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The Employment and Earnings Mobility of Polish Migrants in Ireland in the Recession

Abstract

How has the recession affected the employment and earnings of Polish migrants in Ireland? Using a unique dataset of Polish migrants in Dublin, the paper demonstrates that employment levels and earnings have been surprisingly stable at the macro-level of the Polish community in Dublin. Underlying this macro-stability is a high degree of individual transitions in and out of employment and of vertical earnings mobility. This is likely to reflect the combined working of the on-going structural integration of Polish migrants and of a recession-induced increased risk of unemployment and downward earnings mobility.

Key words: recession, economic mobility, Polish community, dual labour market, human capital

Introduction

Between 2004 and 2008, Ireland was perhaps the most attractive destination for Polish migrants (Okólski 2010). Factors that contributed to the attractiveness of Ireland were open access to the Irish labour market and a booming economy that provided ample job opportunities. In 2008, a bursting property bubble triggered a particularly severe recession. As a consequence, the employment volume in Ireland shrunk by 15% between the end of 2007 and mid 2011 (Central Statistical Office [CSO], National Quarterly Household Survey [NQHS]) with souring unemployment and emigration figures. In this paper I examine how the recession has affected the employment and earnings of the Polish community in Dublin. After briefly describing Polish migration to Ireland and the Polish community in Dublin, I will sketch the underlying theoretical frameworks, summarize and evaluate the evidence provided by previous research on the economic position of Polish migrants (and other migrants from the New Member States) in Ireland and identify the prior expectations guiding the analyses of the data. The following paragraphs introduce the data, how they have been collected and how work histories have been reconstructed from the data, and the general strategy of analysing the data. The core of the paper consists of the report on the findings and the paper finishes with a discussion.

Polish Migration to Ireland and the Polish Community in Dublin

Ireland, beside the UK and Sweden, belongs to the few countries which granted free access to the labour market for migrants from the eight new member states of the European Union in 2004. As a consequence, Ireland became an important destination country for Polish migrants after 2004. Poles established themselves quickly as the largest group of migrants from the new member states in Ireland. The exact size of the Polish community is difficult to ascertain. The Irish census counted 73 402 Polish nationals in April 2006, 10 126 of which were considered to be visiting (CSO 2008). Figures of the Polish Central Statistical Office are comparable with an estimated 76 000 Polish citizens staying in Ireland in 2006 for two months or longer. According to the estimates of the Polish Central Statistical Office the number of Poles in Ireland peaked in 2008 with 200 000 staying for three months or longer and has somewhat declined since then (Kaczmarczyk, Okólski 2008, p. 603; Okólski 2010). Compared with other destinations or the Polish general population, Polish migrants in Ireland are very similar to those in the UK: Predominately male, young and relatively well educated (Okólski 2010). The Dublin area is particularly attractive for women. According to NQHS estimates, 55,5% of the Poles in Dublin are men and 44,5% are women. About 35% have a tertiary qualification and more than 50% are younger than 30 with women being on average better educated and younger than men.

Structural Integration or Marginalisation?

Migrants typically have poorer jobs than domestic workers and Polish migrants in Ireland surely are no exception. There are two theoretical approaches in employment and migration studies accounting for this fact: human capital theory which explains the labour market position of migrants by their endowment with human capital, specifically their lack of destination-specific human capital, and dual labour market theory which emphasizes the role of labour market segmentation and the inherent instability of the jobs accessible to migrants.

For human capital theory, the crucial insight is that important parts of human capital are not general, true for every employer worldwide, but specific to a particular country (e.g. Friedberg 2000). The language of a person is the most obvious one, but familiarity with local circumstances and practices and being connected with information and referral networks, what sociologists refer to as social capital, are also important. Differences in the way 'things are done' limit the cross-country transferability of education and work experience and lack of familiarity on the employers' side with the credentials and reputations in the country of origin add to the depreciation of the human capital stock of migrants. Even skills and knowledge that are valuable in the destination country, may be of limited use in the destination country if the migrant is not endowed with 'complementary' destination-specific components, for example an architect lacking fluency in English and a knowledge of Irish regulations (Dustmann, Fabbri 2003). Consequently, migrants are expected to be first employed in jobs with qualification needs far below their levels of education

and skill. However, migrants have strong incentives to invest into destination-specific human capital. These incentives are stronger if migrants are endowed with a complementary stock of general human capital and will consequently experience a considerable improvement in their situation and if they intent to stay in the destination country for a long time (see e.g. Dustmann 1993). In short, human capital theory expects that recent migrants are employed in marginal jobs that under-utilize their skills but regard this situation as temporary; in the long-term immigrants' human capital investments lead to structural integration or immigrants' labour market and earnings assimilation (e.g. Chiswick et al. 2005).

Dual labour market theory, in contrast, shares the expectations of human capital theory regarding the initial jobs but sees migrants as stuck in these positions. Dual labour market theory (Doeringer, Piore 1971; Piore 1979) argues that labour markets are not integrated but consist of two separated sectors, the primary and the secondary sector. 'Good jobs' are located in the primary sector and are characterised by good wages, job security and opportunities of advancement while the 'bad jobs' of the secondary segment are poorly paid and precarious. A crucial argument of dual labour market theory is that secondary sector jobs are not 'stepping stones' to the more desirable jobs in the primary segment. Primary sector jobs are inaccessible for secondary sector workers due to various reasons ranging from labour turnover costs to blunt discrimination. These barriers separate 'outsiders' from competing with the 'insiders' of the primary sector (Lindbeck, Snower 2001). Primary and secondary sector jobs may be concentrated in certain industries or in certain firms within industries. Within firms, many firms are said to divide their workforce into a core and a periphery jobs (Atkinson 1981). The important point is that workers on secondary sector jobs lack the promise of long-term employment and are therefore prevalent in volatile industries or function as 'buffers' that protect primary sector worker jobs in the economic downturn. Dual labour market theory has been used to analyse the position and role of migrant workers in general (e.g. Piore 1979) and Favell (2008) sees the European 'East-West' migration as a primary case.

The Labour Market Position of Poles and New Member State Migrants: Pre-recession Evidence

The knowledge about the labour market position of Poles in Ireland is limited, among others, because the Irish CSO does not publish figures separately for migrants from specific countries but aggregates them in their publications and data releases. If immigrants from the New Member States (NMS) are accepted as proxies for Polish migrants, a series of studies by the research group around Alan Barrett mainly using data from the 2006 National Employer Survey is illuminating. Barrett, McGuinness and O'Brien (2011) find that immigrants from the New Member States earn on average only about 57% of an Irish employee and that there is very little variation among the wages of NMS immigrants. Even if the wage is controlled for industry, occupation, job tenure, firm size and unionisation, NMS workers earn 10% less than Irish workers. This wage penalty is higher for better educated migrants and is particularly large in non-unionised companies.

The human capital approach regards additional training as crucial for migrants to build up their stock of destination-specific capital. Employer-sponsored training is also seen as a pre-condition for career advancement and as a characteristic of the primary sector. Barrett et al. (2009) show that NMS migrants have a lesser chance to receive training than Irish workers or other immigrants. Partially, this has to do with the occupations and industries they work in, but this can only explain a small part of the disadvantage. 'Training-intensive' companies tend not to employ NMS immigrants; and in companies that train only some employees NMS immigrants do not belong to the happy few. Consistent with this is an early study of Barrett and Duffy (2009), using 2005 QHNS data, demonstrating that NMS migrants had the largest occupational gap of all migrant groups. They neither find conclusive evidence that a larger proportion of earlier migrant cohorts works in managerial or professional occupations which could be seen as indication that NMS immigrants progress in the occupational ranking over time.

The research thus reviewed the above points in the direction that Polish migrants are stuck in 'lousy jobs' with no promise to progress to better jobs. This general conclusion appears to be uncontested and mirrored by findings for the UK (see Clarke, Drinkwater 2008; Drinkwater et al. 2009). But perhaps the data are less conclusive than they appear. The data on which this research is based are from 2006 or earlier. At that point in time, post-accession migrants were two years or less in Ireland. Ireland in the mid-2000s provided a favourable context for Polish migrants: a language being taught in Polish schools with a high use value also outside of the destination country; a very dynamic and quickly growing economy and a flexible labour market with less clear demarcation between 'insiders' and 'outsiders' than in many continental countries which should favour the labour market integration of migrant workers (Kogan 2007). Is it quite likely that Polish workers achieved substantial earning gains until 2008 (Mühlau et al. 2012).

Recession in Ireland and the Effect on Migrant Workers

Compared with other countries, the 2008 recession hit Ireland particularly hard and was largely homemade with a property bubble, financed by aggressive lending by Irish banks, bursting in 2007/8. Depreciation of assets, credit rationing by banks and a fiscal crisis induced by the re-capitalisation of the banking system added to a drying up of domestic demand (see Lane 2011). As a consequence, the employment volume in Ireland sunk dramatically, from 2 139 000 jobs in the last quarter of 2007 to 1 821 000 in the second quarter of 2011. Unsurprisingly, the construction industry was particularly hard hit with almost 2/3 of the jobs lost between 2007 and 2011. More than 40% of the lost jobs were skilled blue-collar jobs and another 35% were semi-skilled and unskilled blue-collar jobs. Far less clerical, sales and service positions have been lost and hardly any managerial and professional jobs (CSO, QNHS, own calculations). Male workers, specifically less educated male workers, suffered particularly. Unemployment rates rose from 4,5% to 14,3%.

The jobs of NMS migrants were particularly at risk. The number of jobs held by NMS migrants shrunk by a third from 168 000 (Q1, 2008) to 107 000 (Q2, 2010)

and has been stable since. In many sectors, NMS workers appear to be displaced by other, mainly indigenous workers (Mühlau 2012). A study of Barrett and Kelly (2010) on QNHS micro-data shows further that the vulnerability of NMS migrants cannot be explained by the high share of males and young people among them who are at particular unemployment risk in Ireland during the recession years or other demographical characteristics.

Many NMS migrants left the country – the estimated stock of NMS migrants over 15 shrunk from about 209 000 (q4, 2007) to about 170 000 (q4, 2009) and has been stable since (CSO, QNHS). According to the population and migration estimates, more than 83 000 NMS migrants emigrated between 2008 and 2011, almost 50 000 (25% of the stock end 2007) in 2008 and 2009. It is likely that migrants who lost their job in Ireland are largely over-represented among the NMS emigrants. However, inward migration continued: about 62 000 migrated from the NMS to Ireland between 2008 and 2011, more than half of them in 2008 (CSO 2011, own calculations). But among the stayers and recent arrivals, employment rates plummeted from 82% (q1, 2008) to 64% (q2, 2010) and unemployment strongly increased from 6 to 20%. There is also a higher share of NMS migrants which is not active in the labour force; the share of inactive people rose from 13 to 21%. How much of this increase reflects discouragement and how much is the consequence of a higher share of inactive women migrating after 2008, is not clear.

The available evidence of how the recession affected the employment prospects of NMS migrants again strongly points that there is much truth in the idea that the Polish migrants did not penetrate the primary sector in a segmented labour market. In the study reported below, I will explore whether this is the dominant force shaping the mobility experiences of Polish workers between 2008 and 2010. If so, we should observe overwhelming transitions from employment into unemployment and from better paid to worse paid jobs. The alternative hypothesis is that the recession has curbed but not stalled an on-going process of labour market integration of Polish migrants. Consequently, it is expected that a considerable share of Polish workers moved on to better paid jobs and that factors related to human capital such as education, language skills and job training are associated with upward earnings mobility. Finally, we are interested in whether the recession affected women differently than men. As indicated by the high concentration of men in skilled blue-collar positions, but also by a higher share of technical qualifications in the 'higher' occupations, the skills of men are more industry-specific while women have more general skills. The transferability of such industry-specific skills across borders may be higher than of the general, but perhaps more 'culture-specific' skills of women, and may have provided a better starting position for men in the boom period. But industry-specific skills are not easily transferred across industrial sectors and many of these skills have been devalued by the collapse of the construction industry. Moreover, women's more general skills are more dependent on the accumulation of complementary country-specific knowledge and skills. Hence, from a human capital perspective, I expect a much higher degree of upward earnings mobility among women than among men. A dual labour market perspective, typically arguing that secondary sector jobs have little skill requirement and that ascriptive characteristics

tend to play a strong role in the allocation of jobs, would more likely lead one to expect that women are crowded out by men looking for employment in the formerly 'female' sectors and occupations.

Data

The study uses the 'Polonia in Dublin' dataset which was collected in the Greater Dublin Area between November 2009 and June 2010. The data were collected using respondent-driven sampling (RDS). This sampling method was developed by Heckathorn (1997) for 'hard-to-reach' populations where no sampling frame exists. RDS is appropriate if members of the target population know each other as members of the target population and if the target population forms one social network that is sufficiently dense and interconnected to support recruitment and prevent the strong clustering of the data. In the 'Polonia in Dublin' study, the target population was Polish migrants living in the Greater Dublin Area. The fieldwork took place between November 2009 and July 2010. Personal interviews in Polish were conducted with 623 respondents, 586 of which were referrals (for more details see Mühlau et al. 2011).

The data has been weighted using a composite weight reflecting relative inclusion probabilities due to differential network sizes, the effect of homophily in the referral process and recruitment effectiveness on the sample composition and differences in the propensity to respond. The weighted sample underlies the reported univariate and bivariate distributions; this excludes the seeds. Regression results are presented for unweighted data including the seeds but the results of regressions on the weighted data are qualitatively similar (see Winship, Radbill 1994).

The information about the respondents' employment status, earnings and occupations are based on the reconstructed employment histories of the interviewees. The respondents provided information about the job they were holding at the time of the interview and retrospective information about the previous job they held in Ireland, their first job in Ireland and the last job they had in Poland including the start and the end date of the employment. Basing on this information, I reconstructed their employment and job situation in January 2008 and in January 2010. For the respondents who were interviewed in November and December the situation at the time of the interview was taken as proxy information for January 2010. For some of the respondents, it is not clear whether they were employed, what occupation and earnings they had in January 2008, because their first job in Ireland had already finished and the job preceding the current job has not yet started in January 2008. I refer to these as 'status 2008 not known' in the tables (n=56). Other migrated to Ireland later than January 2008. These are referred to as '2008: Not in country' (n=79). The respondents reported their earning per job. Unfortunately, within-job earning changes such as pay raises or pay cuts are not picked up. Earning changes refer thus to changes in the wages associated with job changes and the total amount of earnings mobility is likely to be underreported.

Results: Employment Status

Table 1 presents the estimates of the employment status for the Polish community in 2008 and 2010. Of the Polish population in Dublin in 2010, a substantial number were still in Poland in 2008. I estimate that about 16% of the resident population in 2010 migrated to Dublin between January 2008 and January 2010. With 21%, the share of recent migrants is substantially larger among women than among men (11%). If we take as the basis the migrants who were in Dublin in January 2008, of 79% it is known that they were employed in 2008 with a slightly higher proportion of certainly employed men (81%) than employed women (76%). 9% of the weighted sample was either inactive or unemployed in 2008. Unsurprisingly the share of the inactive or unemployed was higher among women (13%) than among men (5%). Of 12% of the sample the exact status in 2008 is not known. People of this category are frequent job changers, having at least one job before January 2008 and two further jobs after January 2008; it is likely that a substantial share of this group was also employed in January 2008. If we assume that the share of unemployed/inactive is about twice as large for this category than for the remaining population, a reasonable estimate for the employment rate of women in January 2008 would be 85%, for men 93% and about 89% for the overall population.

Tab. 1. Employment status in January 2008 and January 2010, n=603

	2008						2010		
	All		Men		Women		All	Men	Women
Employment	66,8	(79,5)	72,4	(81,9)	60,6	(76,4)	81,1	83,6	78,2
Inactive/unemployed	7,5	(8,9)	4,7	(5,3)	10,8	(13,3)	18,9	16,4	21,8
Status 2008 not known	9,8	(11,6)	11,3	(12,8)	8,1	(10,2)	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
2008: Not in country	15,9	–	11,6	–	20,8	–	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.

In 2010, the employment rate had fallen to 81%. If we exclude the migrants who arrived after 2008, the percentage differential between 2008 and 2010 shrinks from 8 to 6 percentage points. The gender gap in employment may have somewhat narrowed with 78% of women being in employment and 84% of men. Table 2 reports the transition between the employment status in 2008 and 2010. 85% of the respondents that were in employment in 2008 were also employed in 2010. 57% had the same job as two years before, 28% were employed, but in another job than they had held in 2008. Of the respondents who were inactive or unemployed in 2008, 72% were in employment in 2010 and 79% of the respondents who moved in 2008 or 2009 to Ireland had a job in 2010. Noteworthy is, that while respondents who were employed in 2008 had a substantially higher chance of being employed in 2010, the overwhelming majority of the most recent cohort of migrants and of the migrants that were unemployed or inactive in 2008 were employed in 2010.

Tab. 2. Employment transitions between January 2008 and January 2010, n=603

	2008	Employed	Inactive/unemployed	Not known	Not in country
2010					
Employment – same		57,0	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
Employment – different		28,1	71,7	70,7	79,4
Inactive/unemployed		14,9	28,3	29,3	20,6

Results: Earnings

The average weekly earnings in 2008 were €484. They have fallen by almost 10% to €444 in 2010. For men, average weekly earnings fall from €539 to €498; for women, from €411 to €398 (see Table 5). Table 3 reports the weekly earnings in 2008 and 2010 in broad earnings categories. In 2008, 6% earned less than €250 per week. The majority, 46%, earned between €250–€500, 38% between €500 and €750 and 9,5% more than €750. Two years later the earnings distribution was more skewed towards low and very low earnings: 9% earned in January 2010 less than €250 and 62% between €250 and €500. Only 22% earned between €500 and €750 and 7% more than €750. There is a large wage gap between male and female workers. 78% of women, but only 50% of men earned less than €500 per week. In 2010, 81% of women and 61% of men earned less than €500. The recession has narrowed the earnings gap between men and women, but has not closed it. This happened mainly as a result of the over-proportional wage loss of male Polish migrants.

Tab. 3. Weekly gross earnings, January 2008 and January 2010, n= 491 (2010), 417 (2008)

	2008			2010		
	All	Men	Women	All	Men	Women
< €250	6,3	8,4	10,7	8,7	3,1	14,9
€250-€500	46,0	48,2	67,3	62,4	58,8	66,5
€500-€750	38,1	38,5	19,0	21,8	28,1	14,5
> €750	9,5	11,9	3,0	7,3	10,0	4,1

Table 4 reports how the weekly earnings have changed between 2008 and 2010 for people in employment at both time points. 14% moved to a frequently substantially lower paid job; on the other side, 13% managed to get a new job with better payment. For the migrants who changed their job between 2008 and 2010, 39% experienced a worsening of their earning situation and 36% an improvement. Among men, 16% changed to a job with lower earnings (43% of the job changers) and 10% (28% of job changers) improved their earnings by a job change. The situation is less gloomy for women: 13% moved to a worse paid job (33% of job changers), while 20% could increase their earnings by changing their job (49% of job changers).

Tab. 4. Earnings Mobility January 2008–January 2010

	All	Job changers	Men, all	Men, job changers	Women, all	Women, job changers
< 90%	13,3	38,6	15,6	42,6	13,0	32,6
90–110%	73,4	25,4	74,0	29,6	68,5	18,6
> 110%	13,3	36,0	10,4	28,2	19,5	48,8

Again the discrepancy between the substantial change in the overall wage distribution in, and the fairly stable earnings of the group who was continuously employed between 2008 and 2010 can be accounted for by the relatively good 2008 earnings of the group which lost their job between 2008 and 2010 and the relatively meagre 2010 earnings of the group formerly not in employment (see Table 5). For the subsample of migrants who were employed in 2008 and 2010, the earnings were fairly stable with an average of €473 for 2008 and of €469 for 2010. The average 2008 earnings of the migrants employed in 2008 who were without a job in 2010 are €548 while the migrants not in employment in 2008 earned €391 in 2010 and the migrants arriving in 2008 or later earned on average €420. For men, the earnings of the ‘continuously’ employed sunk from €515 to €502. More important for the aggregate is the substitution of the fairly well paid migrants who were unemployed in 2010 (€689) by the formerly unemployed (2010: €402) and the male migrants who moved after January 2010 (€566). For women, the earnings of the ‘continuously’ employed from €413 to €423 was outweighed by the ‘exit’ of women employed in 2008 with an average earnings of €389 and the ‘entry’ of women who earned less in 2010 (not employed in 2008: €383, not in country: €316).

Tab. 5. Mean weekly earnings (in Euro) by gender and transition type, 2008 and 2010

	2008	2010	All		Men			Women			
			Share	2008	2010	Share	2008	2010	Share	2008	2010
Employed	Employed	Employed	61,4	473	469	62,7	515	502	60,6	415	423
Employed	Not empl.	Not empl.	8,7	548	–	10,4	689	–	7,5	389	–
Not Empl.	Employed	Employed	5,3	–	391	4,0	–	402	6,1	–	383
NIC	Employed	Employed	10,9	–	420	8,8	–	566	12,3	–	316
Not known	Employed	Employed	5,9	–	359	6,4	–	376	5,6	–	338
Total	Total	Total	92,2	484	444	92,4	539	498	92,1	411	398

Table 6 reports regression results of upward and downward earnings mobility between 2008 and 2010. Earnings changes of more than 10% in either direction are considered to indicate mobility. Gender and age are unrelated to the risk of job change with a substantial earnings increase or decrease. Males having a partner experienced more likely downward earnings mobility, possibly indicates that they are willing to accept a lower paid job in Ireland rather than emigrating. The length of stay in Ireland is negatively related to downward mobility, but associated with

a lower chance of being in employment (see Table 4); perhaps early arrivals have acquired entitlements which make unemployment in Ireland preferable to going for a poorly paid job. The regression contains also the change in working time as an independent variable, expressed as the ratio of normal working hours in 2010 and of 2008. This variable is an excellent predictor of earnings mobility, in particular of downward mobility. Much of the downward mobility reflects thus forced moves to jobs with reduced working hours and a substantial part of upward mobility is associated with longer working hours in the new job. For earnings mobility, the occupation of the migrant also matters. Sales and service workers least likely experienced a substantial reduction of their earnings while office workers and also the 'higher' occupations less likely than other occupations experienced a substantial increases associated with job changes. Variables associated with human capital are unrelated to earnings mobility. Neither education, nor employer-sponsored training, nor language proficiency bears any relationship to the chance of a substantial pay increase or decrease associated with a job change.

Tab. 6. Multinomial logistic regression of earnings mobility, n=354

	Downward		Upward	
	Coefficient	S.E.	Coefficient	S.E.
Constant	6.86***	1.76	-5.44***	1.64
Female	-.18	.44	.51	.38
Age	-.03	.04	-.09	.07
Age x Female	-.04	.07	.09	.09
Education	.10	.60	.27	.59
Education x Female	.35	.79	.38	.73
Partner	1.08*	.64	.21	.59
Partner x Female	-.87	.85	.08	.73
Child(ren)	.28	.40	-.34	.63
Child(ren) x Female	-.87	.87	.35	.81
Time in Ireland	-.37**	.17	.22	.13
Language Proficiency	-.36	.25	.18	.24
Training in Ireland	.54	.39	.41	.34
Hrs2010/hrs2008	-7.06***	1.28	2.67**	1.08
Manager, Professionals and Semiprofessionals	-.69	.59	-.81	.55
Office workers	.12	.56	-1.03*	.62
Sales and service workers	-1.56**	.62	-.50	.48
Skilled blue collar workers	.44	.63	.53	.64

*** p<.001; ** p<.01; * p<.05

Discussion

In this study, I have analysed data from a representative sample of Polish migrants in Dublin and examined, on the basis of retrospective employment

history information, how their employment and occupational status and their earnings developed between January 2008 and January 2010. Ireland experienced a severe recession in this period, and labour market statistics indicate that NMS migrants had to take an over-proportional share of this burden. This has also been felt by the Polish community in Dublin. This study suggests that 15% of the Polish migrants in Dublin who were employed in January 2008 and stayed in the country until beginning-to-mid 2010 lost their job and a further 13% went for a job with substantially lower earnings. Almost 30% of the migrants who were in employment in 2008 experienced some form of downward mobility in the form of unemployment or lower earnings. This does not include people who were in 2008 in Ireland but had migrated back to Poland or onward to another country. A rough estimate on the basis of the emigration figures reported above is that an additional 15–20% of the workforce left the country, which would add another 10–15% to the share of formerly employed migrants who lost their job. Adding the unknown number of migrants who experienced a decrease in earnings while keeping their job, it is likely that not less than 50% of the Polish community in employment in 2008 saw their situation deteriorate by 2010.

On the other hand, the Dublin labour market continued to integrate Polish migrants. 72% of the migrants who were not in employment in 2008 and 79% of the Poles who migrated after 2008 had found a job by January 2010. These ‘newly employed’ migrants add up to 20% of the 2010 population. Of the migrants who were in employment in 2008, 13% changed to a job with better earnings. Again, we do not know how many migrants experienced wage growth within their job. But even if that is not many, at least a third, but likely about 40% of the Polish population who lived in Dublin in 2010 had experienced some form of upward mobility in the form of getting a job or progressing to a job with better wages. If we take into account all Poles who lived in 2008 or 2010 in Dublin (including the emigrants) more migrants will have experienced that their situation in Ireland worsened in terms of employment and wages. But the difference is not dramatic, the net-share of losers is slightly larger than 10%. For the Polish community still residing in Dublin in 2010 there may be even a bit larger share of people who had improved their situation between 2008 and 2010 than the share who had lost employment, earnings and status between 2008 and 2010.

In terms of the change of employment and wages, the position of Polish women improved in all dimensions in comparison to Polish men. This happened although a higher share of women migrated after 2008. In large parts, this had to do with the fact that many men on particularly well-paid jobs became unemployed between 2008 and 2010. Job losses among women were fewer, but more importantly, the quality of the lost jobs was worse than the average job women held in 2008. Besides that, among the continuously employed, women experienced a small rise in weekly earnings while men experienced a small loss which contributed to the relative improvement of women’s standing.

From a theoretical point of view, the Polish community in Dublin appears to be not as marginalised as predicted from a dual labour market perspective. There is at least a strong under-current of a process of continuous integration. During the

described period a substantial minority improved their earnings, as predicted by human capital theory, in spite of adverse circumstances. Earnings reductions and increases, however, proved to be unrelated to variables associated with human capital, casting doubts indeed to do with human capital development. From a labour market segmentation point of view, it is noteworthy that there are no signs of clear demarcations structuring mobilities but also no evidence against it. This can either mean that the Dublin labour market is not strongly segmented and that Poles will have a fair chance to progress further in the Irish economy. In particular better educated Poles who more easily develop language proficiency and learn skills appreciated by an Irish employer may benefit from opportunities if the Irish economy starts growing again. But the findings are also compatible with the idea that Polish migrants are on an unstructured labour market because they did not get access to a primary segment. They may experience some limited advancement in the first years after arrival, but may feel that the 'good jobs' in the Irish economy are closed to them. This interpretation would be compatible with much of the literature on NMS migrants in Ireland reviewed above.

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Streszczenie

W jaki sposób kryzys ekonomiczny wpłynął na zatrudnienie i zarobki polskich migrantów w Irlandii? W oparciu o unikatowy zbiór danych dotyczących polskich migrantów w Dublinie, wskazuję w niniejszym artykule, iż poziom zatrudnienia i dochodów polskiej społeczności w Dublinie jest zadziwiająco stabilny. W cieniu stabilności ekonomicznej na poziomie makro, dostrzec można wysoki stopień indywidualnej mobilności związanej z utratą i podejmowaniem nowego zatrudnienia oraz poziomą mobilnością w dochodach. Tendencja ta prawdopodobnie odzwierciedla wspólne oddziaływanie ciągłej integracji strukturalnej polskich migrantów oraz wywołany przez recesję wzrost ryzyka zatrudnienia i spadek dochodów.