

**СОЦІОЛОГІЯ МІГРАЦІЙНИХ ПРОЦЕСІВ**

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**SOCIAL ORPHANHOOD OF CHILDREN OF UKRAINIAN LABOUR  
MIGRANTS: THE EMPIRICAL DIMENSION**

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The article presents the results of the study of social orphanhood in the context of modern migration processes in Ukraine based on the theoretical provisions of the concept of transnational migration and the phenomenological approach. In the context of the researched problem, the understanding of social orphanhood as a social phenomenon in the Ukrainian discourse through the prism of transnational migration does not have a clearly defined scientific status. According to the authors of the article, a closer approximation

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in the understanding of this phenomenon is the concept of “Euro-orphanhood”, which has been actively studied recently by Polish scientists. An empirical study based on a qualitative methodology concluded that the transnational family involves both physical and psychological gap between parents and abandoned children, and therefore may constitute a new form of social orphanhood. In the transnational families of Ukrainian migrants children experience loneliness, lack of love, attention and even parents’ alienation. There is also a partial weakening of control in such families, redistribution of responsibilities, changes in the organization of daily routine. However, it is impossible to say unequivocally that the children of Ukrainian labour migrants are social orphans. The difficulties they face due to the absence of their parents are not crucial. Moreover, based on self-assessment, they do not consider themselves social orphans, as in most cases parents working abroad maintain contact with their children. The results of other international studies on the importance and leading role of mothers in the emotional relationship of support and education of children of labour migrants have been confirmed. It is noted that the vast majority of respondents perceive migration abroad as a common phenomenon, as a formed model of behaviour in Ukrainian society which is worth following. The lack of problems with the technical side of communication due to the development of information and communication technologies still depersonalizes the communication process, weakens control over real forms of children’s behaviour and creates a kind of «illusion of parents’ presence» of parents which is especially expected during family holidays and important life events of the children.

*Keywords:* migration, migrants from Ukraine, labour migration, children of labour migrants, intellectual migration, social orphanhood, adaptation strategies of migrants.

### **Introduction**

One of the main patterns of modern Ukrainian labour migration is a significant and constant increase in its scale which is confirmed by both official statistics and expert assessments. Taking into account permanently difficult economic situation in the country, as well as the introduction of a visa-free regime between Ukraine and the EU, we can assume that this scale will continue to increase. The intensification of labour migration has many social consequences, one of which is the spread of the transnational family model. This is a family where the parents or one of them is not fully involved in the upbringing of their child and outsources direct care to other family members because they are physically out of the family due to labour migration.

Such a family is an environment that produces risks of deformation of the child’s personality structure, deterioration of the socio-psychological state and / or quality of life in general. Innovative communication technologies have, of course, provided migrants

this does not reduce the physical distance between parents and abandoned children, but on the contrary - the spatial dispersion between them causes a special state of childhood of labour migrants' children, which is characterized by difficulties in maintaining the emotional connection between parents and their children, the threat to family unity, lack of full-fledged care, etc. That is, children of labour migrants due to the physical absence of their parents have risks of the same problems that are relevant for orphans or those whose parents are deprived of parental rights in the manner prescribed by applicable law.

In this regard, there is reason to believe that children of labour migrants can create a separate group of so-called «social orphans» which may be quite numerous. This poses new challenges for Ukrainian society and the scientific community that need to be addressed by exploring the real situation and outlining the prospects for helping transnational families solve their social problems in order to prevent the reproduction of social orphanhood by future generations.

### **Social orphanhood and transnational migration: Eastern European discourse**

The problem of social orphanhood is not new for European society, given that for more than a long time there has been an intensive movement of labour migrants within the continent, especially in situations of radical change in political trends. The fall of the Berlin Wall, the formation of the European Union - these are only recent events that have led to the conditional leveling of borders and the creation of a global European labour market. Thus, in 2018, the total number of migrants in Europe amounted to 82.3 million people which is 11% of the total population of international migrants. Classical migration in Europe for the period 2013-2018 - 6.5 million people. According to the International Organization for Migration (IOM) in the 2018 World Migration Report ([https://www.iom.int/sites/default/files/country/docs/china/r5\\_world\\_migration\\_report\\_2018\\_en.pdf](https://www.iom.int/sites/default/files/country/docs/china/r5_world_migration_report_2018_en.pdf)), about 40 million of international migrants were born in Europe, but lived in another region of Europe. Migration from Europe to Europe was the second largest regional migration corridor in the world. In 2015 the number of migrants from outside Europe reached more than 35 million.

The growing number of labour migrants in Europe from Europe is largely a «contribution» of countries that have embarked on a path of lasting political and economic transformation since the collapse of the Soviet Union. This contributed to the intensification of processes aimed at the emergence of new phenomena for these countries, associated with the destruction of the traditional way of family life, designed to survive in difficult economic conditions based on the process of migration to developed European countries and beyond. On the other hand, within the European Union due to the addition of new members of the community there is an acceleration of transnational

migration from those countries that have not reached high standards of economic well-being. The phenomenon of the «single-parent family» is a reality today that needs its own comprehensive in-depth research, especially regarding the situation of children who have been left outside the physical confines of parental care.

Terms such as «social orphans» and «child abandonment» are used in the world practice to describe the situation of children in single-parent families. Social orphans are children with at least one parent alive, but who still have been placed in an institutional care without their actual fault (<http://www.agape-trust.org/articles/>). There are basically two family environments (or two types of families) where social orphans «emerge» from: disadvantaged (dysfunctional) families when parental responsibilities are not performed properly (children are neglected, abused and mistreated); families where they felt warm and loved, but under certain circumstances the authorities removed them from their family. There are various reasons for this including acute poverty or upbringing in a single-parent family only by one of the parents (single mother/father) with unstable mental and emotional health (depression, anxiety, etc.).

Another term «child abandonment», which literally means «surrender of a child», includes both physical rejection - leaving a child on the threshold of a stranger and emotional rejection - when there is excessive employment of parents or lack of physical contact or emotional support over a long period of time (<http://criminal.findlaw.com/criminal-charges/child-abandonment.html>).

It is worth noting that in modern Ukrainian society to describe the situation when children live in single-parent family because one of the parents works abroad the term «social orphans» is used. This creates some difficulties in distinguishing and clearly delineating the situation of children in the families of labour migrants. Unlike Ukraine, a country in Central and Eastern Europe such as Poland has been actively «promoting» and using the concept of «Euro-orphanhood» for more than 10 years. However, this concept has not acquired a clearly defined scientific and legal status yet. In general, Euro-orphanhood refers to a situation involving children from families where a father or both parents live abroad for a certain period of time in order to earn money to improve the family's financial situation (Kozak, 2010). The scale of this phenomenon in Polish society is quite significant. According to the Ministry of National Education of Poland in 2018, up to 20% of school-age children have experienced European orphanhood (<https://wydarzenia.interia.pl/polska/news-men-alarmuje-nawet-20-proc-polskich-dzieci-eurosierotami, nId, 2514289>). Poland remains a country of pure emigration. The outflow of population exceeds the indicators of inflows. 75% of temporary migrants stay abroad for 12 months or longer and become residents of immigration countries (Ślusarczyk, 2014). Accordingly, such international movements of Poles lead to negative consequences in the functioning of the family, namely the loss of emotional connection

between parents and children, creates a number of problems concerning upbringing and studying process. These issues are represented in a number of scientific publications on this topic (Olearczyk, 2007; Tarka, 2014; Kawecki I. et al., 2015; Kacperska, E. et al., 2019) and in the confirmation of those trends that have already been noted in situations of families related to transnational migration. First of all, it concerns the formation of the image of one's own self, the construction of relationships with the external social environment and self-esteem of migrants' children (Jussim, 1986; Babad, 2009), which under certain adverse conditions can lead to increased anxiety, feelings of hopelessness, and even helplessness (Seligman et al., 2003; Wentzel, Miele, 2009). Migrants' children in the motivational and behavioral sphere can form a negative image of their abilities, competencies on the basis of low self-esteem, which has a demotivating effect on their further acquisition of knowledge and avoidance of new achievements in education and science (Levesque, Lowe, 1992; Dweck, 2002).

It is believed that the absence of one parent for six months is acceptable and does not lead to the destruction of family relationships. However, prolonged absence of the parent(s) can complicate the situation and may be a so-called trial for the child. It is also necessary to take into account the age of the child, the family relationship, who remained a guardian in case of the migration of both parents and other factors (Pawelec, 2011). At this stage it is important to provide psychological support to children, the presence of clearly defined rules for determining the official guardian who will be responsible while the parents are absent.

Unlike the Republic of Poland, in Ukraine it is extremely rare for children, whose parents have emigrated, to have a legally guaranteed official guardian. Given the massive outflow of labour resources from Ukraine, the problem of social orphanhood is one of the most painful for the society. In recent years, the number of scientific papers dealing with this issue has increased. It has been stated that the absence of a father or a mother leads to the situation when children have a number of complexes associated with the lack of inner harmony. In particular, it is envy of children who have good, friendly families, and feelings of lack of love and doom to loneliness (Bordian, 2012). The fact of the absence of parents or one of them can contribute to the formation of a child's or adolescent's personal traits and qualities that prevent further successful socialization (Yashchuk, 2016). It is noted that only the family has such a system of social information which allows the child to learn it with maximum interest, completeness and speed. The components of this system include parental love, boundless trust in parents, the overall positive psychological climate of the family, and so on. In addition, the agents of this information, that is parents, are guided in the process of upbringing by internal motives rather than external incentives, as is typical for employees of schools, universities or any other institution that performs the same function (Verstyuk, 2017).

Ukrainian scientists pay special attention to the absence of a mother in the process

of raising children. Migration of mothers will inevitably lead to the division of gender roles in the family and may have much more serious negative consequences in the field of child care than the migration of both parents (Zhuravlev, 2012). In the sociological study «Children of labour migrants: peculiarities of behaviour», the researchers concluded that the likelihood of emotional deprivation syndrome increases when the child is acutely aware of the mother's absence ([http://caritasua.org/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=220&Itemid=23](http://caritasua.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=220&Itemid=23)). The results are consistent with research by Rhacel Salazar Parreñas on transnational families, who, following the example of the Philippines, shows that children who grow up in families without their parents, and especially without mothers, are prone to crime and declining of moral values (Parreñas, 2005).

In view of the above, the aim of the authors' empirical study was to find out what difficulties children of Ukrainian migrants face in their daily lives under the conditions provided to them by their parents or one of them during their physical absence.

### **Methodological background of the study**

One of the theoretical positions of the work is the foundations of the modern concept of transnational migration (Glick Schiller, 1999). Based on its provisions, the peculiarity of modern Ukrainian migration is that it has a transnational character. This means that its dominant form is the circulating short- or long-term temporary migration of mainly one family member, who through various means of communication maintains contact with those family members who have stayed at home, i.e. carries out transnational family practices. Hence, transnational migration is a territory-independent social process, as a result of which migrants enter more than one community and, thus, create new social networks that cross the borders of nation states and continue to operate in global social networks. Migrants become transmigrants when they develop and maintain multiple family, economic, social, organizational, religious, and political cross-border relationships (Glick Schiller, 2000).

Among the subjectivist concepts, the theoretical basis of this study is the phenomenological approach (Schultz, 1961), which made it possible to consider social orphanhood through the prism of the so-called life world - the everyday world of routine where children constantly communicate and spend part of their childhood. This, in turn, will allow children of labour migrants to be seen as individuals feeling and experiencing parental absences. The state of the phenomenological approach concerning the significance of the objective world, which is achieved only through its transformation into the subjective (internal), is one of the research hypotheses about the attitude of labour migrants' children to the phenomenon of social orphanhood.

The empirical basis of the work was a study of the impact of international labour

migration of parents on the daily lives of their children. The research was implemented in Lviv region (October-November 2019, Ukraine) which according to statistics is one of the most involved in such processes. An in-depth interview (n = 20) was chosen as the method of gathering information. This is a qualitative method that involves interviewing the respondent according to a pre-arranged general plan with certain thematic blocks that reflect the basis of researchers' interest, and selected questions to obtain more detailed information. The advantage of this method is the ethical way of collecting information, which is provided by the respondent's permission to use the interview materials. In addition, the interviewer's face-to-face conversation with the respondent provides a freer expression of the respondent's views and positions than, for example, during a focus group discussion, when pressure from one participant on others is also possible. The advantage of this method is also the interviewer's control in the process of collecting information which allows you to get exactly the information you need for the study. The search for respondents was carried out by targeted selection, namely using the quota method. Accordingly, certain parameters of participants' selection were introduced, namely: experience of living in a family whose parents (or one of them) worked abroad during their childhood; age of the respondent - due to the inaccessibility of the respondents, children aged 16-25 were involved in the interview, who could already agree or disagree to participate in the study; length of stay of parents or one of them abroad - more than 5 years.

### **Results of the study**

According to the official data of the State Statistics Service of Ukraine in 2019, 26,789 people migrated from Ukraine abroad (State Statistics Committee, 2019). These data do not cover the population of the temporarily occupied territory of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea, the city of Sevastopol and part of the anti-terrorist operation zone. The specified information is formed on the basis of available administrative data on change of registration of a residence. This means that this figure is not final. According to other sources, since 2010, about 4 million of Ukrainians have left Ukraine and not returned, which is almost 10% of the population (Vinokurov, 2019).

Within the framework of the Caritas project «Network of social centers for children of labour migrants in Ukraine», which was implemented in 7 cities of Western Ukraine (Ivano-Frankivsk, Kolomyia, Drohobych, Stryi, Boryslav, Brody, Novovolynsk), it was determined who takes care of children when a father or a mother or both parents are absent. Therefore, with the total number of 353 children-respondents half of them are raised without a mother, a third - without both parents, and more than a quarter - by the older generation, i. e. grandparents (Lukavetska, 2012). Analysis of the duration of absence of parents within the same project showed the following picture of parents' absence: up to



a year - 35 cases; from 1 to 3 years - 111 cases; from 3 to 5 years - 112 cases; from 5 to 10 years - 99 cases; more than 10 years - 14 cases. Thus, approximately 64% of children (at the age of 3 and elder) grow up without parents for years.

According to research provided by the international human rights center La Strada-Ukraine, labour migrants themselves claim that they are forced to leave their children for a while for their own benefit. Motivation: 86% of migrants earn money for children's education, 72% - for the construction and purchase of housing, 69% - to meet the daily needs of descendants (Pigida, 2010). As a result, a number of life difficulties arise for children of labour migrants. In particular, this is evidenced by the results of the study «Life difficulties of children of foreign labour migrants», conducted in 2009 in schools of Transcarpathia. 230 students were interviewed and almost 80% of them have experienced various life problems: 33% of surveyed children, whose mother worked abroad, felt «unbearable mental burden», 11% - «parental abuse», 3% - «heavy physical pressure», 3% - «domestic problems» ([http://www.kas.de/wf/doc/kas\\_23409-1522-21-30.pdf?110720153220](http://www.kas.de/wf/doc/kas_23409-1522-21-30.pdf?110720153220)). In addition, a 2010 study “Left-Behind Children” conducted by the International Organization for Migration (IOM) in Ternopil and Chernivtsi regions, provides the following conclusions: parental departure could have a negative impact on the emotions and social behaviours of left-behind children in Ukraine; can lead to their secrecy, aggression, low level of respect for others, poor discipline, refusal to study; to become an impetus to numerous problems in the field of social communication and cognitive activity of children (<http://www.childrenleftbehind.eu/wp-content/uploads/2011/11/Final-Report-ITA-UKR-project-IOM-Italy.pdf>). However, researchers draw attention to the fact that a significant disadvantage of many empirical studies is their methodological fragmentation. None of them have used control groups of children and adolescents living in the same area with their parents. There were no arguments in favour of the fact that the negative emotional manifestations and psychological features that researchers emphasize are unique to children of labour migrants, and not due to age-related changes in the mentality or caused by other circumstances (Odinets, 2013).

Regarding the statistics on the number of labour migrants' children it should be noted that in Ukraine neither the existing official nor expert estimates reflect the real scale of the phenomenon. Unconfirmed figures of 3 to 9 million children whose parents work abroad are circulating in the public space<sup>1</sup>. Moreover, as of today, there is no nationwide survey of labour migrants' children in Ukraine.

The aim of our study was to find out what difficulties migrants' children face in their daily lives. According to the study, ten children out of twenty had a mother working

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1 A whole generation of children, whose parents are forced to stay abroad, has already grown up in Ukraine. URL: <http://kobza.com.ua/trudovi-migranty/2342-pokolinnja-minus.html> (access date: 11/1/2016)



abroad, four - had a father abroad, and six - had both parents working abroad. The most common recipient country of the respondents in this study is Italy, especially when it comes to female migration. Other countries, which labour migrants' children mentioned, include Poland, the Czech Republic, Russia, Spain and Germany. Most labour migrants have secondary special education, higher education is less common. As for the main type of occupation, most parents before going abroad were employees in working specialties. The average duration of labour migrants abroad is 10.5 years (min = 5 years, max = 25 years). As for the age of the children themselves, they were mostly left before the age of 10.

### **Reasons and circumstances of the father's / mother's departure to work abroad**

To the question «Do you remember why your father (mother) went to work abroad?» in nineteen cases out of twenty, financial difficulties were reported. For example, respondents noted the following: difficulties in financial support of the family, inability to live with a small child on the salary of a primary school teacher, and so on.

Among the reasons for parents' migration, in addition to the difficult financial situation, the respondents indicated the cost of tuition fees concerning the entrance to a higher educational institution, children's movement to and living in a new city (renting an apartment or dormitory), desire for a «better life», buying a new home, the prom cost after graduation, payment for the work of tutors required for successful completion of final exams - external independent testing. Other reasons for migration included job losses due to redundancies, as well as difficult family relationships (frequent parental quarrels, father's alcohol abuse, etc.).

Adults mostly make their own migration decisions by simply informing their children about going to work abroad. Instead, in those families where both parents left, the issue of migration was discussed with the probable guardians of the children, mostly grandparents. Also there were cases when the decision to migrate was made by the whole family, including children. Mostly, these are families where any decisions are made as follows: give children the opportunity to evaluate the proposal and study the reaction to innovation. Moreover, some respondents stated that important family changes were discussed at so-called family councils.

### **Reaction of labour migrants' children to parents' notification of departure**

More than half of the respondents were against parental migration. Especially, they had no idea how they would be left without their mother, would live without her and what to do next. A small proportion of respondents reacted to this situation with understanding. Such a decision was quite normal for them. Some even noted that they themselves saw

no other way out for their parents than to go to work abroad. According to the study, in the case of migration of one parent, the children remain in the care of another family member. Instead, when both parents migrate, the children stay with their grandparents. There were no cases when children were left with distant relatives or acquaintances.

### **Communication**

Parents visit their children at home mostly twice a year, on Easter and Christmas holidays, less often 3-4 times a year. Unfortunately, there are also cases when labour migrants leave and never return. The number of migrants who do not leave their children for a long time and periodically return home is also growing. The longest separation time between parents and children is 16 years. The other children did not see their parents for more than six months after the interview.

Regarding children's visits of parents abroad, half of the respondents never visited their parents. However, there were those who traveled every year, mainly during the summer holidays. The most common form of communication between children and labour migrants is the Internet, namely Skype and Viber. Telephone communication is now less common, due to the high cost of calls on the one hand, and the emergence of Internet communication on the other.

In general, when it comes to communicating with parents working abroad, the most common contact is every day / every evening, and the rarest is once a week. There is only one case in the study group when there is almost no connection as such. Also, with regular communication, it is not a problem for migrants to get in touch once again, which is explained by the development of communication technologies. In general, children have enough time to communicate with their parents. There are even those who think that communication every day is too much. There are cases when, as of the time of the interview the respondents (adults) state that they now have enough communication, but mention the lack of it at an earlier age. However, respondents noted that they still lack direct communication with parents, hugs during conversations, advice. It was emphasized that no social network can replace at least an hour of «live» communication. They talk mainly about general, everyday topics related to the affairs of both parties, the success of children's education, discuss their personal lives, weather and more.

### **Emotional connection**

Lack of parents nearby and lack of emotional connection are manifested in most cases during the school years and holidays. This is especially true during Christmas and Easter holidays, when the whole family gathers. For some children, this lack of parents is manifested in the absence of direct contact with the them. It was about cases when advice was needed here and now, and for this children had to wait for the parents to be

free of work.

For a third of respondents who took part in the interview, the lack of parents was manifested in all aspects and was accompanied by emotional deprivation. This was especially felt by the respondents at important moments in their lives: university admission, marriage, birthdays, etc. It is worth noting that even those children, who confidently stated that the absence of parents did not influence them, mentioned at least one specific case when they were acutely aware of the lack of a father / mother or both parents. And in such cases, for the vast majority of children parents were replaced by those who took care of the children at the time of the absence of those parents who were abroad.

If for most children the guardians have been able to replace a parent or both parents working abroad, to the question, «Can you name a specific person who is very similar to your parents?» however, most respondents answered «no». And only a small part of the children clearly indicated that it is impossible to replace their parents: «No, of course, the mother is the dearest person»; «Well, no one will ever replace the mother»; «Exactly at the age when my father left that it is impossible to replace him.» Also referring to the words of the respondents, we can state that if a father can still be replaced (and it is done mainly by a mother, who takes care of the children), the mother cannot be replaced. Neither grandparents nor the guardians cannot replace children's mother. Even the father cannot replace her.

If children have any difficulties, first of all they turn to their mother for advice - this is the case when the father works abroad. Some turn to grandparents, but usually children still call their mother, who is abroad.

Most respondents said that they consider their families to be incomplete due to the absence of a parent or both of them. However, again, these are mostly those where a mother is a migrant. Children and teenagers especially mention that the mother is the best mentor and supporter. Those children, who still do not agree that their family is incomplete due to the labour migration of a family member, mostly justify their position by the fact that they often communicate with their parents.

One of the tasks of the study was to find out whether the children of labour migrants feel lonely due to the absence of their parents or one of them. The following pattern has been recorded: most say that they were familiar with the feeling of loneliness in childhood and adolescence, but this is not the case now, as they are used to the fact that their father / mother or both parents are not around. In general, the number of those who do not feel lonely without parents is higher than of those who feel this loneliness.

As for the lack of love, most children of labour migrants say «no», because, according to them, a father or a mother showed their love and care at the available opportunity. To the question «Do you have the feeling that emotional intimacy and mutual understanding between you and your father (mother) is lost with each subsequent year of his (her) stay abroad?» the majority of respondents clearly state «no». This is due to the parents themselves, who correctly explained to the children the reason for migration and the benefits for the family from it. Moreover, it was even a question of strengthening the

emotional connection because the children felt the real value of their parents during their absence. If the answer to this question is «yes», then these are isolated cases. Also, children of labour migrants do not feel guilty that their parents went abroad. Many of them shift the blame to the government which is unable to provide decent wages to its citizens and they are forced to resort to international labour migration. Some believe that migration is normal because it is a mass phenomenon, and some do not even think about the role he / she has played in deciding on migration.

### **Education**

Respondents report that neither school performance nor attendance nor their behaviour has deteriorated since the departure of their parents, and even if so, it is not due to adult migration, but to other reasons. In case of difficulties at school, children were mainly helped to cope with them by the people under whose care they remained. As for performance monitoring, in addition to guardians, it was also exercised by parents from abroad.

### **Financial support**

According to the children, after the parents started sending the earned money from abroad, their financial situation improved significantly. Some claimed to have paid off family debts and bank loans, and some used the funds to build and repair homes. Accordingly, with the improvement of the financial situation of the family, the opportunities of the children themselves increase. They have the opportunity to attend various courses, continue their studies away from home, shop for quality things and food, travel, etc. Some even take advantage of the fact that parents earn well, abuse it and at the same time realize it themselves. However, there are those who believe that their opportunities with the migration of parents have not increased.

The children of labour migrants ambiguously answered the question «Do you consider the sacrifice of parents to be justified?». It was difficult for them to answer «yes» or «no». Some children believe that this is a forced step; some confidently declare that such sacrifice by the parents is justified. However, they are willing to give away certain material items in exchange for their return and a full-fledged family.

Preferably, each child considers earning money in the future through labour migration, as their parents do. Some refer to the fact that such a need may arise, others consider such an option in the absence of decent work in Ukraine. Those who do not see labour migration as a way to earn money in the future argue that they do not want separation from their future family members or their patriotic attitude and will make efforts to find a decent job at home.

### **Control**

The control of parents working abroad over their children was in several cases

for the majority of respondents, parental (when both parents are abroad) words are more important. When a mother is abroad, her words are also more authoritative for the majority: either for the words of a father under whose care the children remained, or for the words of other guardians (grandparents). To the question «Have you always done what your parents told you?» (meaning by phone or Skype) more than half of the children said «no». And this is mainly due to the lack of direct control. That is, promises made through various means of communication did not always become a reality.

### **Self-identification with «social orphans»**

In general, the children of labour migrants do not agree that they can be called «social orphans»: «I do not agree with this statement because it does not depend on whether the parents work abroad or they are with the children»; «I think it is completely wrong to call children orphans with living parents. Often parents who are abroad take much more care of their children. «

Moreover, the term «social orphans» has a stigmatizing effect on the children of labour migrants. They emphasize that if it were applied to them, it would be unpleasant and make them think badly.

Many believe that the correctness of the term «social orphans» to the children of labour migrants depends on various circumstances:

- who takes care of the children when parents are abroad: «If the child grows up alone or has some distant relatives (grandparents, godparents or other relations), then I completely agree. The family atmosphere disappears, but in my case I had elder brother and sister, so I didn't feel the need for anything. Therefore, it depends on the situation»;

- behaviour of migrant parents: «In some cases, I agree. I also have two friends whose parents are abroad. The girl communicates with her mother. And another friend hardly communicates with his dad. Dad sends money, calls once a month and that's it»;

- the age of the children when the parents leave them: «If a child between the ages of one and ten and the mother goes abroad, I would probably call these children social orphans. And if they are elder children, I think this term is inappropriate for them»;

- general situation within the family: «It depends on the parents. There are parents who do not fully fulfill their responsibilities, even when they are close to their children. There may be both parents in Ukraine with a child, but they have absolutely no care for the child. Here is an example: where I live, there is a family where mother drinks and no one looks after the children at all. Thus, there are parents, but the children are not taken care of. Accordingly, to call a child a social orphan, parents do not need to travel far abroad. That is, this issue is quite ambiguous and it depends on each family and person».

Another part of respondents noted that children of labour migrants become «social orphans» only when both parents have left. Those who believe that the absence of even

of even one parent gives grounds to consider the child a «social orphan» argue their opinion as follows: «I think that this term can be used even in the absence of one parent, if they completely forget about their family, about children and disappear at all»; «I think that even the absence of one of the parents somehow makes the child an orphan. One way or another, the child will lack warmth and comfort from either a father or a mother».

### Conclusions

The results of the author's research allow us to make the following generalizations. Most children of labour migrants (on the example of Lviv region) do not problematize the fact of their living without parents, but perceive it as self-evident, as an integral part of their daily lives. This is confirmed by the fact that many questions were difficult for respondents to answer because, according to them, they have never thought about it. Based on the provisions of the phenomenological approach, we can say that in the «life» of children of labour migrants the phenomenon of «social orphanhood» is not meaningful or reflected.

According to their children, labour migration of parents is a consequence of the economic situation of the country as a whole, which makes it impossible for parents to provide a decent standard of living for their family. There was no lack of communication in the families of labour migrants. Communication between parents and children through modern means of communication (mobile, social networks) is regular, but it is characterized by some limitations, as it is reduced or mostly consists of monitoring the health and success of the child's learning. Hence, it is only a matter of communication «impoverishing» between parents and children, not their absence.

Returning to the theory of transnational migration, we can say that modern migration is indeed transnational in nature. In particular, labour migrants and their family members (in our case children) who remained at home carry out transnational practices. Despite the spatial and temporal distance between family members, the latter maintain various contacts. According to the results of empirical research, it is both verbal communication (arrival of a migrant back home, visits by relatives of a migrant in the host society, mobile and Internet communication, social networks) and nonverbal (money transfers and transfers of various goods home, etc.).

The results of in-depth interviews also clearly indicate that respondents rate their families as incomplete due to the absence of parents or one of them; feel the lack of parental love, alienation from parents; name specific cases of acute shortage of parents nearby in certain life situations; ready to even give material things in exchange for the return of parents, and so on. Respondents emphasize the emergence of such an emotional state as loneliness caused by the absence of parents, which leads to the loss of close emotional ties and can be seen as a manifestation of emotional deprivation, which, in our opinion, is one of the hallmarks of social orphanhood.

Given that the majority of children of labour migrants remain, either with one parent living at home or with close relatives, as well as through the regular implementation of

of transnational family practices, the manifestations of emotional deprivation are temporary, which is more acute in the early stages of separation from parents. Therefore, this is a reason to single out only hidden social orphanhood in the context of modern migration processes.

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## **СОЦІАЛЬНЕ СИРІТСТВО ДІТЕЙ УКРАЇНСЬКИХ ТРУДОВИХ МІГРАНТІВ: ЕМПІРИЧНИЙ ВИМІР**

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У статті представлено результати дослідження соціального сирітства в контексті сучасних міграційних процесів в Україні на основі теоретичних положень концепції транснаціональної міграції та феноменологічного підходу. Розуміння соціального сирітства як соціального явища в межах транснаціональної міграції не має чітко визначеного наукового статусу в українському дискурсі. На думку авторів статті, більш близьким у розумінні цього явища є поняття «євросирітство», яке останнім часом активно досліджується польськими науковцями. Емпіричне дослідження, проведене на основі якісної методології, дозволило зробити висновок, що транснаціональна сім'я передбачає як фізичний, так і психологічний розрив між батьками та дітьми, а тому може становити нову форму соціального сирітства. У транснаціональних сім'ях українських мігрантів діти відчують самотність, брак любові, уваги і навіть відчуження батьків. Також у таких сім'ях відбуваються часткове послаблення контролю, перерозподіл обов'язків, зміни в організації розпорядку дня. Однак не можна однозначно стверджувати, що діти українських трудових мігрантів є соціальними сиротами. Труднощі, з якими вони стикаються через відсутність батьків, не є визначальними. Більше того, за самооцінкою, вони не вважають себе соціальними сиротами, оскільки в більшості випадків батьки, які працюють за кордоном, підтримують контакт зі своїми дітьми. Підтверджено результати інших міжнародних досліджень щодо важливості та провідної ролі матері в емоційному зв'язку підтримки та виховання дітей трудових мігрантів. Відзначено, що переважна більшість респондентів сприймають міграцію за кордон як звичне явище, як сформовану модель поведінки в українському суспільстві, яку варто наслідувати. Відсутність проблем з технічною стороною спілкування завдяки розвитку інформаційно-комунікаційних технологій все ж таки деперсоніфікує процес комунікації, послаблює контроль за реальними формами поведінки дітей та створює своєрідну «ілюзію присутності» батьків, що особливо очікується під час сімейних свят та важливих життєвих подій дітей.

*Ключові слова:* міграція, мігранти з України, трудова міграція, діти трудових мігрантів, інтелектуальна міграція, соціальне сирітство, адаптаційні стратегії мігрантів.

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