

## **CARIM EAST – CONSORTIUM FOR APPLIED RESEARCH ON INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION**

Co-financed by the European Union

# ***Eternal Return: Present-Day Problems Associated with Social Reintegration of Ukrainian Labor Migrants Arriving in Ukraine from the EU (based on sociological research results)***

**Kateryna Ivashchenko**

CARIM-East Research Report 2013/06

**CARIM-East**  
**Creating an Observatory of Migration East of Europe**

**Research Report**  
**CARIM-East RR 2013/06**

**Eternal Return:**  
**Present-Day Problems Associated with Social Reintegration of Ukrainian**  
**Labor Migrants Arriving in Ukraine from the EU**  
**(based on sociological research results)**

**Kateryna Ivashchenko**

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Kateryna Ivashchenko, *Eternal Return: Present-Day Problems Associated with Social Reintegration of Ukrainian Labor Migrants Arriving in Ukraine from the EU* (based on sociological research results), CARIM-East RR 2013/06, Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies, San Domenico di Fiesole (FI): European University Institute, 2013.

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European University Institute  
Badia Fiesolana  
I – 50014 San Domenico di Fiesole (FI)  
Italy

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## **CARIM-East – Creating an Observatory East of Europe**

This project which is co-financed by the European Union is the first migration observatory focused on the Eastern Neighbourhood of the European Union and covers all countries of the Eastern Partnership initiative (Belarus, Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova, Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan) and Russian Federation.

The project's two main themes are:

- (1) migration from the region to the European Union (EU) focusing in particular on countries of emigration and transit on the EU's eastern border; and
- (2) intraregional migration in the post-Soviet space.

The project started on 1 April 2011 as a joint initiative of the European University Institute (EUI), Florence, Italy (the lead institution), and the Centre of Migration Research (CMR) at the University of Warsaw, Poland (the partner institution).

CARIM researchers undertake comprehensive and policy-oriented analyses of very diverse aspects of human mobility and related labour market developments east of the EU and discuss their likely impacts on the fast evolving socio-economic fabric of the six Eastern Partners and Russia, as well as that of the European Union.

In particular, CARIM-East:

- builds a broad network of national experts from the region representing all principal disciplines focused on human migration, labour mobility and national development issues (e.g. demography, law, economics, sociology, political science).
- develops a comprehensive database to monitor migration stocks and flows in the region, relevant legislative developments and national policy initiatives;
- undertakes, jointly with researchers from the region, systematic and *ad hoc* studies of emerging migration issues at regional and national levels.
- provides opportunities for scholars from the region to participate in workshops organized by the EUI and CMR, including academic exchange opportunities for PhD candidates;
- provides forums for national and international experts to interact with policymakers and other stakeholders in the countries concerned.

Results of the above activities are made available for public consultation through the website of the project: <http://www.carim-east.eu/>

*For more information:*

CARIM-East

Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies (EUI)

Convento

Via delle Fontanelle 19

50014 San Domenico di Fiesole

Italy

Tel: +39 055 46 85 817

Fax: + 39 055 46 85 770

Email: [carim.east@eui.eu](mailto:carim.east@eui.eu)

Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies

<http://www.eui.eu/RSCAS/>

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## **Executive Summary**

In the present paper Ukrainian case study is used to examine certain research aspects associated with the research of return migration and subsequent social reintegration of migrants in the country of origin. In this paper by return migrants we mean those who in the post-Soviet period have acquired experience of legal or illegal temporary (in the course of less than three months) stay abroad (in this case in the EU member states) with the purpose of employment and who have by now returned to their home country – Ukraine.

The present analysis focuses on four key aspects of re-inclusion of returning migrants: 1) legal re-adaptation, 2) resolution of housing-related problems, 3) employment issue/ conditions for starting a business, and 4) family reunion and socio-cultural re-adaptation to the local community.

This research is based on secondary data: analysis of the way the issue of return migration is reflected in political and scientific debate, as well as on results of new empirical studies carried out by the research team of the Institute of Sociology (with the participation of the author), such as: annual nationwide surveys (2005-2012), in-depth interviews with return migrants (2011-2012), focus groups with children of migrants (2012), as well as theme-based survey on migration in the city of Kyiv and in the Lviv Region (2012).

Special attention is paid to the fact that current economic instability in the main EU recipient countries is responsible for the growing volume of return migration to Ukraine. This is primarily true for those labor migrants for whom benefits associated with temporary stay abroad are canceled out by the increasing risk of wage decline, social vulnerability in case of unemployment and legalization problems. However, over 80% of surveyed labor migrants named family circumstances as the main reason for their return to the home country and only around 10% indicated that decision to come back had been motivated by unemployment in the destination country or by new economic opportunities in Ukraine.

Based on research results a conclusion is made that return migration allows overcoming or mitigating the disruption of family ties, but the absence of opportunities for efficient reintegration in the national labor market and entrepreneurial environment prevents full-scale social reintegration of migrants. Only one tenth of surveyed respondents believe that majority of return migrants manage to set up their own business or contribute to the qualitative improvement of the situation in their locality (for instance, contributing to the improvement of the local infrastructure, creating new jobs). With the exception of improved material standing and housing conditions for migrants and members of their families, labor migration does not bring about any significant structural transformations in the legal, social and cultural domains in the country of origin. For the majority of return migrants the depth of systemic crisis in contemporary Ukraine touching upon fundamental civil, political, socio-economic and cultural rights of an individual predetermines the need to pursue new migration plans within transforming migration systems with redistributed migration tracks.

As for recommendations on how to improve the national migration policy, it is suggested that Ukraine introduces the best international practices of providing support to return migration and ensuring successful reintegration of migrants. Introduction of these practices is possible only if corruption is reduced and conditions for economic liberalization are established in the country. Return migration not backed by necessary political decisions does not bring sustainable dividends to the state and society and creates a precedent of marginalization and new exodus of qualified workforce from Ukraine.

## 1. Introduction

Increasing economic recession and associated socio-economic disturbances in the majority of EU member states caused the increase in the flow of return migration to the countries of origin. As far as in the course of the last two decades Ukraine has been one of ten most significant donors of workforce in Europe<sup>1</sup>, “narrowing down of the space of opportunities”<sup>2</sup> for employment with acceptable working conditions and competitive wages for labor migrants from Eastern Europe resulted in the active return of Ukrainian labor migrants to their home country.

According to the Eurostat data, the level of unemployment in 27 EU member states reached 10.7%<sup>3</sup> in October 2012 (25.913 mln. citizens have the status of unemployed). This figure is ten times higher than the official level of unemployment in Ukraine<sup>4</sup>. According to Ukrainian embassies, five most popular destinations of labor migration from Ukraine to Europe have traditionally been Poland (300 thousand migrants), Italy (200 thousand), Czech Republic (200 thousand), Portugal (150 thousand) and Spain (100 thousand)<sup>5</sup>. Current level of unemployment in these countries varies from 7.3% in Czech Republic, 10.4% in Poland and 11.1% in Italy to 16.3% in Portugal and 26.2% in Spain<sup>6</sup>. Analysts estimate that economic decline in the EU will last until the end of 2012 and in 2013 stagnation is likely to start<sup>7</sup>. The economic situation remains unstable, especially in Southern European countries, and in the short run it is difficult to count on the change of situation in the European labor market for the better. Hence one should expect the trend of increasing return migration, as well as further redistribution of outgoing migration tracks to become stronger<sup>8</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Data of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development <http://www.oecd.org> for 2011 (see: <http://delo.ua/world/ukraincy-desjatye-v-spiske-mi-161165/>).

<sup>2</sup> Borderline of opportunities // *Correspondent*, No.1 (540), 11 January 2013, – P.17 [in Russian].

<sup>3</sup> Rise of unemployment from September 2012 was 1.1%. *Eurostat Newsrelease*, 170/2012, 30 November 2012 (see: [http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/cache/ITY\\_PUBLIC/3-30112012-BP/EN/3-30112012-BP-EN.PDF](http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/cache/ITY_PUBLIC/3-30112012-BP/EN/3-30112012-BP-EN.PDF))

<sup>4</sup> As of October 2012, officially announced level of unemployment in Ukraine is 1.4% (399.9 thousand citizens of employable age are registered as unemployed) and is characterized by the downward trend. At the same time, labor market experts estimate that almost 5 more mln. people work illegally and are not registered. The level of unemployment in Ukraine calculated on the basis of ILO methodology was 7.1% in the second quarter of 2012. See information with reference to the report of the Ukrainian State Statistics Committee: [http://news.zn.ua/ECONOMICS/ofitsialnyy\\_uroven\\_bezrobotitsy\\_v\\_ukraine\\_v\\_10\\_raz\\_nizhe,\\_chem\\_v\\_evrosoyuzi-112192.html](http://news.zn.ua/ECONOMICS/ofitsialnyy_uroven_bezrobotitsy_v_ukraine_v_10_raz_nizhe,_chem_v_evrosoyuzi-112192.html)

<sup>5</sup> *Labour Migration Assessment for the WNIS Region* / IOM, Kyiv, 2007, p.11.

<sup>6</sup> *Eurostat Newsrelease*, 170/2012, 30 November 2012.

<sup>7</sup> Reference to the overview by analysts of one of the leading global banks UBS AG, see: [http://www.ukrudprom.ua/news/Ekonomicheskij\\_spad\\_v\\_evrozone\\_prodlgitsya.html](http://www.ukrudprom.ua/news/Ekonomicheskij_spad_v_evrozone_prodlgitsya.html)

<sup>8</sup> Despite the fact that over the recent years Ukraine has become a country of transit to the EU and a recipient of numerous foreign refugees and illegal migrants (for more detailed information see the above-mentioned CARIM-East paper: E. Ivaschenko-Stadnik (2012, *Social and political implications of labor migration in Ukraine in the mirror of the sociological analysis*), in the present paper attention is focused on the issue of return migration and associated social reintegration of Ukrainian citizens, as in our point of view this phenomenon is much more large-scale and crucial from the standpoint of Ukrainian national interests at this stage. One should note that according to the Ukrainian State Statistics Service the number of immigrants legally arriving in Ukraine tends to decrease lately (from 42.5 thousand in 2002 to 31.7 thousand in 2011). Furthermore over 70% of migrants come from the near abroad, primarily Russia, Belarus and Moldova; significant share of these migrants have Ukrainian roots and reintegration opportunities comparable to those of Ukrainian citizens who lived abroad for several years. The inflow of migrants with a different ethnical background (Chinese, Turks, Syrians, Jordanians etc.) planning to live and work in Ukraine remains insignificant for now due to low competitive ability of the Ukrainian labor market and instability of conditions for business development. And although a share of population that does not identify itself with Ukraine as a country of origin can thereafter grow gradually and result in low motivation towards sustainable, rather than transit, participation in the domestic labor market and full-scale involvement in political and cultural processes in Ukraine, in the short-run the problem of return migration

Starting to examine the topic of return labor migration based on the case study of Ukraine, one should correctly assess the scale and key parameters of this phenomenon, comparing Ukraine to other CIS and Eastern European countries.

First, Ukrainian citizens, who left the country after disintegration of the Soviet Union and the country's independence in 1991, formed one of the most significant migration flows to the EU member states. Despite the fact that Russia was and is one of the dominant destinations for migrants from Ukraine (based on the estimate of the Ukrainian embassy, there are around 1 mln. Ukrainian citizens in Russia), the total scale of migration to the EU member states, taking into account illegal transitions, exceeds the 'Russian track', which gives some Western researchers a reason to refer to Ukraine as 'Europe's Mexico' (Düvell 2006: c.1).

Second, unlike numerous political migrants, displaced persons and refugees who were forced to leave conflict zones in the former USSR, for the overwhelming majority of migrants from Ukraine departure was a result of a free individual choice and search for optimal survival strategies in the context of the national labor market crisis, which predetermines the dominance of the economic basis for possible reintegration of this group upon their return to the home country.

Third, migration flow from Ukraine was and is characterized by the predominant share of illegal (according to the estimates of Western experts, up to 95% of the total number of transitions) and circular migrations (up to 70-80% of the total number)<sup>9</sup> (Markov 2010: p.9; Düvell 2006: c.3) with relatively short time of stay in the recipient country. As a rule departure to this or that state is temporary and migration tracks can be modified depending on the changing economic or legal principles, however the total period of circulations can be rather long and homecomings can be short-term, which predetermines profound economic and considerable socio-cultural exclusion of persons for whom migration gradually becomes a way of life (it is symbolic that in Ukrainian language labor migration is succinctly referred to as 'zarobitchanstvo' – this word means not only occupation / voluntary migration of labor resources, but also the way of thinking, an existential culture of the group)<sup>10</sup>.

Fourth, disunited flows of 'new wave' Ukrainian migrants (those who departed after 1991), unlike, for instance, similar flows from Georgia, Armenia or Poland, have not formed a monolithic community, that would be internally integrated and would maintain organized external ties with the country of origin prompting the government and relevant institutions in the home country to focus on resolving a wide range of migrants' problems: from issues of legal and social protection in the recipient country to creation of special programs aimed to promote return and re-adaptation in the country of origin.

Fifth, unlike the neighboring Eastern European countries (Hungary, Poland, Romania, Slovakia), that were also characterized by intensive outgoing labor migration in the course of the last two decades, Ukraine not only fails to demonstrate the steady development of the national economy and gradual improvement of the national labor market (Vidovic 2001: 27; Gruber 2004: 118, 199; Shnyrkov 2006), but is also quickly moving away from the real European integration<sup>11</sup> and associated

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deserves more attention in the context of state integration policy due to the risk of outflow of qualified national workforce from the country and challenges associated with the national demographic situation.

<sup>9</sup> According to the estimate of Ukrainian research team led by Igor Markov, over 80% of Ukrainian migrants plan to return to their home country; almost 70% have a family in Ukraine and staying abroad they maintain close ties with relatives in the home country; 90% implement plans for the future in Ukraine (buy real estate, pay for children's education etc.). For more detailed information see CARIM-East explanatory note: E. Ivaschenko-Stadnik (2012), *Developing Circular Mobility: Observations from Ukraine*, 8 p.

<sup>10</sup> For more detailed information see CARIM-East paper: E. Ivaschenko-Stadnik (2012), *Social and political implications of labor migration in Ukraine in the mirror of the sociological analysis*, 36 p.

<sup>11</sup> Difficulties that Ukraine has experienced on the path of euro-integration in the past half a year became one of the key issues in public political debates. See: interview with former Head of the European Union Delegation to Ukraine, Ambassador Jose Manuel Pinto Teixeira <http://interfax.com.ua/news/general/115982.html#.ULq1MGeJmuI>; fragments of TV debate between the representatives of opposition parties, diplomats and experts at one of the main Ukrainian opposition TV channels TBi [http://lb.ua/news/2012/11/30/180783\\_tv.html](http://lb.ua/news/2012/11/30/180783_tv.html); statement of Ukrainian Prime Minister

legalization opportunities and employment programs. In the context of the visa regime tightening in the Schengen area this complicates further development of the European migration track for Ukrainian citizens, narrows down for them the choice of possible individual survival strategies and contributes to the worsening of opportunities for self-fulfillment both in the home country and abroad.

Thus, talking about the problem of reintegration of labor migrants who stayed in the EU and came back, are coming back or plan to come back to Ukraine, one should take into account that we are talking about numerous<sup>12</sup>, but statistically unaccounted for, disunited and diverse group of persons, who left Ukraine at different moments of time and stayed abroad for different periods and on different terms. Although most migrants declare their intention to return home sooner or later, their current return to the home country is to a large extent predetermined by the current economic crisis in recipient countries and may only be temporary – if reasons and opportunity come up, they will leave again.

Just like any space in the ‘eternal return’ paradigm, the space of migrations is “infinite, cyclical and irreversible” – it provides motivated individuals with potential “possibility to rule their lives” in this space (Burks 2000). Does Ukraine have a chance to put an end to the circle of departures and returns of a significant number of its employable and qualified citizens offering them decent conditions for fulfillment of their aspirations in the home country? Can migration experience of citizens bring benefits to Ukrainian economy and society and contribute to their modernization and democratization? And if so, under what conditions would return to Ukraine not be perceived by migrants as a temporary and forced period of personal stagnation and social isolation?

The present paper relies on monitoring and special theme-based sociological studies to consider the key socio-legal, economic and institutional aspects that predetermine the climate for reintegration of those Ukrainian citizens who decided to return to their home country – for some time or for good. Attention is paid to socio-demographic and qualification characteristics of the returning migrants (who they are, why they return and for what period they return), as well as the main aspects of their re-inclusion: 1) legal re-adaptation, 2) resolution of housing issues, 3) employment issue / conditions for starting a business, and 4) family reunion and socio-cultural re-adaptation in the local community. Research relies on the results of the new empirical studies carried out by the research team at the Institute of Sociology (with participation of the author), including:

- Nationwide monitoring “Ukrainian Society”, Institute of Sociology, Ukrainian National Academy of Sciences (2005-2012)<sup>13</sup>;
- Focus group with migrants’ children (2012), CARIM-East project<sup>14</sup>;
- Ukrainian part of the THEMIS project, devoted to the study of contemporary changes in migration systems of recipient countries and countries of origin, including in-depth interviews with return migrants and members of their families (2011-2012) and the survey of respondents (stratified random sampling with quota screening at the final stage) in the city of Kyiv and in the Lviv Region (2012)<sup>15</sup>.

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Nikolay Azarov on the current status of relations with the EU <http://news.intv.ua/news/51866-azarov-rasskazyval-eschto-evrointegraciya-ukrainy-zavisit-ot-nih-myach-nahoditsya-na-vashem-pole-video.html>

<sup>12</sup> Experts note that there is no statistics backed with documents with regards to the number of Ukrainian citizens who left the EU after crisis. In informal estimates figures vary from 800 thousand to 5 mln. (although the latter figure seems considerably exaggerated to us). This number automatically includes circular migrants, including seasonal workers who do not aim to legalize in the EU, but who feel the costs of the crisis and are involved in the outflow. See Babich D. Why labor workers come home / Vremya.UA, 12 October 2012 <http://www.vremia.ua/rubrics/problemy/2437.php> [in Russian]

<sup>13</sup> Representative sample – 1800 respondents.

<sup>14</sup> Materials of the focus group with 6 children of labor migrants who are in the EU member states are presented in greater detail in the paper “Social and political implications of labor migration” (CARIM-East, 2012).

<sup>15</sup> THEMIS (Theorizing the Evolution of European Migration Systems) – is a four-year long academic project (2010-2013), aimed at studying various patterns of migration to Europe. Project focuses on conditions under which people make decisions regarding the need for migration to another country and on how migration steps of individual citizens gradually transform into migration system, when migration becomes massive. The project is organized by the International

## 2. Brief overview of Ukrainian political and scientific discourse in the field of return migration

According to many experts monitoring and evaluating the development of national migration policy, Ukraine is one of those countries where the rate of legislation adoption always considerably surpasses the degree of readiness of public institutions and society (Mozol 2001; Mosyondz 2002; Migration trends 2008: p.43). According to the sociologist I. Pribytkova, both outgoing and return migrations are primarily determined by the individual choice of people<sup>16</sup>. Migration-related social factors are difficult to manage and develop much faster than weakly coordinated agencies and institutions meant to control them. Nevertheless, both politicians and experts acknowledge the need to improve migration policy, particularly control over labor migration and integration of return migrants – primarily within the social policy of the state that is currently experiencing large-scale economic crisis.

Although presidential decrees and governmental regulations usually rather clearly outline the task of developing and implementing programs of social adaptation and reintegration of migrants, the state migration policy of Ukraine lacks systemic approach and remains incapable of expeditiously resolving pressing problems in this field. Neither establishment of the State Migration Service in 2009<sup>17</sup>, nor adoption of the State Migration Policy Concept in 2011<sup>18</sup> improved the general situation in terms of “creation of favorable conditions for the return to Ukraine of qualified professionals and workers, whom the national economy needs, as well as for their integration into Ukrainian society and legal support” (quoted from the text of the Migration Policy Concept). Two large-scale documents – Program of Economic Reforms for 2010-2014 “Prosperous society, competitive economy, efficient state” and “On approval of the action plan to implement the Strategy of Demographic Development up to 2015” – both declare strategic position of the state with regards to preservation and development of the human capital, increase of employment rate and reduction of unemployment. However, analysis of the main socio-economic indicators demonstrates the absence of considerable progress in implementation of these strategies (Socio-Economic Development of Ukraine 2012: 18).

Therefore, along with development of relevant legislation and institutions<sup>19</sup> and announcement by public officials of the state strategies to regulate labor migration and encourage the return of Ukrainian citizens to their home country, there is a hot debate in Ukraine on whether the policy pursued by the country leadership contributes to achieving the declared objectives. Representatives of opposition parties regularly make public statements about inefficiency of the oligarchic structure of Ukrainian economy, about the absence of strategic understanding of the meaning of democratic reforms and lack of good will needed for interaction with the civil society, without which economic recovery is impossible. In these debates significant attention is paid to the image of Ukrainian labor migrants, to brain drain and lost opportunities for the country:

“We are not against big companies, we just want to support people who are only starting their business. For Ukraine the fall of the exchange rate of hryvna results in panic, because we produce nothing but metal. New, different leadership should revive the investment climate. It is necessary

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Migration Institute in Oxford (UK). Extended interviews were carried out within the project with 45 former migrants from Ukraine who for a certain amount of time worked, studied or stayed in Europe for different reasons (particularly, in four EU member states that actively accept labor migrants – UK, Netherlands, Norway and Portugal), as well as 420 structured interviews with respondents in the city of Kyiv and the Lviv Region (including those who have or do not have previous migration experience). They were aimed at studying public opinion about changes in the regions encouraging migration or, on the contrary, containing it. For more detailed information see the project website: <http://www.imi.ox.ac.uk/research-projects/themis>

<sup>16</sup> Expert interview with I. Pribytkova taken by the author in October 2012.

<sup>17</sup> See: <http://dmsu.gov.ua/>

<sup>18</sup> See: <http://soderkoping.org.ua/page31881.html>

<sup>19</sup> Legal and institutional basis in the context of integration and reintegration of migrants is considered in greater detail within the module of the CARIM-East project “Legal Framework of Migration”.

to motivate people who left Ukraine, for them to come back with their money and skills” (Andrey Senchenko, member of parliament from the All-Ukrainian Union “Fatherland”)<sup>20</sup>.

“It is because of corruption and monopolism that in the course of the last two decades we have been listening to stories about economic growth, while absolute majority of citizens have been dreaming about incomes of the population in pre-default Greece. ... What is an alternative? Release the economy from the clutches of corruption. Offer the best possible opportunities for unhindered functioning of competitive businesses, from small shops to large investments. Finally, uncover the human potential of the country. Ukraine’s human potential is worth trillions. And the leadership deliberately wastes, devaluates and brings it to degradation, primarily by constraining business activity and pushing people to emigration” (Pavel Zherebrovsky, member of parliament, leader of the party Ukrainian Platform “Sobor”)<sup>21</sup>.

“All-Ukrainian Union “Svoboda” [“Freedom”] demands favorable conditions for return of all Ukrainian migrant workers to the Motherland. Money and property earned by them ought to be acknowledged by the state as investment not subject to taxation, provided that they are invested into entrepreneurial activities in Ukraine. Only under these conditions Ukrainians who wander in strange lands will come back to Ukraine, applying work experience acquired overseas for development of our economy, investing funds earned by hard labor into development of Ukrainian economy. Return to Ukraine of a third of employable-age citizens will be one of decisive factors of Ukraine’s modernization and its entry into the ranks of developed states” (Oleg Tyagnybok, member of parliament, leader of the All-Ukrainian Union “Svoboda”)<sup>22</sup>.

Research community also takes an active part in debates about migration policy at scientific conferences, in the media, at round tables and during public debates, but has no common perspective on reintegration of migrants and their potential role in society. On the one hand, sociological studies – monitoring study “Ukrainian Society” by the Institute of Sociology, Ukrainian Academy of Sciences (1994-2002), selective survey of households in Kyiv, Chernovtsy and Prylbychi by the National Institute of International Security Problems (1994, 1995-98, 1999-2002) and nationwide selective survey on labor migration by the State Statistics Committee (2008) – confirm considerable adaptive potential of labor migrants, their rationalism in choosing life strategies and competitive forms of behavior in the labor market: “labor migrants are market idea missionaries” (Pribytkova 2003: 124). On the other hand, attention is drawn to the fact that the share of real entrepreneurs who use the money earned abroad to develop business remains small and money is mostly used for consumption (Pirozhkov 2003: 126). Demographers explain this by the fact that if the most active young, mobile and qualified labor migrants, including potential employers, return to Ukraine, they do so temporarily. Their potential is still much more valued abroad and employment terms offered there are better even in the times of crisis. Hence low-qualified workers are the ones who are more willing to return to their home country, as well as those for whom downward social mobility was typical overseas (Libanova 2011; Poznyak 2012: 3,4) or those who were forced to come back due to family or other personal reasons.

In this regard in Ukraine, just like in Russia (Bobylev 2009: 61,62) and other post-Soviet states, one can talk about two expert points of view on migration policy in terms of regulation of the labor migration flow and policy with regards to migrants’ possible return: 1) the state ought to take measures against the outflow of labor migrants, encouraging their conscious and voluntary return to their home country, as far as after the leading world economies overcome the consequences of financial crisis the demand for workforce will be even more acute for all countries without exception and competition for qualified labor resources will be even harsher. Ukrainian economy will start to develop actively and will face workforce deficit in 2014—2015 (this point of view is voiced, for

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<sup>20</sup> Materials of the round table at Gorshenin Institute on 29 November 2012.  
[http://institute.gorshenin.ua/news/932\\_eksperti\\_obsudili\\_chego\\_stoit.html](http://institute.gorshenin.ua/news/932_eksperti_obsudili_chego_stoit.html)

<sup>21</sup> Zhebrovsky P. (2012), Locust economy // *Ukrainian Truth (Ukrainskaya Pravda)*, 29 November 2012 [in Russian].  
<http://www.pravda.com.ua/rus/columns/2012/11/29/6978338/>

<sup>22</sup> Statement of O. Tyagnybok in front of voters in the Lviv Region, 4 September 2012.  
<http://www.svoboda.org.ua/diyalnist/novyny/032410/>

instance, by demographer E. Libanova); 2) the state should not create barriers on the path of labor migration, as far as it is a form of citizens' self-organization guaranteed by their constitutional rights. Migrations in search of better living conditions and employment are inevitable, especially in the context of crisis economy – “people always search for a better place to live” is the main principle of “self-organized process of social behavior” (Pribytkova 2009). These viewpoints are not mutually exclusive – both are in favor of migration policy liberalization, improvement of socio-economic conditions for integration of the population involved in labor migration into competitive national labor market and creation of favorable conditions for investments to be made into national economy by Ukrainian labor migrants and Ukrainian diaspora.

It is noteworthy that in Ukraine there are no special programs for return migrants willing to start their own business and no special taxation terms for those who plan to invest money into the local economy. On the contrary, even though the “Plan of measures regarding the integration of migrants into Ukrainian society” was adopted in 2011 by the Ukrainian Cabinet of Ministers<sup>23</sup>, many steps that the government plans to undertake in the nearest future will only worsen the position of small and medium businesses and members of households depending on financial transfers from overseas. For instance, there are measures envisaging additional tax on purchase and sale of foreign currency hitting the inflow of funds coming to Ukraine by means of financial transfers to migrants' families<sup>24</sup> (there is a project registered at Verkhovna Rada envisaging a 10-15% tax on such operations)<sup>25</sup>. Furthermore, in November 2012 the National Bank adopted a regulation making it mandatory to convert foreign currency transfers sent to physical persons (residents and non-residents) from abroad at the Ukrainian interbank currency market, if those transfers are equal or exceed the equivalent of 150 thousand hryvnas a month (approximately 18,700 US dollars). This means that for every large financial transfer from abroad its recipient will lose a considerable amount due to the currency exchange rate difference (as far as the exchange rate set by the National Bank is below the rate offered by private banks) and will also bear the risks associated with instability of savings in a quickly devaluating national currency<sup>26</sup>. For labor migrants and their families financial losses as a result of above-mentioned novelties can be rather considerable, however the issue of protection of their financial interests has been raised neither in public discussions, nor in political debates.

One should emphasize that in Ukraine there are no designated public institutions that would offer informational, organizational and legal support to returning labor migrants and their families. Recently adopted state budget for 2013, just like previous budgets of independent Ukraine, does not envisage separate articles on funding for these activities. As a result, according to G. Seleschuk, head of the

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<sup>23</sup> Regulation No. 653-r of 15 June 2011. The plan envisages in 2011-2015 “informing, including using Internet, Ukrainian migrants, who returned to Ukraine on employment, entrepreneurship, social security and healthcare issues” (responsible agencies – Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Economic Development, Ministry of Interior, State Migration Service, Ministry of Social Policy, Ministry of Culture, Ministry of Youth and Sports, Ministry of Healthcare, Pension Fund), as well as “rendering psychological assistance to Ukrainian migrants who returned to Ukraine” (responsible agencies – Ministry of Youth and Sports, Ministry of Healthcare, Ministry of Social Policy, Ministry of Interior, State Customs Service, Council of Ministers of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea, Kyiv and Sevastopol municipal administrations). See: <http://document.ua/pro-zatverdzhennja-planu-zahodiv-shodo-integraciyi-migrantiv-doc61615.html>

<sup>24</sup> According to estimates of the World Bank and information of the National Bank of Ukraine, the volume of remittances from abroad in the second quarter of 2012 constituted up to 4% of Ukrainian GDP.  
See: [http://www.business.ua/articles/money/Obem\\_denezhnyh\\_perevodov\\_iz%20%80%93za\\_rubezha\\_sostavil\\_\\_VVP-37676/](http://www.business.ua/articles/money/Obem_denezhnyh_perevodov_iz%20%80%93za_rubezha_sostavil__VVP-37676/)

<sup>25</sup> See: Draft law regarding tax on currency exchange was submitted to Rada // *Economic Truth (Economichna Pravda)*, 19 November 2012 <http://www.epravda.com.ua/news/2012/11/19/345140/> [in Ukrainian]; Verkhovna Rada will soon consider a draft law suggesting to oblige physical persons to pay 15% tax to the Pension Fund when selling currency // *Power and Money (Vlast I Dengi)*, 19 November 2012 [http://www.vid.org.ua/rus/news/page\\_11/vr-zavtra-rassmotrit-zakonoproekt-predlagayushciy-obyazat-fizlic-pri-prodaje-valyuty-platit-15-sbora-v-pf](http://www.vid.org.ua/rus/news/page_11/vr-zavtra-rassmotrit-zakonoproekt-predlagayushciy-obyazat-fizlic-pri-prodaje-valyuty-platit-15-sbora-v-pf)

<sup>26</sup> See: National Bank of Ukraine obliged to convert into hryvnas remittances in foreign currency to physical persons in Ukraine exceeding 150 thousand hryvnas // *Information portal BANKI.UA*, 19 November 2012 <http://www.banki.ua/news/lenta/?id=207711>

non-state organization Commission for Migrants of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church (one of the few NGOs supporting return migrants ('povertantsi' in Ukrainian<sup>27</sup>), out of 70% labor migrants who would like to come back to their home country only around 20% do so<sup>28</sup>. Negative experience of post-migration adaptation of many return migrants is broadcast by social networks and mass media and reinforces the stereotype of 'unfriendly Motherland' that is not capable of ensuring social and legal protection of its citizens and does not look forward to the return of its citizens. In the meantime, one can make practice-oriented conclusions regarding the national policy in the field of return migration, relying on the studies of labor migrants returning or planning to return to their home country, as well as data on the structural and individual factors contributing to or preventing their successful social reintegration in the country of origin.

### 3. Main problems associated with re-inclusion of return migrants: research results

Re-inclusion of return migrants is a very special and controversial phenomenon. On the one hand, those who lived and worked in a different cultural environment are potential carriers of knowledge and skills that might be unavailable in the country of origin<sup>29</sup>, and the longer the stay in another country, the more different it is from the country of origin – the more significant are individual achievements and 'upgrades'<sup>30</sup>. On the other hand, long-term absence from the country of origin is inevitably associated with the risk of emotional withdrawal from once familiar everyday environment, as well as profound exclusion, falling out of the role, social, legal and cultural contexts. In this sense, according to the definition of sociologist J. Hunt, return migrants are "a mixture of successes and failures" (Hunt 2008: 830). In-depth interviews carried out by us indicate that application of experience obtained overseas and fulfillment of new life aspirations depend not so much on the power of personal motivation, but rather on adaptability to norms, values and principles of society, as well as readiness of society and its institutions to accept those who have returned and to offer them a wide range of social opportunities.

Who are return migrants? How can their reintegration be characterized? What is their influence on the shaping of societal principles with regards to migration in Ukraine?

#### 3.1 Socio-demographic portrait of return migrants: who they are, where they go, why they leave and why return.

The data of our survey confirm that from mid-1990s the European track of migration gradually became dominant for Ukrainian citizens: around one quarter of respondents with migration experience of three months and more stayed in Russia and over 50% – in the EU member states (including Poland, Czech Republic, Hungary, Italy, Portugal etc.). According to the monitoring research "Ukrainian Society", from 1994 to 2012 the so-called far abroad gradually surpassed Russia as the most preferred migration route (see fig. 1) and faced the greatest challenges of the global economic crisis and associated social costs forcing migrants to come back to their home country.

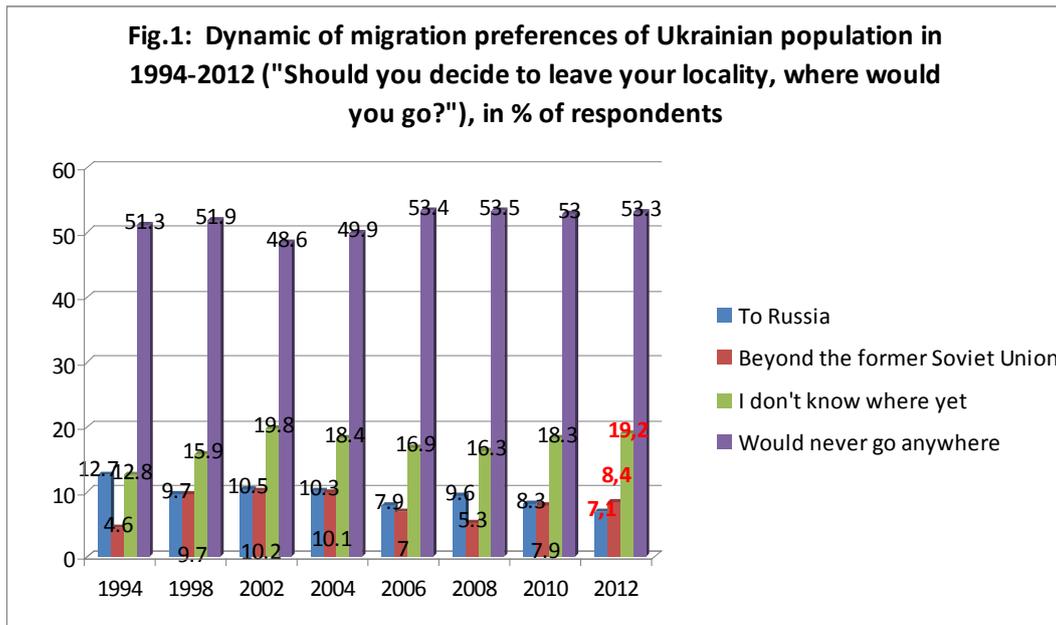
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<sup>27</sup> The term was introduced by His Beatitude Cardinal Lyubomir Guzar, former head of Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church and member of the "1<sup>st</sup> of December" group uniting the leading representatives of Ukrainian secular and clerical intellectuals for the protection of universal human values in Ukraine. See: <http://projects.zn.ua/guzar>

<sup>28</sup> See: Interview with Grigory Seleschuk, head of UGCC Commission for Migrants on legal protection of Ukrainian migrants and UGCC suggestions in this field // *Religious Information Service of Ukraine RISU*, 12 October 2009 [http://risu.org.ua/ua/index/expert\\_thought/interview/32206/](http://risu.org.ua/ua/index/expert_thought/interview/32206/)

<sup>29</sup> Most return migrants who had qualified jobs in the EU during our in-depth interviews emphasized that they believe experience acquired by them overseas to be unique and valuable for their personal growth.

<sup>30</sup> Advantages of experience acquired during the stay in far abroad were noted even by children of labor migrants during our focus group discussion: (quotation) "External migration – it is more positive, while internal does not change anything... Here efficiency coefficient is zero".



\* Figure prepared by the author on the basis of the data presented in the volume *Ukrainian Society: 1992-2012. State and Dynamic of Change. Sociological Monitoring* / Ed. by V. Vorona and M. Shulga, – Kyiv, 2008, p. 613 [in Ukrainian]

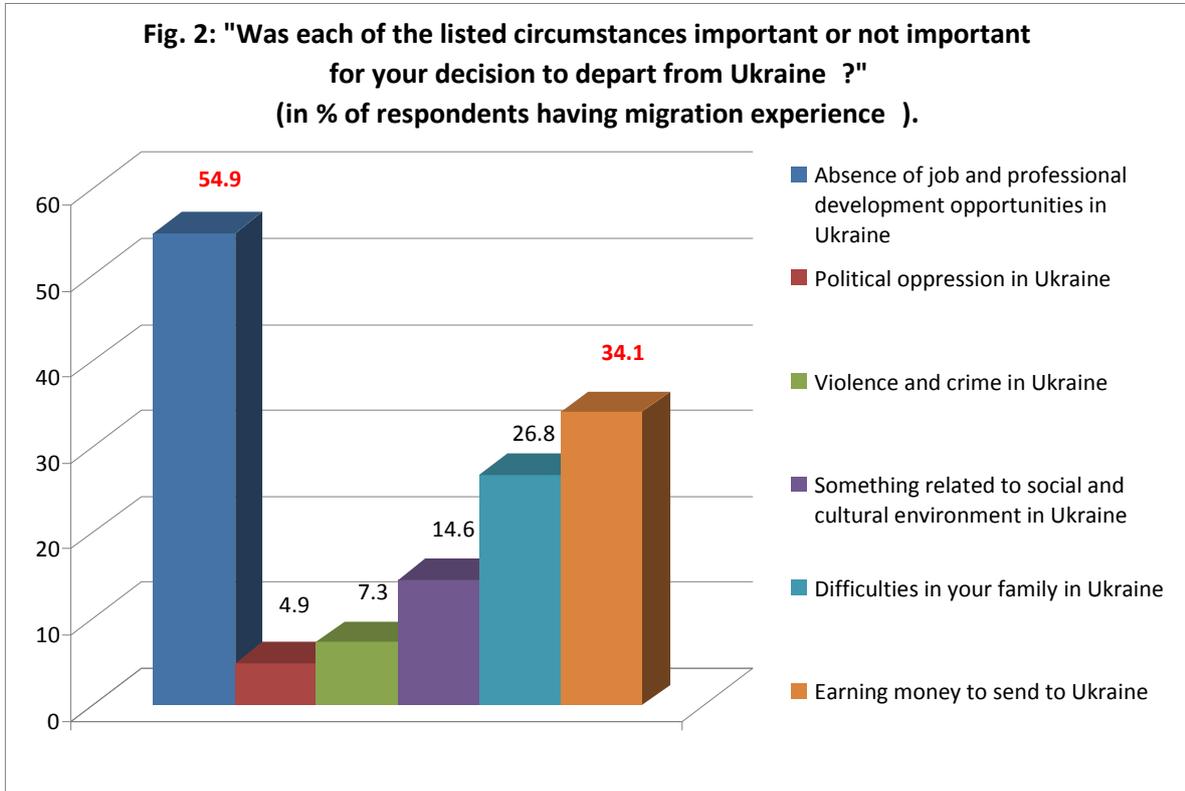
The data of in-depth interviews confirm the trend previously noted by demographers: return migrants, unlike circular ones, are traditionally more oriented towards countries that are not among the main recipients of Ukrainian workforce<sup>31</sup> – majority of our respondents who willingly returned to Ukraine after a long (as rule longer than a year) period abroad had stayed in the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, Norway. Circular migrants from the main recipient countries, especially EU member states sharing a border with Ukraine (Poland, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary) return unwillingly and with less clear plans for the nearest future. It is not yet clear whether they will stay long in Ukraine or will soon leave again. In fact, employment visas in that part of Europe have traditionally been easier to obtain (Ukraine has bilateral interstate agreements with a number of these countries in the field of social security and employment of migrants<sup>32</sup>), transfer has been cheaper and socio-cultural adaptation – less painful. That is why there have been more trips in this direction. However, lately due to the rise of unemployment in the EU, labor ministries of recipient countries recommended employers not to extend employment contracts of foreign labor migrants and offer jobs to their own compatriots instead. This resulted in greater shift of the labor market to the shadow, increase in organizational costs and decline in the income of migrants who now have to develop further plans (try to get a job in the same country, taking into account the new circumstances, leave for another country offering relatively better conditions or return to Ukraine).

Among migrants surveyed by us – those who returned for a while or for good (unfortunately migration plans are difficult to forecast based on sociological surveys) – there is practically the same number of men and women (52% and 48%), over 40% of respondents have higher and over one third – secondary specialized education, and overwhelming majority are of employable age below 45. Respondents name the following crucial reasons for their departure: studies (25.5%), reunion with family members or other important persons (34.5%), opportunity to learn about the culture and life in another country (43.9%), learning a foreign language (46.3%). However the most crucial reason was

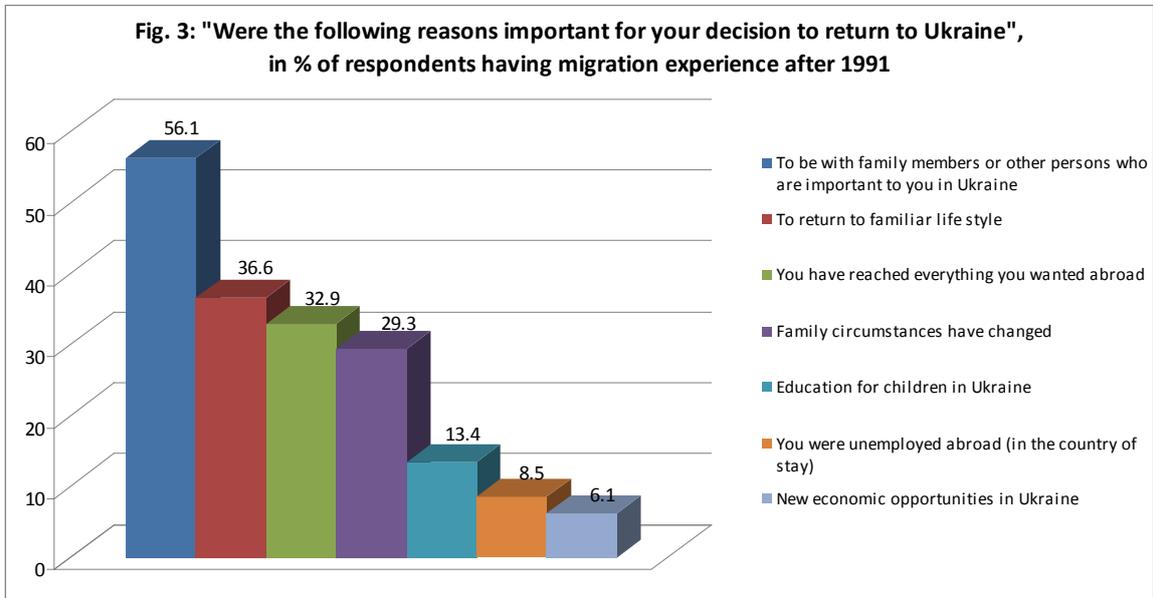
<sup>31</sup> Poznyak A. (2012), The demographic and economic framework of circular migration in Ukraine / Explanatory note 2012/93, CARIM-East.

<sup>32</sup> Bilateral agreements on social security were concluded with Bulgaria, Estonia, Spain, Lithuania, Latvia, Mongolia, Portugal, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Hungary and Czech Republic; on employment of migrants – with Portugal, Spain, Lithuania, Latvia, Moldova, Poland, Russia, Vietnam, Belarus, Azerbaijan, Armenia, Libya. See: Ukrainian State Employment Service <http://www.dcz.gov.ua/>

and is an opportunity of getting a job (80.4%)<sup>33</sup>. Absence of job or professional development opportunities in the home country and a chance to earn money abroad, in order to transfer it to family members in Ukraine, are indicated by former migrants as the main rationale behind their decision about departure (see fig. 2). In the context of the current crisis economic benefits of staying abroad become less evident and migrants decide in favor of return to their families (see fig. 3).



\*Figure prepared by the author on the basis of unpublished data of the survey carried out within the THEMIS project, 2012.



\*Figure prepared by the author on the basis of unpublished data of the survey carried out within the THEMIS project, 2012.

<sup>33</sup> Unpublished data of the survey in the city of Kyiv and the Lviv Region carried out within the THEMIS project, 2012.

Generalizing qualitative and quantitative studies, one can identify several main socio-demographic groups of respondents who had migration experience and came back to Ukraine by the time of research (2011-2012): 1) undergraduate / postgraduate students, young researchers and professionals who legally stayed abroad for a period from half a year to three years, studying or undergoing an internship and resorting to part-time employment, usually in their main field of occupation; 2) persons who legally stayed abroad for a period from three months to one year or longer on the basis of employment visa (unqualified and qualified workers, as well as highly qualified professionals); 3) persons who went abroad on the basis of a non-employment type of visa (tourist visa, based on an invitation of a private person etc.) with a purpose of illegal employment and stayed there for an uncertain period of time, from several months to several years<sup>34</sup>. The third group, unlike the first two, is mostly characterized by downward social mobility and high risk of marginalization both in the country of stay and upon coming back to the country of origin, which is due to their long-term stay in a foreign country having uncertain social and professional status. It is in this group that the return to the home country is usually not voluntary and is primarily motivated by aggravated legalization problems: they are especially vulnerable in situations when advantages of temporary stay abroad are cancelled out by growing risks of job loss, social vulnerability and risk of deportation. For the first two groups return to Ukraine is not only a prerequisite of visa issuance, but is also predetermined by personal choice: for the overwhelming majority of Ukrainian citizens who depart or plan departure abroad, the most preferable declared life project is temporary study program or work overseas with subsequent return to Ukraine and reunion with family and familiar environment. Thus, over 80% of surveyed respondents with migration experience refer to some kind of family circumstances as the main reason for return to their home country and only less than 10% – to the fact that decision to come back was motivated by unemployment in the country of stay or by new economic opportunities in Ukraine:

“When my labor contract expired, I came home and told my wife that I am not going to work abroad anymore. I have only one life and I want to be with my family” (male migrant from the Netherlands)<sup>35</sup>.

Nevertheless, the overwhelming majority of migrants who recently came to Ukraine said during in-depth interviews that in principle they consider a possibility of repeated departure, if an opportunity comes up. This supports our hypothesis that for those who have migration experience return to their home country is not an ‘ideal solution’ to life problems. Degree of success of post-migration adaptation in Ukraine has a decisive impact on the period of stay in the home country and plans for the future.

### 3.2 Legal re-adaptation.

Long-term experience of staying abroad, especially experience associated with the need to be in personal contact with migration and social services, as well as other agencies regulating arrivals/departures, registration and employment in the recipient country, has a significant impact on the legal culture of migrants and their re-adaptation in the legal field of the country of origin after their return. When abroad, migrants not only perceive the very notion of legality, the rule of law and value of civil rights in a different way, but are also inclined, during the initial period after coming back, to have a more proactive and responsible understanding of their roles and rights in the system of their relations with authorities<sup>36</sup>. For many surveyed migrants return to their home country is motivated to a large extent by the absence of legalization opportunities in the country of stay (during interviews they

<sup>34</sup> The groups listed can be identified among migrants both from the main recipient countries of Ukrainian migrants in Eastern, Central and Southern Europe and less widespread countries of origin, for instance, Northern Europe.

<sup>35</sup> A more detailed analysis of in-depth interviews with migrants will be carried out within NVivo program in January-February 2013. Hereinafter we rely on preliminary observations on the basis of interview transcripts, as well as selective theme-based analysis of qualitative data carried out by the THEMIS project coordinator Agnieszka Kubal and presented in Kubal A. (2012), *Facts and fabrications: experiences of law and legality among return migrants in Ukraine*, IMI, University of Oxford, working paper 59, p.1-24.

<sup>36</sup> See Kubal A. (2012), *Facts and fabrications: experiences of law and legality among return migrants in Ukraine*, IMI, University of Oxford, working paper 59, p.1-24.

mentioned difficulties with visa extension and residence permits, impossibility of extending the labor contract or threat of deportation for visa regime violation) – return to the home country is presented by migrants as return to the legal field that guarantees fulfillment of their civil rights:

“It is impossible to live your whole life illegally in a foreign country. You need documents to have confidence in the future” (female migrant from the UK).

“When time came to extend my residence permit once again, I asked myself what would be easier – for my wife and daughter to (legally) come and settle here or for me to return to Ukraine? It was evident that it would be easier for me to return” (male migrant from Portugal).

However, attitude to law and relations with authorities often changes at the EU border – the farther east, the less transparent are the rules, the more corrupt are public officials and the more lawless are the citizens:

“If I had been detained by the German border officer, I would certainly have gotten a mark in the passport banning entry for several years. But it was the Polish officer who caught me. I gave him 50 euro and he let me go” (male migrant from the Netherlands).

Unfortunately, after their return to the home country, attempts of migrants to fulfill their rights in a civilized way often face obstacles created by corrupt authorities, that is why there is gradual, often painful re-adaptation to informal norms and decision-making rules accepted in Ukraine and associated with obtaining necessary personal documents, permissions to do business etc. ‘European vision’ of basic legal foundations of society remains, but outside the decision-making field, that is why the need to evade laws and play by the ‘rules’ accepted in this territory is described by migrants as a difficult and negative kind of experience:

“Feeling as if you are caged, stupor” (male migrant from the Netherlands); “It was really difficult. It seems that after two years abroad I forgot what life in Ukraine was like” (female migrant from Portugal).

“My perception of Ukraine is very simple. It is a beautiful country, but it is a prison for its own citizens – was and remains” (male migrant from the UK).

“(There) police acts in accordance with the law and humanity principles. No comparison with police in Ukraine” (male migrant from the Netherlands).

“(In Ukraine) it is difficult to find common language with public officials. If you ask them why they postpone considering your documents, they fume with indignation. In the end it turns out that the issue can nevertheless be resolved. ... This is a problem of our mentality. Here no one would miss the chance to earn money out of you” (male migrant in Portugal).

The results of public opinion monitoring carried out within the European Social Survey confirm the phenomena indicated by return migrants: in the course of 2005-2011 the level of trust of Ukrainian citizens to the national justice system and police was registered at the level which was the lowest among 32 European countries included in the monitoring (Trends of social change 2012: 83, 84): on average twice lower than in Central European countries and three times lower than in Northern Europe. Around 80% of respondents surveyed in the city of Kyiv and in the Lviv Region believe that justice system in Western Europe is applied to everyone equally. At the same time over 95% note that in Ukraine over the past 10 years corruption has not been reduced, 93% – that politicians and state bodies in Ukraine have not become more accountable to citizens. It is interesting that evaluating the state of Ukrainian justice and public administration system respondents without migration experience and former migrants are practically unanimous, which confirms our hypothesis about gradual re-adaptation of migrants to Ukrainian realities. Former migrants adequately assess the situation and modify civil practices upon their return to the home country, in order efficiently resolve their problems.

### **3.3 Resolution of housing issues.**

Absence of positive dynamic in the level of satisfaction of Ukrainian population with the housing situation allows stating that this issue is extremely relevant for most families, especially in the countryside and small towns with economy in recession (for instance, in 1996 34.7% respondents

noted that they lacked good housing, in 2012 there were 38.8% of them; in 2012 more than 40% of respondents did not have hot water and almost 30% did not have sewage systems) (Ukrainian Society 2012: 585). It is not surprising that investment in housing (including construction, acquisition and maintenance) traditionally constitutes the main large investment made by Ukrainian labor migrants in the home country.

Although sociologists note that “one cannot talk about significant inequality of housing conditions of labor migrants and other citizens of Ukraine”, nevertheless opportunity of investing money earned abroad into improvement of housing conditions gives migrants some advantages compared to people who have never gone abroad to earn money. Based on the data of the monitoring study, I. Pribytkova makes a conclusion that labor migrants more often privatize their residences and invest into their improvement: residences of respondents with migration experience are more often equipped with water supply system, including running hot water and sewage, they are gasified and are generally larger, but housing area per family member is usually smaller in their case (Pribytkova 2003: 115). Obviously the problem of ‘apartment overpopulation’ might be getting worse after the labor migrant returns to the home country. Many of surveyed return migrants and migrants’ children noted during the interview that they managed to invest some money into expansion of living space and noted that, taking into account outrageous mismatch between real estate prices and income level in Ukraine, without money earned abroad – both at highly qualified legal and low-qualified illegal jobs – it would be impossible for them to significantly improve the level of housing security for their families:

“In Ukraine one cannot earn money to buy a flat for parents by picking strawberries. It would be hard even for those who have a normal job. And working in Britain she managed to do that” (female relative of a female migrant working in the UK).

“Where does the money go? Apartments are bought, children enter educational institutions, cars are bought... Depending on who earned how much” (daughter of a female migrant working in Italy).

Improved housing conditions of persons who have or had an opportunity to invest money earned abroad into resolution of housing problems are perceived in many localities, especially in Western parts of Ukraine, as a symbol of prosperity achieved thanks to ‘zarobitchanstvo’ (see table 1):

**Table 1. Public opinion in the city of Kyiv and the Lviv Region on housing conditions of labor migrants, in % of respondents who gave affirmative response, by regions**

	Kyiv	Lviv Region
<i>“Have you seen in this region houses/apartments built/repared by our compatriots using money earned abroad?”</i>	19.8	77.4
<i>“Have you noticed any difference between those houses/apartments and other houses/apartments?”</i>	13.0	63.5
<i>“Are these houses/apartments different by ...</i>		
<i>being bigger or taller</i>	4.8	29.8
<i>being built in a different (more European) style</i>	5.3	36.5
<i>being better repaired</i>	6.2	24.5
<i>being newer (recently built)</i>	6.8	19.7
<i>using materials of a better quality (including materials imported from abroad)”</i>	3.9	17.8
<i>“Housing conditions of families, members of which went abroad, were improved”</i>	85.7	92.5

\*Table prepared by the author on the basis of unpublished data of the survey carried out within the THEMIS project, 2012.

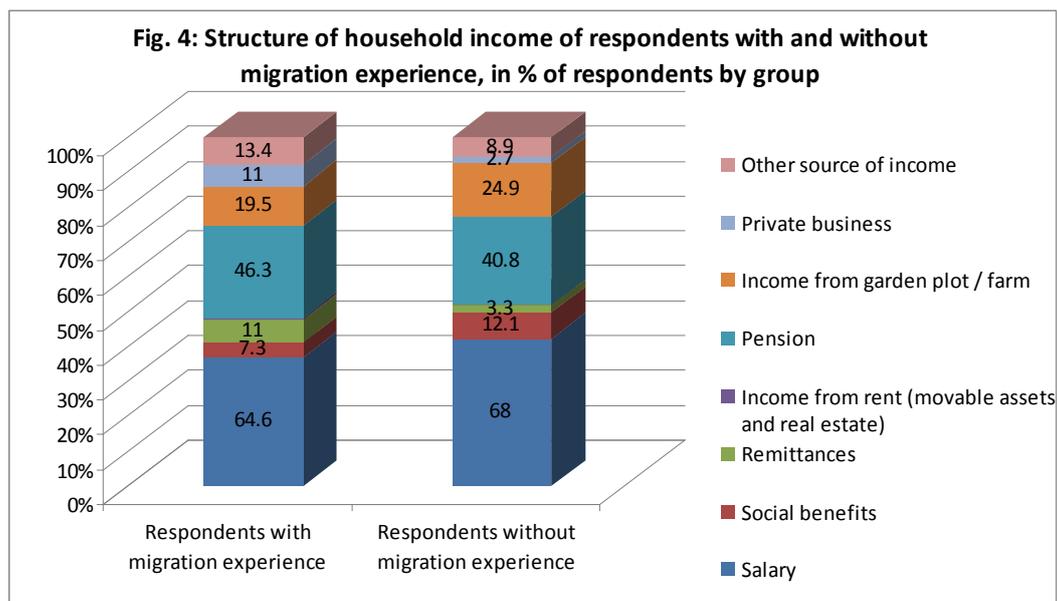
### 3.4 Integration into the labor market: employment and conditions for starting a business.

Results of nationwide Ukrainian monitoring studies confirm that adaptability to competitive market conditions is traditionally higher among labor migrants. Resolving their own life problems they are inclined to rely primarily on their own forces, rather than the state assistance. Migrants 1.5-2 times more actively than the rest of the population support ideas of privatization and market reforms, are more inclined to seek payroll jobs in private business and pursue their own entrepreneurial plans (Pribytkova 2003: 119, 123). According to the 2012 THEMIS survey, in the city of Kyiv and the Lviv Region employment among respondents with migration experience is almost 10% higher than among those who have no such experience (57.3% vs. 48.8%). Moreover, there is a higher share of those who in addition to the main job have another occupation (20.7% vs. 13.2%). As a result higher degree of household income differentiation is typical for respondents with migration experience, unlike ‘nonmigratory population’, resulting in relative financial independence: despite the fact that questions about income are traditionally ‘uncomfortable’ for the surveyed, they nevertheless more often note that they have income from financial transfers from abroad (11.0% vs. 3.3%), income from one’s own business (11.0% vs. 2.7%), as well as other additional sources of income (13.4% vs. 8.9%). Migrants’ households are also somewhat less dependent on wages and social benefits (see fig. 4).

In the mass survey respondents with migration experience more optimistically, than respondents without such experience, assess the degree of entrepreneurship among return migrants and their positive influence on the local economic situation (see table 2), but in in-depth interviews many note considerable obstacles to starting a business in Ukraine and underappreciated potential of migrants in domestic labor market. Many respondents point to high tension of internal conflict associated with professional self-realization, discrepancy between personal aspirations, values and labor behavior orientations acquired or modified while abroad and those models and principles that are offered by the local business environment and national labor market:

“After return to Ukraine I wanted to find a job, but everyone told me that there were no vacancies for a person of my age. And in my opinion at 50 I am much more capable to work, than those who are younger” (male migrant from Portugal).

“It is very difficult to find a good job with a decent salary without having connections. I got a master’s degree at the university, I spent half a year undergoing professional internship in the United Kingdom and two years in Norway. But in Kyiv I was offered a salary of 500 hryvnas (appr. 160 US dollars). This is ridiculous” (female migrant from the Netherlands).



\*Figure prepared by the author on the basis of unpublished data of the survey carried out within the THEMIS project, 2012.

**Table 2. Public opinion on entrepreneurship among labor migrants and their influence on the local situation, in % of respondents by group**

<i>“Can you say that ...</i>	<b>Respondents with migration experience</b>	<b>Respondents without migration experience</b>
<i>most migrants or their families started a business or improved the local situation (in agriculture, for instance), or</i>	19.7	10.7
<i>some started a business and improved the situation, while some did not, or</i>	43.9	39.3
<i>most did not start and did not improve the situation, or</i>	10.6	9.9
<i>none of the migrants or their families started a business and none improved the local situation?”</i>	25.8	40.1

\*Table prepared by the author on the basis of unpublished data of the survey carried out within the THEMIS project, 2012.

(continuation of the text before the figure and the table) “It is impossible to start even a small business, because taxes will eat up your income. This is very risky and one needs good connections” (female migrant from the Netherlands).

“Those who would like to start their own small business here choose not to do that. I, for instance, wanted to open my private enterprise (in the field of design), but I cannot, because I will find myself so deep in the red, that it will be impossible to survive. Abroad, if you are ready to do something, you will always be able to provide for yourself. Here it is especially demotivating that when you come and say “I have European education, I have work experience”, they look at you strangely... You find yourself in some kind of ‘matrix of hatred’ and slowly start to resemble these people” (female migrant from the Netherlands).

Full-scale integration of return migrants in the labor market and business environment is hindered not only by significant difference in salary that is offered here for a job of a certain qualification (in Ukraine, compared to EU member states, the price of both physical and intellectual labor is usually several times lower), but also by absence of professional acknowledgement and moral satisfaction with the results of one’s efforts. Over 90% of respondents consider migration to Western Europe an efficient way to improve their financial situation (95.1% among returned migrants and 90.3% among respondents without migration experience). In the course of a mass survey 44.6% respondents with migration experience agreed that “migration to Western Europe is a way to ensure respect in Ukraine” (36.5% of ‘nonmigratory’ respondents think that way). However in the absence of significant economic opportunities in Ukraine (only 12.3% of migrants and 20.7% are inclined to consider local conditions good), a person’s return to Ukraine from the EU is perceived by others as a kind of ‘downshifting’, transition ‘back and down’. Judging from our conversations with return migrants, people will keep leaving, once they have motives outweighing benefits of the stay in the familiar surroundings and with their family. According to demographer E. Libanova, the issue is not even about the number of those who can leave, but the “quality of the labor resource that leaves to contribute into the growth of GDP of another country; those who are leaving are the most active, young and mobile people, who want to change something in their lives to the better”<sup>37</sup>. Sociologist K. Wallace believes that migrants return to their home country, when they have health problems, when time and need come to devote more attention to upbringing and education of their children, as well as to preserve their status in the social security system that is rather well-developed in Ukraine (Wallace 2008: 18) and offers guaranteed, even if minimal, level of social security. However for the most active part of former and potential migrants current economic situation does not leave a choice: decreasing

<sup>37</sup> See Bilousova N. (2012), Competition for the qualified resource will be even harsher // *Day (Den)*, 21 August 2012 <http://www.day.kiev.ua/ru/article/ekonomika/borba-za-kvalificirovannyi-trudovoy-resurs-budet-eshche-zhestche> [in Russian]

number of acceptable vacancies, limited opportunities for entry into monopolizing businesses and lack of influence upon decision-making in the socio-economic area, as well as inevitable dependence of households on additional source of income, i.e. remittances from abroad (see table 3) – all this will encourage new waves of outward labor migration.

**Table 3. Public opinion on the influence of migration on development of the labor market and economic situation, in % of respondents by group**

	<b>Respondents with migration experience</b>	<b>Respondents without migration experience</b>
<i>“Number of vacancies (available jobs) for people who live here went down”</i>	41.4	43.5
<i>“Remittances sent by migrants to their families gave boost to the local economy”</i>	40.0	35.0
<i>“Migrants make their contribution into the funding of new infrastructures, such as roads, medical centers or schools”</i>	13.7	8.0
<i>“Many families became dependent on remittances from abroad”</i>	79.2	81.2

\*Table prepared by the author on the basis of unpublished data of the survey carried out within the THEMIS project, 2012.

### **3.5 Socio-cultural re-adaptation.**

According to historian T. Shanin, “social analysis ought to take into account historical experience, social background and preserved societal ties of migrants” (Shanin 1992: 150). In this sense migrants who returned from the EU to Ukraine represent a multilayer symbiosis of the Soviet and post-Soviet experiences, rich skills of communication channel establishment and interaction with the new surroundings in Europe (with which contact is maintained even after return to Ukraine), as well as family capital that is important from the standpoint of successful and full-scale socio-cultural integration. Migrants remain insiders tightly integrated into Ukrainian reality, but at the same time on a certain level (worldview, daily life, aesthetic, ethical, professional levels) they become the carriers of European values and gradually change the ‘structure of routine’ in the country of origin in terms of what is admissible, acceptable and desirable and what is not (Kubal 2012: 16).

“Even two weeks (abroad) completely blow your mind. All this European attitude to a person, his or her individuality is very tempting. Architectural, cultural packaging is completely different” (female migrant from the Netherlands).

“This changes your mind. You won’t throw rubbish. When you see, what it is like there, people’s attitude changes, you want it to be like that here as well” (female migrant from the UK).

“Parents (who have experience of living in Europe) transfer to you this European vision, give you certain pushes... When you sit here and you are surrounded by people like this, then even if you don’t want that, you absorb this European style” (son of female migrant from Czech Republic).

“At first, nothing seems to change here. “This is not my business” – is a widespread way of thinking in Ukraine. But now something is changing slowly nevertheless, something is coming from the outside, from abroad. Why? People (those who came) start helping each other, more openly share experience, how... to search for an income, how to open a business” (female migrant from Portugal).

After a more or less long period of socio-cultural disorientation and emotional depression caused by return home after the long absence (“*After return to Ukraine everything became mixed up for me, I was completely disoriented*” (male migrant from the Netherlands); “*Upon returning I had a depression for a year*” (female migrant from Portugal)), migrants usually overcome the obstacles of possible rift with family members and successfully face the challenges of exclusion from the local communities. From the standpoint of unique cultural experience acquired during the stay abroad,

migrants from different socio-demographic groups usually state an obvious benefit for themselves, feel that they have become different, that they look at familiar things differently and are capable of readapting quickly and using acquired knowledge and observations in Ukraine to improve the image and quality of life of their families. Their influence on the change of cultural code of the local communities is minimal now, but it is present nevertheless, especially in the regions susceptible to values of the European lifestyle.

One should not forget about such problems associated with reintegration as the so-called ‘distance parenting’ and ‘social orphanacy’: a generation that grew up without guardianship of one or both parents who during their employment abroad lost a chance to establish mutual trust with their growing children and often fail to find a common language. They are connected by common household (as far as children of migrant workers are often financially dependent on their ‘ATM parents’), but not common worldview. It is important to note that both migrant respondents and respondents without migration experience are concerned about demographic challenges (outflow of population, intergeneration rift and family disintegration), as the latter observe the above-mentioned phenomena among friends and relatives in their locality (see table 4). Family disintegration may be the most painful side effect of migration and the most serious challenge to successful socio-cultural integration of Ukrainian migrants after coming home.

**Table 4. Public opinion on migration influence upon socio-demographic, family and cultural situation, in % of respondents by groups**

	<b>Respondents with migration experience</b>	<b>Respondents without migration experience</b>
<i>“Population of this region went down as a result of migration”</i>	63.5	58.1
<i>“Families split because of migration”</i>	85.7	75.2
<i>“It is hard for children to grow without parents, if one or both parents are abroad”</i>	88.0	89.5
<i>“Migration brought in cultural influence and habits/traditions from abroad”</i>	55.8	32.7
<i>“In general it is good for this city/village that people went abroad”</i>	37.3	29.5

\*Table prepared by the author on the basis of unpublished data of the survey carried out within the THEMIS project, 2012.

#### **4. Brief conclusions and recommendations**

Questions asked and interpretations suggested are not claimed to be complete; different aspects of migrants’ reintegration in the country of origin discussed in the present paper need further investigation and search for explanations. However, the data presented and some preliminary conclusions can serve as an impetus for public debate on working mechanisms of support to civilized and efficient outgoing and return migration practices of Ukrainian citizens.

Outgoing migration, including migration to the EU, enables large number of our compatriots to acquire new experience and improve material status and thus enhance their competitive advantages in the international and national labor markets. Return migration offers an opportunity to reunite with the family and reintegrate into familiar environment, having social, cultural and material capital, claiming new life prospects. It offers the present and consequent generations a chance to get engaged in upward social mobility. Brain drain can be useful for Ukrainian economy, if it is temporary and is followed by

the incoming flow, injection of new resources into innovative infrastructural projects, creation of jobs by new employers who organize businesses relying on the best global market economy principles<sup>38</sup>.

The most successful international practices of support to return migration are hardly a secret: successful reintegration of migrants is possible only if there is gradual decrease in the scale and subsequent elimination of corruption, creation of conditions for market liberalization in the country and development of special loan, tax and mortgage programs for return migrants willing to invest skills and funds into the national economy<sup>39</sup>. Return migration / return of compatriots is the gentlest way for Ukrainian state to stimulate growth of the population that speaks Ukrainian and foreign languages and usually possesses higher educational and professional qualification than most migrants of other ethnic backgrounds. However, declaratory (non-stimulated and uncontrolled) return migration not backed by necessary political decisions will not bring sustainable dividends to the state and society and will instead create a precedent of marginalization and new exodus of qualified labor resources from Ukraine.

Research results confirm that at this stage – when return migrants are not a real subject of national policy – neither employable age, nor high professional qualification guarantee successful social reintegration in the home country. Migrants' problems are massive and systemic, while 'successes and failures' are individual and chaotic. Return to the home country helps alleviating acute and painful problem of Ukrainian labor migrants, i.e. the problem of family disintegration, and it is the desire to reunite with relatives that often pushes people towards reconsidering their migration projects. However, absence of opportunities for efficient participation in the national labor market and entrepreneurial environment prevents full-scale reintegration. Apart from improved material standing and housing conditions for migrants and members of their families, labor migration does not contribute to any significant structural transformations in the legal, social and cultural domains in the country of origin. For most return migrants the depth of systemic crisis in contemporary Ukraine touching upon fundamental civil, political, socio-economic and cultural rights of an individual predetermines the need for implementation of new migration plans within changing migration systems and redistributed migration tracks.

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<sup>38</sup> This topic was the focus of the public debate "Emigration of highly qualified personnel is good for Ukrainian economy", initiated by the Foundation for Effective Governance (founded by the richest Ukrainian industrialist and billionaire Rinat Akhmetov) (Kyiv, 22 September 2011). See. <http://economics.unian.net/rus/detail/103516>

<sup>39</sup> See, for instance, ideas for development of state programs in the field of expanded return migration channels in Grebenyuk A. (2008), *Migration of compatriots to Russia and improvement of migration policy*, Moscow [in Russian]. State programs schemes are suggested: "Return migration of youth", "Return migration of researchers", "Return migration of entrepreneurs" etc.

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