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LABOUR SUPPLY IN POLAND IN THE CONTEXT OF THE INTEGRATION WITH THE EUROPEAN UNION

1. INTRODUCTION

Systemic transformations in Poland initiated in the end of 1989 directed at market regulation brought about many diverse changes which among other things concerned the labour market. It is worth stressing that in the following study the author has concentrated on selected aspects of transformations of labour supply (special focus has been placed on the issue of employment) in Poland in the context of the economic development of the country and the advanced processes of integration with the European structures (Polish membership in the European Union has been taken into consideration). For example a comparison of the structure of the employed in Poland and in the other countries of the EU (it concerns 15 "old" member states of the EU before the accession that took place on 1 May 2004) shows certain differences in this area. Therefore, it is worth familiarizing oneself with selected issues connected with the transformations regarding the state and the structure of labour supply in the Polish economy of the transition period as well as the scale and the directions of these changes. Analytic conclusions can form the basis of further research in this field.

Thus the subject (and at the same time the basic aim) of this study constitutes an analysis of selected problems of labour supply in Poland in the light of the integration with the EU (particularly in the nineties and in the beginning of this decade). Research encompassed mainly the structure of employment (among other things the generic cross section, the ownership cross section, the cross section of the forms of employment, and the cross section focusing on the education level) as well as certain issues concerning unemployment. Certain problems and demographic prospects regarding potential work resources have also been touched upon.

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In the following study the author has used among other things the data obtained from the Ministry of Economy, Labour and Social Politics and from statistical yearbooks and other publications issued by the Central Statistical Office in Warsaw. They include registered data, information from the General National Census and some data taken from the Survey of Economic Activity of Population (BAEL) which has been carried out since 1992.

2. SELECTED ASPECTS CONCERNING THE TRANSFORMATIONS OF LABOUR SUPPLY IN POLAND (IN THE CONTEXT OF SOME EXPERIENCES OF WORLD ECONOMIES)

Considering the problems regarding labour supply discussed in the following study (that is to say employment and unemployment) it should be stressed that they depend on the demographic determinants and the state and structure of the economy. Marketisation of the Polish economy, successive processes of integration with the EU and an increase in domestic and foreign competition enforced structural change processes in the economy which encompassed among other things transformations regarding labour supply. A presentation of selected aspects of these transformations will be preceded by a short description of their determinants. Substantial impairment of the dynamics of the economic growth constituted a vital cause of a decrease in employment as well as an increase in unemployment in Poland which were visible during the systemic transformations period.

As a result of the Polish transformation initiated at the turn of 1989 and 1990 the labour market underwent considerable changes. Work became "a commodity" to some extent and since then it has been subject to the rules of the market (including a certain degree of commercialisation). In 1990 evident unemployment appeared, which considerably influenced the nature of the labour market. In the former period there was a shortage of labour but at the same time there was substantial latent unemployment whereas after 1990 there was a relative surfeit of labour and the unemployment rate was rising quickly (which will be discussed later in the study). However, transformations on the Polish labour market were much more extensive in nature. Since the beginning of the

¹ In order to better illustrate the problems discussed in this part of the dissertation the author will use among other things selected information from the studies entitled: Sektorowy Program Operacyjny Rozwój Zasobów Ludzkich (SPO RZL) na lata 2004–2006, Ministry of Economy, Labour and Social Policy, Brussels, Warsaw, January 2004, p. 9 and the following and *Dziesięć lat polskiej transformacji w aspekcie integracji z Unią Europejską*, RCSS, Warszawa 2000 p. 109 and the following.

nineties the level of occupational activity of the society has been declining (that is to say the share of the employed and the unemployed in relation to the whole of the population). According to the data colleted thanks to the General National Census, occupationally active population amounted to 18 452.5 thousand people in 1988. In the general census of population and households which was conducted in May 2002 16 776.5 thousand occupationally active people were reported. In the case of 1055.8 thousand people no information was obtained as to whether these people worked, were actively searching for a job or whether they were occupationally passive - the majority of them constituted the people who were staying abroad at the time of the census (including those reported on the basis of the population records). Despite certain understatement of the number of occupationally active people in the 2002 census there can be no doubt that there has been a substantial decrease in the real work resources although simultaneously in the period from 1988 to 2002 an increase in the overall number of people aged 15 and over by 3 million was reported. In the same period the population of the occupationally passive aged 15 and over grew. This group amounted to 9816.6 thousand in 1988 and in 2002 - 13 456.2 thousand, which is connected with the increase in the occupational deactivation of people in this period (Narodowy Spis Powszechny..., 2003, pp. 6–7).

According to the data obtained from the Survey of Economic Activity of Population (BAEL) the occupational activity rate of the people aged 15 and over which in November (the 4th quarter) of 1992 amounted to 61.7% had decreased to the level of 54.9% by the end of 2004. A decrease in occupational activity concerned to a similar extent women and men whereas substantial differences were reported as regards this rate in the case of urban and rural population. In the years 1992 - 2004 there was a decrease in the occupational activity rate (calculated with regard to the whole of the population aged 15 and over) by 5.4 percentage points (to 54.1%) as regards urban population and by 9.2 percentage points (to 56.3%) in the case of rural population. Since the beginning of the nineties the process of falling scale of employment has been taking place, which particularly concerns the people of immobile age (that is to say over 44 years old). With regard to this group the factors such as a quite commonly applied option of early retirement, pre-retirement allowances and benefits and relatively lenient criteria as regards application for invalidity pensions contributed to this fall. The rate of employment in the years 1992 - 2004 (the 4th quarter) declined by 8.2 percentage points (from 53.3% to 45.1%). This means that in the 4th quarter of 2004 only less than half of people aged 15 and over worked. In accordance with the characteristic trend the rate was higher for men than for women (respectively 52.2% and 38.5%) as well as in the case of inhabitants of villages than in the case of inhabitants of cities. In the 4th quarter of 2004 the rate of employment amounted to 47.2% as regards rural population aged 15 and over whereas in the case of urban population -43.8%.

Taking into consideration the scope of interest of the following study it should also be stated that the direction of structural changes in the world economy to date points to the fact that the role of technically advanced branches of economy will grow. Consequently, qualifications (know how) and the demand for skilled workforce (growing role of human capital) will acquire more and more significance. Changes implemented in enterprises and researchdevelopment units are increasingly radical in nature, which means that businesses decide on a particular restructurisation scheme which aims at ensuring adjustment of the kind of business activity, strategy, organisation structure to the challenges posed by the new economy. Defining the new economy American economists R. Atkinson and R. Court state that this notion describes an economy based on knowledge in which new jobs and higher standards of living are generated by: enterprises' flexibility, continuous technological change, the speed of operation on the market and a penchant for risky undertakings (Atkinson 1999, pp. 7-8). The characteristics of the new economy are as follows: globalisation of world markets, increase in significance as regards state-of-the-art technologies, innovations in the field of high-tech.

It is worth adding that certain determinants of the Polish employment and labour market policy can be found in the Lisbon Strategy, which is a basic document showing how to invigorate and modernise European economy. This scheme was adopted in 2000 and it envisages turning the European Union into the most competitive and dynamic economy in the world. However, in accordance with the conclusion of the Presidency of the European Council in Brussels of November 2004 with regard to preparing a medium-term evaluation of the Lisbon Strategy in the future it is necessary to take into consideration (*Strategia lizbońska...*, 2002):

- 1) Raising competitiveness of European economies by means of a balanced strategy which would have an economic, social and environmental dimension.
- 2) Further treatment of the implementation of the Lisbon Strategy as a key element of the policy of the European Commission.
- 3) A key role of social partners at all levels, particularly in connection with the labour market modernisation.
- 4) A scheme of actions which can accelerate the development of a common methodology needed for the scheme concerning simplification of legislation.

It is also worth stressing that employees should be supported in acquiring pragmatic skills which can enhance their chances on the increasingly demanding (and sometimes "unpredictable") Polish labour market. This support could be offered in many forms, for example by the state policy towards the labour market, by educational policy (in particular by encouraging a tendency towards universal multifunctional education) and by activities within the scope of continual education. However, a pro-employment macroeconomic policy and flexibilisation of the Polish labour market are also required. An increase in

productive and effective employment (which would enable to efficiently use labour supply) should constitute the main goal of these policies. Therefore, it is important to increase the quality of human resources by means of education, training and occupational activation as well as by reskilling in accordance with the needs of given segments and requirements of particular labour markets. It is estimated that in Poland only 20% of people enjoys the opportunity of doing the job consistent with their profession throughout their economic activity. In the EU countries the occupationally active change their profession on average 6–8 times during their lives. Therefore, the issue of reskilling (and the role of education) seems to be all the more significant (*Sektorowy program operacyjny...*, 2004, p. 46). It is supposed to contribute to the creation of the competitive economy based on knowledge and entrepreneurship which would be capable of long-term harmonious development and which could ensure an increase in employment and socio-economic and spatial cohesion with the European Union.

In the light of these issues it is necessary to mention that the decrease in the number of the employed in the national economy (during the transition period), which affected the employment rate, was triggered especially by the processes of ownership changes, restructurisation of certain branches of management, organisational changes in enterprises, transformations as regards applied techniques and technology which led to an increase in work efficiency and a decrease in domestic and foreign demand. As a result of these changes an increase in the number of the unemployed (who were mostly "redundant manpower") occurred.

Transformations of the macroeconomic situation in Poland in the nineties and in the beginning of the new century affected the structure of economically active people as well. For example in the 4th quarter of 1998 the employed comprised almost 90% of this group of people whereas in the 4th quarter of 2004 they made up only 82.7%. It can be concluded from the Central Statistical Office data that in 1990 all in all 16.5 million people worked. By 1993 the number of the employed had decreased and in 1994 it started to increase until it reached the level of 16.3 million in 1997. The increase in the number of the employed in this period (1994-1997) resulted from the high dynamics of economic growth among other things. Since 1998 the number of the employed has been declining again. In the end of 2003 in Poland there were approximately 14.9 million of the employed, which meant a decrease by approximately 10% in relation to the end of 1990. The analysed processes are also confirmed by the results of the Survey of Economic Activity of Population - BAEL (comparable with the information obtained thanks to the Labour Force Survey - LFS). However, in accordance with the BAEL data in the 4th quarter of 2004 14 058 thousand people worked in Poland (which is more by 340 thousand or 2.5% than in the year before).

The Polish labour market is sensitive to all the changes of the macroeconomic situation (it is characteristic of the economies being in the process of transition). For example in the years 1994–1998 a 1% increase in GDP caused a 0.2% increase in employment. A slow down in the economic development which occurred in Poland in the late nineties translated into a substantial decline in employment (a slow down in the growth rate to the level of app. 1.1% in 2001 was accompanied by a decrease in the number of the employed by 3.3%, a similar trend occurred in 2002). On the contrary the growth rate of GDP reported in 2001 in 15 EU member states generated an increase in the number of the employed by 1.2%. The issue of an increase in work efficiency and a jobless growth played a very important role among all the factors contributing to the limited ability of absorption of the Polish labour market.

In the systemic transition period there occurred a decrease in the employment rate (which has been mentioned before). Sex and education among other things constitute the features which considerably diversify the population of the employed (vide Table 1).

Table 1. Selected characterisations of the structure of the employed in the years 1989–2003 (in percents)

Specification	1989	2003 ^b
By sex		
- Males	52.9	52.5 (54.8)
- Females	47.1	47.5 (45.2)
By ownership sector		
- Private	46.6	74.4 (68.5)
- Public	53.4	25.6 (31.5)
By level of education		
- Tertiary	8.4	(19.1)
- Post-secondary and vocational secondary		(29.1)
- General secondary	28.5ª	(7.6)
- Basic vocational	29.5	(32.3)
- Lower secondary, primary and incomplete primary	33.6	(11.9)

^a Including post-secondary and vocational secondary.

S o u r c e: Own calculations and elaboration based on: "Rocznik Statystyczny" 1990, GUS, Warszawa; "Rocznik Statystyczny Pracy" 2003, GUS, Warszawa; *Pracujący w gospodarce narodowej w 2003*, GUS, Warszawa 2004; "Rocznik Statystyczny" 2004, GUS, Warszawa.

In the 4th quarter of 2004 the rate of employment for the whole population (aged 15 and over) fell in relation to 1992 from 53.3% to the level of 45.1%; at the same time it is worth stressing that as for women it amounted to 46% and

^b As of 31 XII; in brackets – data from LFS (BAEL) for IV quarter.

38.5% and as regards men -61.4% and 52.2%. Besides the share of women in the whole of the employed population in the 4^{th} quarter of 2002 and 2003 amounted to 45.2% and to 44.7% in 2004. If we included December 1989 and 2003 (registered data) than the share in this period was running at 47.1% and 47.5%.

It is also worth mentioning that along with progressive transformation of the economy the percentage of the employed with higher education is growing. In November (the 4th quarter) 1992 they comprised about 10% of the total of the employed aged 15 and over whereas in the 4th quarter of 2002 this percentage increased to the level of 17.6%. The percentage of the employed who possessed only elementary education (or incomplete elementary education) fell substantially: in 2002 they made up only 13.2% of the total of the employed (in 1992 – 25.7%). Similar regularities occurred in 2003 and 2004. This can indicate that the importance of the quality of human resources and the role of education and occupational qualifications in the Polish economy are growing.

It is also worth adding that the structure of the employed according to the employment status is one of the important features enabling evaluation of the changes occurring in the labour market. It can be concluded from the BAEL data that more and more prevalent is the dominance of hired workers employed in the private sector who in the 4th quarter of 2004 comprised almost 43.5% of the total of the employed. Moreover, in the 4th quarter of 2004 hired workers made up 73.2% of the overall employment. 2400 thousand people (17% of the total of the employed) were self-employed. The share of employers amounted to 4% of the total; there is relatively more of them in the case of men than as regards women (more than twice) and in the case of inhabitants of cities (almost 75% of employers lived in cities). Besides the share of the employed in the private sector in relation to the total of them in the 4th quarter of 2003 amounted to 68.5% and in 2004 70.3%. Thus this sector dominates (and its role is growing).

When discussing the changes of the three-sectorial employment structure (Kwiatkowski 1980, pp. 9–48; Kaźmierczak 1995, pp. 191–192) in the Polish economy it should be stated that it is a very important measure of the economic development. It can be concluded from the registered data that in the nineties the scale of employment in sector III (service sector) increased at the cost of the industrial sector (industry and construction) and sector I (agriculture) (Table 2). However, these structural changes occurred on a smaller scale than expected (which particularly concerns agriculture), which makes changes in the employment structure one of the challenges facing the Polish labour market (Kryńska 2001, pp. 76–88; Kwiatkowska 2000, p. 209 and following). The share of the agricultural sector in 1989 amounted to 28.6%, in 2001 29.2% and in 2003 28.9%.

Table 2. The structure of the employed according to three sectors of the Polish economy in the years 1989–2003 (in percents)

Years a	Sector I	Sector II	Sector III
1989	28.6	35.7	35.7
1991	26.8	35.0	38.2
1993	26.7	30.6	42.7
1995	27.0	30.4	42.6
1997	27.5	29.5	43.0
1999	27.6	28.4	44.0
2001	29.2	25.2	45.6
2002	28.7	23.9	47.4
2003	28.9	23.6	47.5

^a As of 31 XII.

Source: As same as Table 1.

Considering the changes of the employment structure according to sections within the range of the industrial sector it is necessary to pay attention to certain regularities. In the years 1992–2003 in Poland the number of the employed in industry fell from 3778.3 thousand to 2872.1 thousand, that is by 24.0% whereas the share of the employed in industry in relation to the total of the employed declined from 25.2% to 19.5%. Of the three subsections distinguished in industry mining was characterised by the highest dynamics of changes, where employment in this period fell by 254.2 thousand that is to say by 56%. Its share in the total of the employed declined from 3% to 1.4%. As for the production activity (industrial processing) there was a decrease in employment by 20.5%, and in the case of manufacturing, provision of electricity, gas and water – by 8.7%. It is worth stressing that the subsection of "industrial processing" concentrates almost 85% of the employed in industry (16.5% of the overall employment). It should also be mentioned that in the years 1992–2003 a decrease in the share of the employed in construction from 6.8% to 4.2% of their total occurred.

A closer analysis of the employment changes in sector III (service sector) shows that it is not homogeneous in terms of the processes taking place in the labour market. Taking into consideration the sections which dominate in the overall employment the following should be mentioned: trade and repairs (13.6% of the total), education (6.6%), real estate and company service (6.3%) and healthcare and social welfare (4.7%) – these data are from 2003. It can be concluded from the presented deliberations that the Polish service market is not fully developed and the processes of adjustment to the requirements of the market economy are still in statu nascendi.

It is also necessary to state that although the change trends of the threesectorial structure of the employed in Poland were consistent with the structural changes regularities in the process of economic development, the proportions of the employment structure shaped in our economy substantially differ from the structures in the countries of "the old fifteen" within the European Union.

Of all the fifteen countries of the EU (within the boarders from before 1 May 2004) only Greece's employment structure (GDP per capita at par of the purchasing power in 2002 – 22.4 thousand USD) is slightly similar to that of Poland (GDP per capita in 2002 – 10.7 thousand USD). In the remaining cases it is different. It is also different in comparison with the average for 25 member states of the EU (vide table 3). There also occurs a correlation between the employment structure and the level of GDP per capita (Szczodrowski (ed.) 1999, p. 153). Taking into consideration the discrepancies between the employment structure in the Polish economy and the average for 15 member states of the EU (and in other developed countries) it is hard to forecast how long the process of reduction of employment in agriculture and the further increase in the role of services will take. However, it is possible that the fact of Poland's accession to the EU will intensify these changes.

Table 3. The structure of the employed persons in 2003 according to sectors and selected countries (in percents)

Countries	Sectors		
	I	II	III
Australia (2002)	4.3	21.1	74.6
France	4.5	24.8	70.7
Greece	16.3	22.0	61.7
Netherlands	2.9	21.0	76.1
Ireland	6.4	27.8	65.8
Japan (2001)	4.9	30.5	64.6
Canada (2002)	2.8	22.7	74.5
Portugal	12.9	32.9	54.2
Germany	2.4	31.4	66.1
Sweden	2.6	22.6	74.8
United States (2002)	2.5	21.8	75.7
United Kingdom	1.3	23.5	75.2
Italy	4.7	31.8	63.5
European Union 15	4.0	27.6	68.4
European Union 25	5.3	28.3	66.4
Poland	18.3	28.5	53.2

Source: As same as Table 1.

The issue of a high rate of the employment structure in agriculture which has remained at this level for a long time is particularly disturbing. Moreover, the highly developed countries much earlier than the Polish economy achieved status quo in which the share of employment in services maintains its advantage over the share of employment in industry (which has been mentioned before). France and Great Britain reached this advantage as early as in the beginning of the sixties, Sweden in mid-sixties and the USA in the end of the 19th century. A part of highly developed countries is approaching the phase of development which was defined by Fourastie as the stage of tertiary civilisation. Such countries encompass among others: Australia, France, the Netherlands, Canada, Sweden, USA, Great Britain. In Poland the worst situation is in agriculture, whose share in the employment (according to the registered data) remains at the level of employment in industry (Kaźmierczak 1995, pp. 130-131, 199). Thus the discussed process of the evolution of the three-sectorial employment structure in the Polish economy is connected with global trends and remains in statu nascendi.

Nevertheless, when discussing selected issues of labour supply in the Polish economy it is necessary to mention that high unemployment resulting from unsatisfied demand for labour still remains a problem. The issue of the lack of labour to a relatively greater extent concerns women, young people (including graduates) but also older people and people with poor education. In 1990 the number of the unemployed amounted to 1126.1 thousand and the rate of unemployment 6.5%; in 2003 respectively: 3175.7 thousand and 19.2% and in 2004 2999.6 thousand and 18.2%. At the same time it is worth stressing that the rate of unemployment in Poland is the highest among all the EU countries (Table 4). The following countries are also characterised by high unemployment rates: Slovakia (16.6%), Spain (10.3%), France (9.6%), Germany (9.6%), Greece (9.3%), Italy (8.6%). The lowest unemployment rates among all the EU countries are in: the Netherlands (3.8), Ireland (4.6%), Sweden (5.6%) (Sobocka-Szczapa 2003, p. 50).

In the context of deliberations concerning labour supply it is worth adding that in accordance with the demographic forecast (made in the end of 2003 on the basis of the results of the national census of 2002 and predicted trends as regards the number of children had, mortality and migration) (*Prognoza demograficzna...*, 2004, p. 14 and following) by 2020 the number of population in Poland will have decreased by one million, and in the next decade (2020–2030) by another one and a half million. In 2030 population can amount to 35 693 thousand. A population drop will concern first and foremost cities. In relation to the present situation it is forecasted that by 2030 the number of population in cities will have decreased by the total of 3 million people and in the country it will have grown by approximately half a million.

Table 4. The rate of unemployment in selected countries in 1990 and in 2003 (in percents)

0	Unemployment rate*	
Countries	1990	2003
France	8.9	9.6
Greece	6.4	9.3
Spain	7.6	10.3
Netherlands	6.2	3.8
Ireland	13.4	4.6
Japan	2.1	5.3
Canada	8.1	7.6
Portugal	4.6	6.3
Germany	6.6	9.6
Sweden (1991)	1.7	5.6
United States (1995)	5.6	6.0
United Kingdom	7.0	4.9
Italy	9.1	8.6
European Union 15	8.1	8.1
European Union 25		9.1
Poland	6.5	19.2

^{*} Calculated as the relation of the number of unemployed persons to the total economically active population.

Source: As same as Table 1.

The number of youth aged 16–24 will systematically decline from current almost 6 million (data from 31 December 2002) to 4 million in 2015 and 3 million in 2030. There will be a significant shift in the proportions between the number of people of economically productive age and those of beyond retirement age. In the period until 2010 the number of people of economically productive age will grow from current 24 million by almost one million whereas the number of people of beyond retirement age will increase from 5.8 to 6.4 million. In the period of further 20 years the number of people of economically productive age will systematically fall until it reaches the level of 20.8 million in 2030 and the number of people of beyond retirement age will grow up to 9.6 million. The level of economic burden which is a ratio of people of unproductive age to 100 people of economically productive age will increase from current 60 to 72; at the same time the burden of people of beyond retirement age will substantially increase – to 46 (presently it amounts to 24) to the disadvantage of people of pre-productive age (from current 26 to 36). Besides the period after

2020 will be characterised by violent aging of population. A substantial increase will occur in the oldest age groups. The number of people aged 85 and over by 2010 will have risen by 50% reaching the level of half a million and in 2030 this number will amount to almost 800 thousand (presently this number stands at less than 320 thousand). Therefore, on one hand it can have a positive effect on the reduction of employment but on the other hand an increase in the level of economic burden will among other things affect social policy.

3. CONCLUSION

Moving on to conclusions it is necessary to stress once again that the increase in the role of sector III (in the employment structure) in Poland should still be stimulated as it constitutes an indispensable condition for constructing modern market economy and an increase in its competitiveness (also in the international aspect). This sector is of vital importance for the development of human capital and the modernisation of the economic structure of the country. There also occurs an issue connected with the need for further restructurisation of agriculture and industry (especially taking into consideration Poland's membership in the EU - since 1 May 2004). Besides in the systemic transition period it was unfortunately impossible to perform a conversion of substantial unemployment (almost 3.2 million people registered as the unemployed in 2003) connected with a drop in employment in the public sector into a quantitatively and structurally adequate increase in the number of the employed in the private sector (which dominates). Therefore, it is still necessary to aim at stimulating socio-economic development and conducting complex policy as regards employment and the labour market. One of its purpose is to adjust the demand for labour to labour supply. Moreover, it is worth mentioning that the selected issues concerning work supply discussed in this study are naturally controversial to some extent. That is why they still need to be researched.

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PODAŻ PRACY W POLSCE W KONTEKŚCIE INTEGRACJI Z UNIA EUROPEJSKĄ

Proces społeczno-gospodarczej transformacji w Polsce generuje dużo zmian odnośnie do rynku pracy. Opracowanie dotyczy analizy wybranych aspektów podaży pracy w Polsce w kontekście integracji z Unią Europejską. Omówiono m.in. różnorodne aspekty tego rynku związane ze stanem i strukturą zatrudnienia oraz bezrobociem. Charakterystycznymi cechami badanych zjawisk są m.in.: spadek liczby pracujących w polskiej gospodarce oraz zmniejszający się udział zatrudnionych w sektorze przemysłowym, a zarazem wzrost zatrudnienia w sektorze prywatnym.

W opracowaniu wykorzystano m.in. dane statystyczne i informacje Głównego Urzędu Statystycznego w Warszawie, które były pomocne w analizie podaży pracy w Polsce. Należy zauważyć także, iż różne dociekania odnośnie do podaży pracy są sprawą otwartą. Stąd wydaje się, iż celowe jest kontynuowanie badań z tego zakresu.