emerge. Notably, individuals from non-migrating families predominantly express intentions to remain in the voivodeship of their current residence (80%). In contrast, only 36% of respondents from migrating families share the same intention. Moreover, a discernible increase in the percentage of individuals declaring their intention to permanently reside abroad becomes apparent with an escalating number of migrants in the surveyed household.

Specifically, in households without migration experience, a mere 12% of individuals declare an intention to migrate abroad. Conversely, among respondents indicating the presence of more than two migrants in their families, the percentage expressing an inclination toward emigration rises significantly to 50%. The presented data distinctly highlight the substantial influence of family migration experiences and the resultant migration networks on decisions related to youth migration abroad.

This influence becomes particularly noteworthy as it is observed among young people residing in districts characterized by a low unemployment rate, where the ease of securing employment with a favourable salary is relatively high. This un-

derscores the heightened significance of family migration experiences in shaping the proclivity of young individuals toward migration.

The impact of family migration experiences on decisions regarding the selection of a future permanent residence is similarly evident among young individuals originating from districts characterized by a high level of unemployment (Figure 6). In this context, a discernible correlation emerges, indicating an increased inclination to permanently reside outside the country with a rising number of migrants in the respondent's family.

However, it is noteworthy that the percentage of individuals intending to live permanently outside the country, upon completing their education and securing permanent employment, is lower in households where more than two individuals have worked abroad (29%). This contrasts with individuals from districts characterized by a low unemployment rate, where the corresponding figure is higher (50%).

Conversely, in the case of high unemployment districts, a significantly larger proportion of individuals, despite extensive migration experience, express an intention to stay permanently in their place of origin (66%). This is in stark contrast to young people from districts with low unemployment who share a similar migration background, among whom only 36% express a similar inclination.

#### 4. Discussion

The number of young migrants is currently more significant than ever before (Hall, 2022, p. 19), prompting an increased focus in both public and academic discourse on unraveling the intricate mechanisms that underpin the migration behavior of this demographic. Researchers delving into migration issues consistently underscore the multifaceted influences of social, political, economic, and psychological conditions on this phenomenon. Nevertheless, interdisciplinary perspectives on migration research are not given sufficient attention in the existing scientific literature, which tends to concentrate on singular factors determining migration due to the disciplinary orientation of the authors.

In contrast, our research strives to bridge economic and sociological perspectives, offering conclusions that span multiple domains. It is noteworthy that existing migration literature often underscores the significance of economic factors (Bobek, 2020, p. 24–34; Langella and Manning, 2022, p. 11). In this vein, our study's findings align with this emphasis, confirming the hypothesis that

the level of registered unemployment, as gauged by the unemployment rate in the area of origin, exerts a discernible impact on the prevalence of migrants in respondents' households. Specifically, in areas characterized by a more challenging labour market situation, young individuals are more inclined to declare the presence of migrants in their families compared to areas with a relatively favourable labour market scenario.

An interesting finding underscores the compelling influence of family migration capital on the emigration tendencies exhibited by the studied young individuals. A discernible pattern emerged, revealing that the readiness to embark on overseas employment or permanent settlement increased proportionally with the number of migrants in the respondents' households. This substantiates the thesis emphasizing the pivotal role of accumulated migration capital within the family in shaping contemporary youth's attitudes toward emigration.

The notion of migration capital's fundamental importance finds validation in our findings, aligning with established research (Massey *et al.*, 1993, pp. 431–436; Palloni *et al.*, 2001, pp. 1262–1273). The presence of experienced migrants in the immediate environment emerges as a key determinant in the decision-making process to embark on migration. Accumulated migration capital within the family serves as a valuable source of information and support for potential migrants, facilitating the often-intricate process of adapting to an unfamiliar emigration environment (Epstein and Gang, 2006, pp. 652–665; Szyszka, 2016, pp. 143–164).

Significantly, contrary to the assumptions posited by hypotheses 2 and 3, the impact of family experiences was notably more pronounced among young individuals residing in districts with a relatively low level of unemployment, where employment opportunities are more readily available. This suggests that, in situations characterized by a favourable labour market, decisions regarding emigration are not solely dictated by economic factors; instead, a broader spectrum of considerations comes into play.

An intriguing avenue to explore is placing young people's declarations of permanent residence abroad within a non-economic context. When comparing youth from districts with a low level of unemployment (50%) to their counterparts in high unemployment districts (29%), both with the same number of migrants in the household (>2), it becomes apparent that the primary determinants of these migrations may extend beyond the local labour market conditions. Factors such as a desire for personal development, exploration of new cultures, and the acquisition of language skills could play pivotal roles. In this context, migration networks established by members of the immediate family undoubtedly contribute significantly to these non-economic motivations.

## 5. Conclusions

As a result of the analysis of the research material presented in the article, several important conclusions can be drawn regarding the relationship between family migration experiences and young people's declarations in the context of migration.

1. Dependence on the local labour market conditions. There is a clear correlation between unemployment levels and migration experiences. In areas characterized by a challenging situation in the labour market, a higher percentage of respondents declare international migration within their households. This observation implies the local labour market conditions significantly influence the scale of migration.
2. Significance of family migration capital. The analysis underscores the pivotal role of family migration capital in shaping the migration tendencies of young individuals. Findings from the conducted research reveal that as the number of migrants in a household increase, respondents more frequently declare their intention to emigrate. This supports the assertion that migration experiences within the family play a crucial role in shaping attitudes toward emigration.
3. Differential propensity to emigrate among respondents from districts with varying unemployment levels. In areas characterized by low unemployment, young individuals with family migration experiences exhibit a higher inclination to emigrate compared to their counterparts in high unemployment areas. This suggests that factors related to family networks and migration exert a more substantial influence on emigration decisions than the economic conditions of the inhabited districts.
4. Influence of migration experiences on permanent residence choices. The analysis reveals that family migration capital plays a significant role in shaping the preferences of young individuals regarding their permanent place of residence. This influence is particularly pronounced in areas with low unemployment, where individuals from non-migrating families more frequently plan to remain in their voivodeship. Concurrently, the inclination to live abroad increases with the growing number of individuals migrating from a given household. A similar trend is observed among young people in areas with high unemployment, although the impact of family migration networks is marginally weaker in this context.

The research results appear to validate the notion that a comprehensive understanding of the spatial mobility of young individuals and the factors influencing

attitudes toward emigration necessitates a focus on micro-scale conditions. Specifically, the presence and nature of migration experiences within the immediate family emerge as key determinants. Consequently, the obtained results affirm the significance of non-economic factors when analysing contemporary international migrations through the lens of migration networks.

The identified patterns significantly contribute to our understanding of the role of social capital in migration processes. Moreover, they provide a foundation for more in-depth research on this phenomenon, considering the broader context of economic and cultural conditions.

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