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ROLE DIVISION WITHIN RELATIONSHIPS OF POLISH IMMIGRANTS LIVING IN FRANCE AFTER 2004

Emigrants/Immigrants face a challenge of a so-called „Dual Absence”. Attempting to partially remain where they are emigrating from, they’re not fully present at the place of their destination (Sayed 1999, pp. 114-115). This unique situation refers to, in terms of time and space, to the community left behind during their departure as well as the host society. The duality described above is strongly linked to a migrant identity. In this complex process the family life, the relation with a partner in particular, can play a pivotal role. Assuming different forms, these relationships influence migration trajectory (Collet B. & Santelli E. 2012, pp. 275-290). Consequently, the paths of migratory career, and the process of integration of the migrant into the host society may differ depending on role division within relationships and on related social expectations. The “role” is defined here as a social construct or a model of attitudes and cultural behaviours attributed to the social status of a person (Mead 2006, p. 127). Examining the fates of migrants, the analysis of the roles in relationships seems particularly important.

This paper relates to the experience of Polish low-skilled workers in France following Polish accession to the European Union in 2004. In France the issue of these economic migrants has caused a high-tension public debate on the eve of the European Constitution Treaty referendum (Patok 2015, p. 150). It is worth noting that there is a relatively low level of research regarding this group of Polish immigrants when compared to scientific analyses of the previous waves of influx to France: The Great Emigration after the November Uprising and the January Uprising, a large scale economic migration in the interwar period and political and economic migration from communistic Poland (Paczkowski 1979; Pezda 2001; Ponty 2005; Śladkowski 1980). Nowadays the community of Polish workers in France differs from the three preceding migration waves and necessitates a distinct study.

Economic migration is a choice that in the current geopolitical circumstances does not exclude the option of a return to motherland (Bera 2008, p. 18). The French labour market has opened for Polish in 2008 causing an increase in appeal for a Polish worker (Invest in France Agency, Wydziału Promocji Handlu i Inwestycji w Paryżu

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2012). France however is not in the lead of states chosen by Polish immigrant workers who constitute only a small fraction among other immigrant groups (Główny Urząd Statystyczny 2016). Interestingly, the current community of Polish immigrants in France is distinctively feminized when compared to the previous Polish waves of immigrations (Institut national de la statistique et des études économiques 2013).

In the context of challenges that Europe is facing in the age of migration crisis a question arises of the situation of Polish workers in France and the process of their integration into the host state. To what extent do social expectations relating to immigrants and the division of roles within their relationships impact the interactions with the French society?

This paper shows the results of a study of the free movement of people and the effect it has on the Polish workers adaptation and integration processes in France. Their situation in France and their relations with the French society are examined through the variety of their experiences. I am focused on the Polish workers employed in low-skilled jobs who have migrated in a large number after 2008 and on their long-term relations with compatriots in France. The goal of this paper is to analyse the division of roles in these relationships taking account of the gender perspective, as well as the experiences of women and men alike. Finally, I would like to understand the consequences that this division of roles may have on the immigrant's integration processes into the host society.

Methodology and the study group

This study was conducted in a Paris metropolitan area between 2011 and 2016, according to the Grounded Theory method (Glaser & Strauss 2006). The research is based on a corpus of 60 semi-structured interviews with Polish immigrant workers, on dozens of informal conversations as well as on participant observation method at their homes and workplaces. I also carried out these observations in a public space frequented by Polish community, such as Polish parishes and shops, public administration offices (Polish or French) and public transport.

Non-probability sampling (Babbie 2007, pp. 204-208) was used in order to choose the analysed group within the population of low-skilled immigrants working in France (Table 1 and Table 2). Polish immigrants are also employed in managerial and highly qualified roles however they require a different analysis, which is not the objective of this study. First, I have randomly selected group of six unrelated low-skilled Polish workers. Then, each person has indicated two or three other Polish workers from his or her labour environment who met the criteria of my target group. Selection of fol-

lowing respondents has been conducted according to the same rule. Finally, the study sample consists of 32 women and 28 men in working age.

The aim was to create a diverse group of Polish immigrant workers who varied in their residence term and arrival moment, both before and after the Polish accession to the European Union structures in 2004. I also took into consideration the immigrant's family situation, particularly the fact of being in a relationship and whether they had children or not. In case of women, 24 were in a long-term relationship of which 15 were in marital unions. The majority of marital unions were with Polish immigrant workers in France (11 persons), 3 with French citizens/residents and 1 with a Cuban citizen. The remaining relationships consisted of 4 engagements with compatriots, 4 long-term relationships with French citizens/residents and one long-term relationship with a Cuban national. As for men from the study group, 19 workers were in marital unions with Polish women who in most cases resided in Poland. There has also been one engaged couple of Polish immigrants and one homosexual relationship with a Bulgarian citizen. In the study group 4 individuals were divorced from Polish citizens (2 women and 2 men). Moreover, almost a half of studied immigrant workers had children (13 women and 15 men). The focus of this study is on Polish immigrant long-term relationships with compatriots: childless couples or those bringing up children in France. The diversity of these actors has allowed me to compare the experiences of Polish immigrant low-skilled workers in France. My main purpose was to understand the process of their integration into the host society, and not to represent entire of Polish immigrants in France or all low-skilled Polish workers in Paris.

In order to understand the integration process I traversed two theoretical frameworks. Firstly, I analysed both the relations between Polish immigrant workers and the French society e.g. colleagues, employers and customers. For this purpose, I applied the concepts from symbolic interactionism (Becker 1963; Goffman 1996). Secondly, I referred to methodological individualism to examine choices made by immigrant workers in their professional and private life (Boudon 1983; Crozier & Friedberg 1977).

Long-term relationships of Polish Immigrants living in France

The dynamic changes in the current lifestyles make it difficult to clearly define the relationship from the sociological point of view (Déchaux 2009, pp. 3-4). In this research, a marriage as well as a long-term committed relationship is defined as socially recognized and acceptable sexual union between two adults (Giddens 2004, p. 194). The cohabiting partners of this union share some rights and responsibilities (Marshall 2004, pp. 181-182).

It is necessary to stress that in the study group of Polish low-skilled workers living in France I did not observe a need of Polish immigrants to establish contacts with other Polish living in France. The relations within Polish the community are based on a new form of informal contact networks between compatriots (Patok 2013, p. 259). The organization of this community is characterised by the strength of weak ties (Granovetter 1973). When a low-skilled worker is looking for a job, one will usual get help from his or her friend's associates whom one has never met before. Functioning in different environments to that of a Polish immigrant these people have a different level of access to information from the immigrant worker. Despite of various experiences of Polish workers from the study group, the immigrants in relationships with compatriots tend to have more traditional family values. A partner or spouse and children are in the foreground (Patok 2014, pp. 316-320). It is worth noticing that despite the Church losing its spiritual dimension, Polish parishes in Paris play an important role in establishing contacts with compatriots as well as in the organization of everyday life in exile (Patok 2013, pp. 255-256).

Professional life and role division in Polish Immigrant's long-term relationships

Economical benefits are the goal of Polish low-skilled immigrant worker. Professional occupation has consequently an impact on quality of his/her life including the relationship: decisions and division of responsibilities between partners. The interviews clearly show that both partners from Polish long-term relationships support each other in their professional life. In the study group, if the relationship/union has been concluded before migration, then the decision to leave motherland was predominantly taken together by both of partners. Usually the couple joins their friends or family who are already working in France. If only one partner has a previously arranged position, the second partner, usually woman, migrates with spouse or joins the partner in France. The case of Magda, a 30-year-old married cleaning lady living in France for 7 years is such an example. Initially in a long distance relationship, Magda departed for France due to her husband already working there:

I came just for him, I didn't want to come here [...]. I do not want to live in France; I always knew that I wouldn't feel good in a foreign country. I've sacrificed myself to be and to live together. That's why I'm here. Usually the acclimatization process it's not easy for me, even in Poland, if I have to change a city, I won't feel good. Now, I'm simply sacrificing myself, and it's already 7 years.

In the study group, regardless of gender of the respondents, the immigrants actively support their partners in the search for a job. In the process of migratory career the

individual already working helps his/her spouse by asking colleagues and co-workers from his or her close circle for information about employment opportunities. He or she symbolizes a link with the French labour market for a recently arrived immigrant. These informal relations and contacts with both Polish community in France and French citizens are dependent mostly on the immigrant's proficiency in French and professional environment: Polish, French or International. Violetta a 38 year-old waitress and cleaning lady is a divorced mother of two. She has come to France with her husband several years ago:

In the beginning, with me having a small child there were no jobs around. My husband had a job though. But I think that when you go out and ask people, you'll always find something. I took my little boy and a pram, and I had been walking around the parks. When I heard Polish language, I was chatting and slowly... slowly I always found something. First, it was cleaning [...] from my husband work's [colleague], because he said [that I was looking for a job] at his workplace and someone had a girlfriend or a wife, so sometimes I filled in for them and it was going on like that. Today I work in cleaning.

Mutual support in searching for professional opportunities continues through all migratory career period. When one partner loses a job or has a professional difficulty, the other does not stay inactive.

In the study group the partners also support each other in fulfilling the legal obligations towards the authorities. A significant factor in the division of roles in a relationship is the linguistic proficiency of an immigrant. In the case of Polish couples, in which one of the partners is not fluent in French, the other partner takes it upon himself or herself to deal with authorities on behalf of his or her partner. A perfect illustration of this case is Magda mentioned before. Upon arriving in France she did not know French however today she speaks basic French as opposed to her husband who is proficient in French. In this arrangement the husband is the link between his wife and her employers. He translates the information relating to the salary as well as the requirements of running her client's house e.g. the order of tasks required by the hosts. Marta is another example. She is a 38 year-old cleaning lady whose husband is self-employed and runs a home renovation company in France. In the study group of Polish low-skilled workers self-employment is a popular solution for both: men in the construction sector as well as women working as cleaning lady or carers. Administrative procedures are simplified and the tax system is friendly (Service Public 2016). Despite living in France for several years Marta's husband has never learned French: "Robert tried to learn French because he has French clients, but somehow he was not getting there, well... learning languages doesn't come easy to him [...]". As a result, Marta shows understanding and helps her husband with administrative tasks e.g. in handling formal documents or registering his commercial vehicle: "I've been at the prefecture [préfecture – a term

describing a municipal administration district] to pick up his driving license [...]. We wanted to exchange his driving license because he has a Polish one and the car had French papers (car registration)".

The interviews show that in relationships where both partners are proficient in French, the immigrants support each other in the professional field even if formally the duties relate to only one of them. It is a form of cooperation supporting the main source of family income. In the study group these were the examples of construction companies run by men or convenience stores and catering businesses owned by both partners. The situation of a 33 year-old self-employed renovation worker, Mariusz will help us illustrate this scenario. The father of two children in a pre-school age shares the duties of running the company with his wife who works as a half-time housekeeper. Because of a busy schedule Mariusz spends his entire day managing the labourers or conducting the work himself. His wife fills in invoices and other documents as well as regularly publishing the company's income online (a procedure legally required in France).

To summarize, in the study of relationships of Polish immigrants in France, in the professional field, despite their careers developing in different directions, the partners support each other regardless of their gender. The division of roles in a relationship depends mostly on such factors as contacts on the French labour market, linguistic proficiency and a time at one's disposal.

Private life and role division in Polish immigrant's long-term relationships

On a daily basis, the Polish workers from the study group declare not having enough time for personal relationships with Polish compatriots, other immigrants or French citizens. Free time is spent among the closest friends or in small groups of people with similar interests. The interviews indicate that people with children tend to spend their free time with their family. In these cases the division of roles with regard to gender becomes evident.

In the study group, the mothers adjusted their professional careers to their responsibilities related to raising their children. Women with young children stressed the importance of occupation's flexibility allowing them to take care of their offsprings. Marta, a 38-year old cleaning lady and a mother of two boys says:

Now, I work solely for people who accept that I'm not available during school holidays [...]. Since I have children, I work for people who don't mind that I'm not working during holidays. It's not easy to find such people. Now I'm in a comfortable position where I get to choose who I work for [...].

The interviews show that as far as couples with children who attend school are concerned, it is mothers who take on the responsibility to contact the school or other children's parents. As a consequence, immigrant mothers develop their language skills in order to communicate with their children's environment. This is a strategy to avoid their children being marginalized or isolated, which can occur when the family is not integrated with the society. Marta has chosen a reputable private school for her children. According to her, in such a school, it is easier to keep in touch with the teachers, who have more time to address the children's individual needs. Marta further explains: "Because of my children, I have to communicate with French families about visits, meetings, pyjama parties etc. They visit us, we visit them [...]. I don't have problems communicating, if I need to, I will always get along".

As for men, their children-related responsibilities are most importantly providing a long-term financial and educational support. In the study group, men who raise their children in France conditioned the decision to come back to their own country by their children's educational needs. As an example we can look at Robert, an electrician and father of two teenage daughters:

My daughter wants to come back to Poland, she's fifteen and she never wants to come back to Paris after holidays [...]. Right now, one does what the brain dictates, not the heart. Eight more years [in eight years his youngest daughter will finish her education in France] and I'm coming back to Poland. My daughters will do as they wish. Usually, the most important is for them to get educated [...]. Until they are 18 unless they want to go to university of course I will finance it. Once it's finished, I'm coming back.

In the study group men acknowledging the financial responsibility related to having and raising their children accept working long hours and search for additional employment opportunities. It is interesting that this entrepreneurial attitude does not change in the event of a divorce, even if immigrant couple does not have children. All men from the study group are characterised by a strong working ethos. It is related to their perception of a migratory success, where one becomes financially independent and can afford to rent or buy an apartment. Piotr, a 30-year old mason says: "Now, after the divorce things have changed. Now, I'm planning to have fun, because all my life I've been doing things for others [...]. I'm saving to buy a house, but I also bought two motors". A long working day is a norm for these immigrants, whose departure is motivated by economic reasons. Piotr's following statement illustrates this perfectly:

We work from 8am to 5pm and sometimes even to 8am or 10pm. French workers don't. They work from 8am to 5pm, on Fridays from 8am to 3pm and that's it. I met one French guy who complains about earning 1800 euros and I earn 2500 euros. I work all Saturdays and I take extra hours, and he goes home after 5pm. Add Saturdays and the extra hours and you'll have the same. He [then] says that he would be tired. [...] We [Polish workers] are used to do it. It has become a routine, we got used to such working scheme [...].

The role division in relationships of Polish low-skilled workers in terms of gender has a traditional character. The woman focuses on a daily care of their children while the man provides financial stability. This model is clear especially for couples with children receiving a school education in France. In this study of Polish relationships a visible division of gender roles occurs once immigrants have their children. In previous stages of their migratory experience, for both childless women and men, their main incentive to leave the country is a well-paid employment.

Conclusions: Immigrant's Integration into the Host Society

The interviews conducted clearly show that marriages or long-term relationships with compatriots of Polish low-skilled workers in France after 2004 have been mostly revolving around their own family circles. Different forms of relations with the host society exist and depend on the division of duties and responsibilities between partners in immigrants' couples. Economic activity is the aim of a Polish immigrant worker and that point has a strong impact on his or her private life organization. In the study group the division of social roles regarding everyday professional career, in the classical meaning of term "career" (Hughes 1937), do not depend on immigrant's gender. The migrant worker's proficiency in French, networking skills and his or her availability determine the way that responsibilities between partners are shared. This couple's collaboration leads to the achievement of migration plan or aim, such as lucrative occupation in a host state. Yet, in the private home sphere we can observe a clear division of social roles by immigrant's gender. Men focus on work and assume the responsibilities to provide financial stability. Women combine the professional occupations with raising their children, which always take centre stage. They are fulfilling socially expected role of a mother according to the traditional family values.

As an opportunity to establish contacts and relationships with the host society, the professional activity is an important factor in the immigrant's adaptation and integration processes. The Polish low-skilled workers in France conceive the employment as a migratory success. In consequence, both partners are involved in the professional career development. This is a positive factor in the process of integration with the French society regardless of the immigrant's gender. Having children and the responsibilities associated with their education are also a significant actor in immigrant worker's integration. However it is women who make more effort to learn French language and to adapt to the French society. They are focused on establishing relationships with French parents of their children's classmates in order to avoid the "isolation" of their own child. In the study group this division of gender roles complies with the traditional family

values and helps women in the gradual integration process into the host society, even at expense of their professional work.

The integration processes are not taking place without resistances. A major source of those difficulties is related to social beliefs and perceptions. Stereotypes, the mechanisms how both immigrants and host country citizens can view each other, are such an example. It is worth to stress that we need to examine the mechanism behind these depictions regarding national, ethnic and especially gender differences in order to understand the immigrant's adaptation and integration processes.

Table 1. Study population: Women by age, occupation, family situation and residency period in France

N°	First name	Age	Occupation	Residency in France	Level of French (self declaration)	Family situation
1	Magdalena	20	Baby sitter	10 months	Does not speak any French	Single
2	Monika	20	Intern	4 months	Advanced	Single
3	Dorota	21	Cleaning lady	6 months	Basic	Married, Polish husband living in France
4.	Monika	22	Shop assistant	3 years	Advanced	Single
5	Weronika	23	Ice cream seller	3 years	Advanced	Single, French partner
6	Aleksandra	24	Secretary	3 years	Advanced	Single, French partner
7	Agata	25	Baby sitter	10 months	Basic	Single, Polish partner living in France
8	Aleksandra	25	Waitress	3 years	Advanced	Single, French partner
9	Sabina	26	Baby sitter	10 months	Intermediate	Single
10	Iga	27	Dancer (Show-girl)	5 years	Basic	Single, Polish partner living in Germany
11	Maja	27	Dancer (Show-girl)	1 year	Basic	Single
12	Magdalena	28	Secretary	7 years	Advanced	Single, French partner
13	Magdalena	28	Barmaid	3 years	Intermediate	Married, Polish husband living in France
14	Paulina	28	Cleaning lady	4 years	Basic	Married, Polish husband living in France
15	Agnieszka	29	Barmaid	1 year	Intermediate	Single
16	Agnieszka	30	Dancer (Show-girl)	5 years	Advanced	Married, French husband, one child
17	Magdalena	30	Cleaning lady	7 years	Basic	Married, Polish husband living in France

18	Dagmara	34	Dancer in an amusement park	6 years	Intermediate	Single, Polish partner living in France
19	Edyta	34	Cleaning lady	2 years	Basic	Married, Polish husband living in France, one child
20	Katarzyna	35	Concierge	10 years	Advanced	Married, French husband
21	Joanna	36	Dancer (Show-girl)	5 years	Advanced	Married, Cuban husband living in France, two children
22	Aneta	37	Baby sitter	10 years	Advanced	Married, French husband
23	Lucyna	37	Concierge	16 years	Advanced	Married, French husband, one child
24	Magdalena	37	Stewardess, ancient Cleaning lady	11 years	Advanced	Married, French husband, two children
25	Violetta	37	Cleaning lady	6 years	Basic	Married, Polish husband living in France, three children
26	Marta	38	Cleaning lady	11 years	Intermediate	Married, Polish husband living in France, two children
27	Wioleta	38	Waitress, cleaning lady	6 years	Intermediate	Divorced with Polish man, French partner, two children
28	Iwona	49	Runs a grocery store	21 years	Advanced	Divorced with Polish man, Australian partner living in France, two children
29	Małgorzata	51	Secretary	21 years	Advanced	Married, Polish husband living in France, one child
30	Barbara	56	Shop assistant	30 years	Advanced	Married, Polish husband living in France, two children
31	Jolanta	56	Hostess, cleaning lady	30 years	Advanced	Married, French husband, one child
32	Aleksandra	60	Runs a bar, barmaid	20 years	Intermediate	Married, Polish husband living in France, three children

Table 2. Study population: Men by age, occupation, family situation and residency period in France

N°	First name	Age	Occupation	Residency in France	Level of French (self declaration)	Family situation
1	Kamil	21	Construction worker	6 months	Does not speak any French	Married, Polish wife living in France
2	Łukasz	23	Plumber	1 year	Does not speak any French	Single
3	Sławomir	23	Construction worker	5 years	Intermediate	Single

4	Grzegorz	25	Construction worker	5 years	Intermediate	Single
5	Artur	27	Construction worker	2 years	Basic	Single
6	Grzegorz	27	Construction worker, Plumber	6 years	Intermediate	Married, Polish wife living in Poland
7	Paweł	27	Construction worker	2 years	Basic	Married, Polish wife living in France
8	Paweł	27	Shop assistant	6 years	Advanced	Single, Bulgarian partner living in France
9	Tomasz	28	Construction worker	3 years	Intermediate	Single
10	Waldemar	28	Mason	7 years	Basic	Divorced with Polish woman, two children
11	Konrad	30	Construction company office employee	3 years	Basic	Single, Polish partner
12	Piotr	30	Mason	5 years	Intermediate	Divorced with Polish woman
13	Łukasz	31	Construction worker	2 years	Basic	Single
14	Szymon	31	Construction worker	3 years	Basic	Married, Polish wife living in France
15	Piotr	32	Construction worker	2 years	Does not speak any French	Married, Polish wife living in Poland, two children
16	Mariusz	33	Construction worker, construction company owner	10 years	Advanced	Married, Polish wife living in France, two children
17	Piotr	35	Construction worker	8 years	Basic	Married, Polish wife living in Poland, two children
18	Piotr	36	Construction worker	5 years	Basic	Married, Polish wife living in France, one child
19	Dariusz	36	Construction worker	4 years	Intermediate	Married, Polish wife living in France, two children
20	Mariusz	38	Construction worker, construction company owner	7 years	Advanced	Married, Polish wife living in France, three children
21	Paweł	38	Construction worker	3 years	Intermediate	Married, Polish wife living in France, one child
22	Rafał	38	Construction worker, construction company owner	14 years	Advanced	Married, Polish wife living in France

23	Robert	38	Electrician	17 years	Intermediate	Married, Polish wife living in France, two children
24	Grzegorz	41	Mechanic, truck driver	6 years	Intermediate	Married, Polish wife living in France, two children
25	Mariusz	48	Construction worker, plumber, construction company owner	17 years	Advanced	Married, Polish wife living in France, three children
26	Jarosław	48	Construction worker	2 years	Does not speak any French	Married, Polish wife living in Poland, two children
27	Marian	50	Security guard	7 years	Basic	Married, Polish wife living in France
28	Jan	66	Bookstore assistant	23 years	Advanced	Married, Polish wife living in France, one child

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ROLE DIVISION WITHIN RELATIONSHIPS OF POLISH IMMIGRANTS LIVING IN FRANCE AFTER 2004

SUMMARY: The paper shows the results of a study conducted on Polish immigrants employed in low-skilled jobs in France following Poland's accession to the European Union. This paper's focus is on Polish immigrant workers' marriages or long-term relationships with compatriots in France and the immigrants' relations with the French society. The author analyses the division of roles in relationships and the consequences that this division of roles may have on the immigrants' integration processes into the host society. In order to interpret and to understand experiences of studied Polish immigrants the author has referred to two theoretical frameworks: symbolic interactionism and methodological individualism. In the studied group, the role division regarding everyday activities in relationships is determined by the migrant worker's proficiency in French, networking skills and his or her availability. The Polish low-skilled workers in France conceive the employment as a migratory success. In consequence, both partners are involved in the professional career development. This is a positive factor in the process of integration with the French society regardless of the immigrant's gender.

KEYWORDS: Integration, Polish immigrant, low-skilled jobs, long-term relationships.

PODZIAŁ RÓL W POLSKICH ZWIĄZKACH EMIGRANTÓW WE FRANCJI PO 2004 R.

STRESZCZENIE: Artykuł przedstawia część badania przeprowadzonego we Francji na polskich pracownikach zatrudnionych w zawodach nisko kwalifikowanych po przystąpieniu Polski do Unii Europejskiej. Autorka porusza kwestie relacji między partnerami-rodakami w małżeństwach lub stałych związkach polskich emigrantów oraz omawia ich kontakty ze społeczeństwem francuskim. Celem jest analiza podziału ról w związkach polskich pracowników i zrozumienie wpływu tych mechanizmów na proces integracji emigranta w społeczeństwie przyjmującym. W interpretacji doświadczenia i wypowiedzi badanych Polaków posłużyły dwie perspektywy teoretyczne z nurtu socjologii rozumiejącej: interakcjonizm symboliczny oraz indywidualizm metodologiczny. W badanej grupie podział ról wokół codziennych praktyk w związku zależy przede wszystkim od umiejętności językowych, sieci kontaktów oraz dyspozycyjności emigranta. Posiadanie pracy zarobkowej postrzegane jest w kategoriach sukcesu. W rezultacie oboje partnerzy przejawiają zaangażowanie na tym polu. Sprzyja to integracji w społeczeństwie francuskim bez względu na płeć emigranta.

SŁOWA KLUCZOWE: integracja, polski emigrant, zawody nisko kwalifikowane, relacje długoterminowe.