



# Childbearing and Parental Decisions of Intra-EU Migrants

A Biographical Analysis of Polish Post-Accession  
Migrants to the UK and Italy

Weronika Kloc-Nowak

Thesis submitted for assessment with a view to  
obtaining the degree of Doctor of Political and Social Sciences  
of the European University Institute

Florence, 15 January 2015 (defence)



European University Institute  
**Department of Political and Social Sciences**

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## Acknowledgements

Completing the doctoral research project means to me reaching the end of a long path that started when I was only a teenager. Numerous people have guided and supported me during this journey, therefore I would like to use this opportunity to express my gratitude to them (in chronological order).

Geography has been my first favourite subject. Thanks to my Teachers, especially late Ms. Dorota Grudzińska, I got interested in Human Geography and did my first small fieldwork on migration. Upon enrolling on University of Warsaw, I was sure I wanted to take all the courses on migration topics. That is how I joined the group of students following lectures of Dr. Ewa Jaźwińska, who later agreed to supervise my Master thesis in Sociology. In my sociological education, an important moment has been the encouragement from Prof. Mirosława Grabowska, who complimented on my approach to data in my first piece of empirical research.

Sociology has stolen my heart with a little help from *Collegium Invisibile* - a unique group of devoted students, with whom I equally enjoyed discussing state of the world in 2001 and 19th century American poetry. Thanks to *Collegium Invisibile* I had the chance to develop under the guidance of Prof. Marek Okólski as my Tutor. He introduced me step to social research on international mobility conducted by Centre for Migration Research (CMR) at University of Warsaw. The training I received from Prof. Okólski and his team has prepared me well for my first job in the Central European Forum for Migration and Population Research (CEFMR), Prof. Marek Kupiszewski's team where I worked for three very important years before deciding to pursue doctoral studies.

During my studies in the EUI I learnt from a unique group of researchers. Through all these years my Supervisor, Prof. Martin Kohli has widened my perspective on lifecourse and generations. Moreover, I would not have completed this doctoral research without his enormous patience. Once Prof. Kohli's work has been done, my Jury Members contributed their advice to help me work on my thesis even more.

My life in EUI was full of friends. I would like to thank first of all Kasia Gracz for giving me this chance and encouraging me to apply. I will never forget our time in

Florence and in the community of multinational EUI families from Pian di Mugnone and the surrounding hills.

In London, Prof. Eleonore Kofman and Prof. Louise Ryan offered to me great working conditions and opportunities for fruitful exchange of ideas. In all the locations I visited in Italy and the UK, Polish migrants let me into their lives - and homes. I would like to thank all of them, my interview Partners, for their time and trust.

My doctoral studies and research would not have been possible without the generous support of the European tax payers, to whom I am indebted. I am equally grateful to my Parents Anna and Janusz, and to all of my family for all of their generous inter- and intragenerational assistance during these demanding years.

Completing this research required great endurance not only from myself, but also from my faithful companions in the field and during the time of analysis and writing up at home. I would like to dedicate this thesis to Kamil and Tytus - my dearest migrant family.

## Abstract

The aim of the study has been to show in what ways, in the perception of the migrants themselves, family-related considerations have affected their decisions regarding long-term settlement in the UK or Italy as countries of immigration, and what aspects of their situation in these countries influenced their family life and plans for the future.

The locus of the study is the migration of Poles to the UK and Italy as countries that successively opened their labour markets for citizens of New Member States after the EU enlargement of 2004.

I argue that i) international mobility may serve not only as a barrier but also as an enhancement for parenthood, and ii) placing one's family in the host country produces more durable and numerous ties than employment alone and favours settlement. In the case of Polish families, migration to the UK was a way of securing more stable and comfortable conditions, through salaries and benefits more adequate to family needs. It improved their experienced quality of life, allowed them to fulfil their desired fertility, and offered better prospects for the future. In families of Poles living in Italy the perception of welfare conditions was not that favourable, however it also offered long-term stability to the ones who had been struggling to survive in Poland. Long-term settlement emerged there due to the path dependency, especially the mechanism of „tied stayer". The perspectives on settlement differed according to age at migration and stage of life (stable partnership, children's age, ageing parents' needs).

On the theoretical level, the project combines sociology of migration, perspectives on intergenerational relations and life course research. The thesis contributes to the research on intra-EU migrants with a wide range of socio-economic statuses by presenting their perception of migratory trajectories and plans for the future from a family-oriented perspective.





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## Introduction

The freedom of movement for citizens and long-term residents is one of the cornerstones of the European Union. The EU institutions promote mobility (as the movement of EU citizens is referred to) as a way to enhance social cohesion, cultural exchange, and economic productivity (2006). The flow of workforce within the union has been conceived as complementary to the monetary union, absorbing local economic shock. In the modern knowledge economy, the circulation of specialists should provide their efficient allocation and exchange of ideas (Recchi & Favell, 2009, p. 10). In order to achieve these aims, movement within the EU has been simplified so that “it can still be qualified as *international* migration, though it operates under the conditions of *internal* migration” (Recchi & Triandafyllidou, 2010, p. 127). There is only one problem: the vast majority of Europeans really do not want to move.

In 2007 EU movers (EU non-nationals residing in another EU country) formed 2.1% of the EU population (Eurostat data quoted from Recchi & Triandafyllidou (2010, p. 130)). By 2013, in 27 EU countries the proportion of residents born in a different EU27 country increased to 3.4% (Eurostat, 2014e). Taking internal mobility into account, each year only 7% of EU citizens change their place of residence, of which 14% (thus 1% of the total) move for job-related reasons. “Persons oriented to residential mobility are still a minority and in some regard an elite. The majority of workforce in Europe is not willing to relocate or migrate” (Limmer & Schneider, 2008, pp. 16-17). In the light of this prevailing sedentary lifestyle of Europeans, the massive migrations of the New Member States (NMS) citizens after the Eastern enlargement of the EU have indeed been outstanding. In just a few years after the EU accession, the populations of Poles in the UK (650,000 in 2008, (Central Statistical Office, 2013a) or Romanians in Italy (969,000 in 2011, (Istat, 2014)) have reached the size of the previously largest populations of EU non-nationals: Italians in Germany and Portuguese in France (644,000 and 555,000, respectively, 2002 data quoted from Recchi and Favell (2009, p. 12).

In the early years of the post-accession migration boom in the UK, the dominant perception of the stay of the migrants in the UK was one of a temporary or open-ended project. Eade, Drinkwater and Garapich (2007) have divided the Polish immigrants into

four types: circulating storks (20%<sup>1</sup>), capital-cumulating hamsters (16%), stayers, aiming to settle in the UK (22%), and unpredictable searchers (42%). The most common type represented the migrants who treated their stay in the UK as an open-ended project, and cared about their position in and ties to both Polish and British society. Their strategy was defined as intentional unpredictability, as they imagined several options for the future (professional development and upward social mobility in the UK, return in Poland when it offers better opportunities, further migration). Their openness and functioning above the nation-state borders made them an ideal mobile workforce: flexible, easily adapting to and accepting the post-modern transnational labour market and its demands (Eade, et al., 2007, p. 34).

Undertaken as an individualistic decision, of seizing a new opportunity, migration cumulated into a massive movement and a shared generational experience (Galasińska & Kozłowska, 2009), "a rite of passage into adult life, a school of life" (Eade, et al., 2007, p. 35). Transition into adulthood was indeed easier in the UK, where the labour and housing market are geared towards young people leaving the parental home early. The outcome of these moves was unpredictable, however it was very predictable that at some point somebody would go to the UK. Especially in the trajectories of the Polish youth, 'dishwashing in London' during or just after their studies became a very common stage, which made them different to their slightly older compatriots. Yet, if migration helped to make this transition - then why not the next ones: relationships, childbearing, residential mobility or even homeownership?

In the golden era of modernity the lives of individuals were scheduled in a standardised time frame, in which after completing education, people started their working lives; the transition to adulthood in other spheres of life followed in an orderly fashion (Kohli, 1986). Since the 1970s, the lives of young adults have been filled with heterogeneity and uncertainty, with people experimenting and searching for their own path rather than entering adulthood with a clear goal in mind. A great variety of life trajectories have emerged, although the choice itself was partly imposed – as the multiplication of options did not necessarily mean personal freedom of choice (Brückner & Mayer, 2005; Kohli, 2007).

---

<sup>1</sup> The proportions were stated based on a survey of 505 Polish immigrants conducted in 2006 for the BBC by the research team at CRONEM (Eade, et al., 2007).

<sup>2</sup> The camp were Polish unskilled agricultural workers were exploited as slave labour was exposed in 2006, for a brief ex



Are then the post-accession migrations a breach in the standardised life course? Or are they way to get on the standard track for people who struggled in Poland and couldn't make the transition to full employment there. If young migrants find employment, start families, even buy homes, and if, thanks to migration, slightly older migrants made redundant in their home country can go back to full time employment and have a chance of working until retirement, then their biographies (in the domains of family and work life) become standard thanks to migration.

Over five years since Eade et al.'s (2007) typology of Polish immigrants in London roused so much interest, not only among migration researchers but also the media in both countries, it is clear that the proportion of migrants who stayed in the UK outgrew the share of stayers estimated in the early phase of the phenomenon. As observed by Düvell and Vogel (2006), who distinguished various types among pre-2004 Polish migrants in Europe – return-oriented migrants, e/immigrants, transnational migrants, and global nomads – migrants of one type can change their orientation into another. For example, return-oriented target earners can find a job they would like to keep, while temporary migrants can meet a partner and start a family abroad. Also Trevena (2013) observed that young highly educated Poles in London, who started as “drifters” often became “career migrants” when they started to be able to make use of their professional qualifications, English language, and new social networks in a skilled job in Great Britain. What is interesting is what makes migrants other than the stayers opt to settle. Are they simply searchers who found themselves an attractive career? Perhaps they had initially only envisaged a short-term migratory project, focused on accumulating enough capital, but later changed their mind about returning to Poland? Where there other mechanism(s) than own career prospects, that have led them to change their plans and perceptions of their future in the UK?

One answer which emerged as vital in earlier research by White (2010b), Moskal (2011), Ryan and Sales (2013) is the family. The mechanism of settlement was based on family migration, either planned from the beginning (which does not exclude an initial period of separation), or emerging after the migration of the pioneer migrant. The emotional costs of separation, risk of family breaking apart, wellbeing of children but also the economic calculation of costs of one versus two households were decisive for the emergence of the migration of the whole nuclear family as the normal pattern among post-accession migrants. The growing popularity, perceived easiness and low cost of family

migration (White, 2010b, p. 113) could even contribute to not well considered moves, especially not taking into account the potential problems for children in the new environment (Ryan & Sales, 2013).

Next answer, also proposed by White and Ryan (2008) and Moskal (2013) involves migratory networks. Networks, usually seen as a mechanism of outflow and integration, could also turn into ties keeping the migrants abroad – for example if the majority of somebody's family and friends migrated or if new bonds created abroad grew strong.

Another answer may be the idea of 'normal life' or 'normalcy' (Galasińska & Kozłowska, 2009; McGhee, Heath, & Trevena, 2012). Normal life would refer to the desire of people who have become tired of dealing with the negative consequences of communism and harsh realities of economic and political transformation they experienced personally or (for the younger ones) by living in a country affected by these problems. Regarding the discourses about looking for a job and working conditions, the unfriendly and unfair arrangements prevailing in Poland (recruitment and promotion based on personal connections, bribery, low salaries, abuse of workers by selfish employers) are contrasted with the comfort of working in the UK (earning enough to satisfy all needs and saving something for future, and relations in the workplace based on respect, professional management). The notion of normalcy can be easily extended to other spheres of life: conditions for entrepreneurs, the welfare system or even quality of everyday life and urban space. Thus understood normalcy evokes in migrants the perception of personal happiness and dignity (McGhee, et al., 2012). Migrants who strive for a normal life leave their unfriendly homeland with bitter memories and organise their life somewhere they perceive to be normal – for Eastern Europeans this normality often equates to the stability, good organisation, and security provided by the wealthier old EU member states.

The positive perception of conditions of work and life in the old EU is striking as for the first couple of years after EU-enlargement, research, both quantitative and qualitative, showed persistent overrepresentation of the accession states citizens in low-paid, unskilled and precarious jobs. Their upgrading to EU citizens and giving them free access to employment hasn't changed their social and economic status much in comparison to the pre-accession immigrants of the same Eastern European nationalities (Currie, 2007; Recchi & Triandafyllidou, 2010, p. 129). This has been the clearest in the UK, where Workers Registration Scheme (WRS) in the initial period imposed an obligation to register any employment and change of it within a short limit of time, narrowing Accession

countries (A8) migrants' choice to easily accessible low quality jobs and thus low social class position (Currie, 2009). In another 'old' (pre 2004) EU country, Italy, migrants from NMS remained largely in the same secondary labour market as before accession: predominantly in unskilled services or construction (Kowalska-Angelelli, 2007, p. 5). While mobile Western Europeans are more often employed as managers and professionals in comparison to the sedentary residents, for Eastern Europeans labour migration often means a decrease of occupational and social prestige (Recchi & Triandafyllidou, 2010, p. 132).

Change in the legal status of NMS immigrants in the receiving countries has had clear implications for their labour market access, but even equal legal rights have not guaranteed equal treatment with old EU citizens but only some help "in remedying the disadvantaged labour market position of EU8 migrants" (Currie, 2007, p. 115). The NMS citizens show a high level of mobility in the labour market, changing employers and sectors easily. Employers perceive them as competitive, flexible and disposable. Western European migration policy stakeholders have preferred them to third country nationals both for their perceived higher cultural affinity and adaptability and for their supposedly easier reincorporation into the countries of origin (Recchi & Triandafyllidou, 2010, p. 139 and 144). However, in the UK they have become target of anti-immigration political discourses, accused of exploiting the host country's welfare system.

Migration policy analyses show that the more open the borders, the more temporary and circular become the movements between the countries, as there are fewer barriers to re-entry after returning (for family or economic reasons) for a certain period to the country of origin. Groups of migrants who may come back easily (e.g. Western Europeans) have higher rates of return migration to countries of origin (Somerville & Sumption, 2009, pp. 23-24). Therefore, when the 2008 economic crisis broke out it was predicted that the post-accession migrants would go back. Yet this assumption was only partly right. In 2008 the UK witnessed its historical peak of 427,000 emigrants (mostly due to the outflow of non-British citizens). The outflow of Poles from the UK was 52,000, compared to 19,000 in 2007 (ONS, 2009). However, the returns were not as massive as the post 2004 inflow and by 2012 the numbers of Polish immigrants were growing again (see Table 1). In Italy the stock of migrants from Poland even increased slightly in the crisis period. Only in Ireland did the emigration of Poles exceed immigration.

**Table 1. Polish migrants' population in the EU and selected host countries (estimates, in 1,000s)**

Host country	2002	2004	2006	2008	2010	2012
Germany	294	385	450	490	440	500
Italy	39	59	85	88	92	97
UK	24	150	580	650	580	637
Ireland	2	15	120	180	133	118
EU	451	750	1550	1820	1607	1720

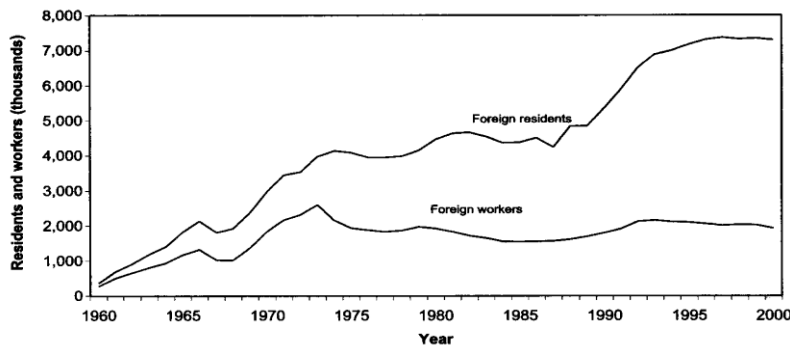
Source: (Central Statistical Office, 2013a)

Studies have shown that the strategy of post accession migrants in times of crisis has been “wait and see”, rather than return, even if it meant accepting even poorer working conditions in the hope of keeping one's job (Recchi & Triandafyllidou, 2010, p. 144).

When massive migration turns into settlement it changes the demographic composition not only of the country of settlement, but also of origin. The country of settlement receives an immediate injection of working-age population and starts to harvest the fruit of increased births, helping to alleviate the ageing of the society. In the country of origin the outflow of the workforce and of the population at reproductive age, who would produce new generations, at first glance seems to be a loss. However, from a long-term perspective, massive emigration from a society is a necessary (although not sufficient) condition for its modernisation. By presenting an opportunity to find a place to work and live abroad, emigration is a way out for masses of relatively well-educated young people, superfluous in the labour markets of their rural and under-urbanised regions of origin. The outflow, although through different channels, also covers the less educated, older, 'victims of transformation' (Kaczmarczyk & Okólski, 2008). It reduces the burden of excessive population in the peripheral regions and – by emigration of part of the modern elite – stimulates education and development by freeing some positions in the local hubs of modernity. However, emigration of masses from the pre-modern part of the population has to be permanent, in order for the effects of such crowding out to be lasting (Okólski, 2012). Therefore, studying the settlement processes among emigrants is also important from the point of view of the modernisation of their country of origin.

The transformation of labour migration into settlement immigration through family related processes is not a new or surprising phenomenon. This mechanism became the only legal option of entry for the families of the guest workers coming to Western Europe after the economic crisis of the 1972-3. Although the recruitment was stopped and some guest workers returned (e.g. 10-15% of those employed in Germany), the foreign population continued to grow due to family members joining previous guest workers (see Fig. 1 for Germany and Somerville & Sumption (2009, p. 30)).

Fig. 1. Number of foreigners in Germany 1960-2000.



Source: (Hatton & Willimson, 2005, p. 243).

After labour migration schemes started to be phased out (in 1972), family reunification, guaranteed by the human rights' based laws, became the principal form of immigration to economically developed countries (Honohan, 2009, p. 769). This may be an unwanted effect of the migration policy allowing for family reunification while trying to limit labour migration. On the other hand Kofman et al. (2011) claim that women, who constituted for example more than 30% of immigrant stock in Germany in 1973, were admitted on purpose, to help men settle down. Yet, family also stands out as the most important factor for long-term migration among the EU15 movers (Limmer & Schneider, 2008, p. 16). This invites the investigation of the role of family in international mobility and settlement of migrants from the NMS to EU15.

Migration decisions in families do not constitute a novel research area. The work of Mincer (1978) concentrated on the effect of marriage and wives' employment on migration of couples. The terms "tied mover" and "tied stayer" from his work were used in analyses of migration focused on the leading labour migrant and looked at the tied spouse as the one who encountered loss in her professional status or whose economic activity was less important, thus not an obstacle to household migration.

For a long time migration studies have been dominated by an economic approach and methodological individualism (Kofman, 2004). According to Smith (2004) the economically oriented migration research concentrated too much on the "tied spouse" aspect of Mincer's work which resulted in a too narrow approach to family migration. Non-economic aspect should also be included in calculating the overall family's gain or loss from migration, and these aspect depend on individual utility of a variety of factors,

e.g. caring for children or other family members, community, social networks maintenance.

Only since the 1980s have the migratory flows of women and children and the impact of migration on families left behind been analysed and shown as more complex than a simple reunification with the leading male migrant (see Kofman et al. (2011)). The seminal works of this decade were *International Migration Review* special issue on Women in Migration (Morokvasic, 1984) and Boyd's (1989) study on family and personal networks' importance in linking people in the countries of origin and destination.

However, the role of family in migration has been noticed mostly among the unskilled labour migrants from less developed countries. Family has been seen as the unit that delegates a migrant to gain an alternative source of income and reduce risk (Stark & Bloom, 1985) or one of channels of providing migration capital, which helps individuals to migrate – and subsequently helps next migrants (Massey & Espinoza, 1997). According to Ackers and Stalford (2008) the determinants of movements among the highly skilled migrants circulating between the most developed economies have usually been considered as purely economic or professional, and such migrants were conceptualised as independent, career oriented male agents (Kofman 2000). Only at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century have migration researchers noticed how family concerns, such as quality of schooling or level of family benefits, encourage or prevent migration, force mobile specialists to return or determine the choice of the place of residence on equal terms with the conditions of work offered to the highly skilled specialists (Hardill, 2002); (Ackers & Stalford, 2008).

In this doctoral research I have chosen not to concentrate on exceptionally mobile European elites (Favell, 2008) but instead to analyse life stories more diverse individuals and their families, treating their experiences as typical and relevant to a large mass of post-accession migrants. By reconstructing the decision-making processes of (potential) parents involved in migration between Central-Eastern Europe and the old EU states, I analyse how migration affects their fertility and parenting, and, on the other hand, how family plans and development influence their international mobility. These are studied in the context of Polish migration to the UK and Italy, two countries with contrasting labour markets and welfare arrangements affecting family life.

## Chapter 1. Contextual and conceptual background and aims of the study

Italy and the UK, the two countries selected as the location of this research project, both have well established Polish diasporas resulting from the political aftermath of the WWII and the participation of the Polish soldiers in the allied forces fighting in western Europe and the Mediterranean. Upon establishment of the communist regime in Poland many Poles who were in Western Europe couldn't or decided not to return to the Polish territory, and remained there as political refugees. The specificity of the Polish diaspora in the UK was the presence of the Polish authorities in exile, parallel to the ones in Poland. It has been accompanied by the Polish media, culture and education institutions in Great Britain (Düvell, 2004). In the subsequent decades both states were also a destination chosen by writers and artists and later by political refugees from Poland, especially after introduction of the martial law. The Italian *Polonia* stands out with the additional component of presence of the Polish clergymen and institutions targeted at receiving Roman-Catholic pilgrims, attracted by the Polish pope John Paul II (Pittau & Ricci, 2006). These diasporas and ties with them were channels for circular and irregular labour migration from Poland in the economically harsh times of the transformation.

Up to day, the literature on Polish immigration in Italy is dominated by the topic of female domestic workers. In her research on Polish women in Naples, Rosińska-Kordasiewicz (2005) combines the theoretical approaches to incomplete migration as a dominant pattern of mobility of Poles in that period (Jaźwińska & Okólski, 2001), of women taking over a leading role as labour migrants and of the complexity of the experience of domestic workers. Kordasiewicz has also documented the signals of the transformation of migration for domestic work from live-in to live out mode – living independently and offering services (usually cleaning) to households in defined hours. The live out workers among her participants have been in Italy longer, spoke the language, were more often legalised and thinking about staying there (Rosińska-Kordasiewicz, 2005, pp. 28-29).

Małek (2011), studying Polish women working as carers in Rome, observed that they can be placed on a continuum according to their frequency of visits to Italy, length of stay and placing of the centre of their life interests (in Poland or in Italy). Quasi circular migrants were women returning to work less often than once a year; not planning their next

trip, rather returning to this activity in reaction to some situation in Poland. Migrants returning regularly often working in the rotational system with other women constituted the circular migrants group. The stable type had a stable job in Italy, visited Poland only occasionally but still declaring Poland to be the centre of their life interests. Finally, settlement migrants were the ones who had decided to stay in Italy for indeterminate time and undertaken steps for settlement (Małek, 2011, pp. 127-128).

After Poland's accession to the EU new characteristics of the Polish migration to Italy have been observed, such as increased share of younger immigrants, more long term stays and better knowledge of Italy – its culture, language and labour regulations, resulting in transfer of some Polish migrants from irregular work to regular employment or self-employment. Polish immigrants started to appear in such sectors as hotels and restaurants, other (non-domestic) services even as skilled staff in offices (Kowalska-Angelelli, 2007, pp. 4-5), (Kowalska-Angelelli & Pelliccia, 2012, p. 81). However, the media presented rather the negative examples of labour exploitation in unskilled jobs, especially the so-called labour camp in Bari<sup>2</sup>, which affected the perception of labour migration among the Polish society (Cieślińska, 2008).

The research on the Polish immigrants in the UK has been much more varied than in the case of Italy. In the period before the accession the researchers studied the lives of irregular workers from Poland (Düvell, 2004), (Düvell & Vogel, 2006). The massive post-accession inflow and researchers' interest it has inspired, resulted in many studies on various spheres of migrants' lives and various social groups among them (see the volume edited by Burrell (2009), special issues of *Social Identities*, edited by Rabikowska (2010), of *Studia Migracyjne* - edited by Garapich (2011) and majority of *International Migration* issue edited by Goździak (2014).

### **1.1. Theoretical perspectives on female and family migration and their application to Polish migration to the UK and Italy**

The aim of this section is to present an overview of theoretical approaches to migrant families and migrant women. It is not intended as a comprehensive review of the

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<sup>2</sup> The camp where Polish unskilled agricultural workers were exploited as slave labour was exposed in 2006, for a brief ex post account see press article from PAP (2013).



global state of the art, especially as it is mostly developed with reference to non-European migrations (e.g.(Hochschild, 2000; Hondagneu-Sotelo, 1994; Parrenas, 2005; Carola Suárez-Orozco & Suárez-Orozco, 2001), partly Baldassar, Baldock and Wilding (2007)). However, I believe that presenting what theoretical perspectives have already been applied to Polish migrants in the UK and Italy and which phenomena concerning them have attracted the most attention, will clarify the research area in which the hereby study is located and point to the directions in which it can contribute new observations and ideas.

First of all, it has to be explained that, as in the title of this section, there is a complicated connection between the topics of family migration and women's migration. Female migrants, more often than their male counterparts are put into a big moving box labeled "trailing wives and children" or, like the title of a collection of papers published in the series Migration and Society - "Women and youth in migrations"(Zamojski, 2005). Is women's position and agency in the migration process the same as that of children and youth? Does only women's international mobility affect their children, while this of men has no such impact? Do we get a valid picture of migrant families' dynamics if we look at them only through the eyes of women? While the two groups have began to form separate research agendas, giving the attention they deserve not only to the female migrants, but also to children's role in migratory processes (Radziwinowiczówna, 2014) and to the family roles of men affected by migration (Brannen, Mooney, Wigfall, & Parutis, 2014; Kilkey, Plomien, & Perrons, 2014), one has to accept that a lot of ideas on the functioning of families affected by migration can be found in works devoted to the topic of women.

The issues of female migration and gendered analysis of migration have been explored and brought to the Polish migration studies in a few edited volumes (Kindler & Joanna, 2010; Slany, 2008b; Slany, Kontos, & Liapi, 2010; Warat & Małek, 2010; Zamojski, 2005). Researchers who contributed to these volumes, especially Kępińska, Kindler, Pustułka and Urbańska, have applied to the Central-Eastern European migrations the theoretical concepts introduced by Morokvasic (1984), (Ehrenreich & Hochschild, 2003; Hochschild, 2000; Hondagneu-Sotelo, 1994; Kofman, 1999; Kofman, Phizacklea, Raghuram, & Sales, 2000; Morokvasic, 2004; Parrenas, 2005; Pessar & Mahler, 2003).

The large numbers of Polish nationality children born in Great Britain inspired studies concentrating on fertility intentions and behaviour of immigrants from Poland. Waller, Berrington and Raymer (2012) have modelled fertility using LFS data, Marczak (Marczak, 2010, 2012) has compared the fertility intentions of Poles in Poland and in the

UK, Janta (2013) analysed the trends based on local birth registers in the first years since the beginning of the post-accession wave of Polish immigration.

For many families, struggling for economic survival due to lack of jobs in their home towns and villages, often indebted, migration has been the last resort of providing some prospects for future, especially for the children (White, 2010a, p. 76). In this context mothers are seen as making more long-term plans, presented as an active, responsible for the decisions determining the situation of the migrant family (Pustułka, 2010) and shaping the identity of their children (Pustułka, 2014).

In her studies on the phenomenon of family migration of Poles to Great Britain, and of the social perception of this phenomenon in Poland, Ann White (2010b) (White, 2010a, 2011) showed that migration of the whole families, including school-aged children has become a popular model and gained acceptance of the sending society. According to the researcher, family migration of Poles bears both traditional (male pioneer, male breadwinner) and new (joint decision of the partners, separation reduced thanks to fast and cheap communication, quick reunification) features (White, 2010a, pp. 87-88).

Studies on domestic work in Italy served as material for in depth analysis, inspired by (Anderson, 2000; Ehrenreich & Hochschild, 2003; Lutz, 2008), of the institution of live in domestic worker as a special situation of being “a stranger in the household”, of the power relations and emotional aspects of being a subordinated employee at the same time working in private spaces and often with the body of the cared for persons ((Rosińska-Kordasiewicz, 2005),(Kordasiewicz, 2010),(Slany, 2008a),(Małek, 2011, p. 167nn).

Małek (2011) proposed a typology of Polish women in Italy, which was based mainly on their different attitude to family versus individual interest and on push factors in the home country versus pull factors in Italy. Profamily women worked in Italy in order to satisfy economic needs of their families in Poland. Escapists declared being simply economic migrants, but in depth interviews revealed that they in fact used migration as an escape from family problems (e.g. an abusive partner). In contrast, individualistic ones were driven by their own plans and, usually as young adults, treated migration as a way for achieving independence from family. Searchers were also driven by individualistic motivations were rather looking for new experiences and adventures, curious of the world beyond their home country. Małek identified also romantic migrants who according to her migrated to join a partner but at the same time were attracted to Italy and Italian lifestyle.

Of course moving between these types is possible, especially transformation of individualists into searchers, who while staying in Italy discovered it offered them much more than a job with accommodation. Both researchers noticed migration to domestic work in Italy was a way of entering the labour market: Małek drew attention to migration as a transition to adulthood and living independently from parents and Kordasiewicz reported that for 37% of her respondents it was the first job ever (2010, p. 43).

In 2012 Kowalska-Angelelli and Pelliccia (2012, p. 82) stated that a higher share of Polish men and families has been recorded but the overall stock has not increased much since 2006, despite the opening of the Italian labour market for Poles. A high share of women married to an Italian (66% in their sample), having children in Italian schools, long stay and naturalisation were quoted as signs of integration with the Italian society, but without much indepth analysis of their mechanisms.

## 1.2. Research questions and outline of the analysis

“It seems appropriate to conceptualise the linkages between mobility, family functioning, family development and subjective well-being as reciprocal. They cannot be understood as one-way causalities” (Limmer & Schneider, 2008, p. 30). This statement concerning an analysis on job-related mobility in Europe (Schneider & Meil, 2008) is very pertinent to this thesis. As the family migration project is analysed here over a long period of time, and as a life story is not a single movement, the ties between the two spheres of interest, mobility and family development, are assumed to grow strong and reciprocal. Therefore, the two research questions this study has aimed to answer are:

- 1. How do post-accession migrants from Poland decide about their fertility and parenting in the context of free movement between different EU states?**
- 2. How do family dynamics and future family plans affect their migratory projects in the long term?**

The terms used in the above questions are defined for the needs of the present analysis in the following way. First of all, **post-accession migrants** are persons who moved to either of the case countries (UK or Italy) after Poland’s EU accession of 1<sup>st</sup> May

2004. This choice was made in order to study mobility within the EU free movement area and thus make it comparable to studies of mobility of EU15 citizens (Ackers, 1998), (Favell, 2008), (Recchi & Favell, 2009).

The subject of this research is the **decision making** of the migrants as potential parents. It explores the way they perceive their mobility and family life as interconnected spheres; the factors they find important in making their life choices; their perceptions of the structural conditions they are embedded in (in their countries of residence); and the arguments they use when negotiating their mobility and settlement with their ageing partners or older children.

The choices regarding **fertility** discussed with the respondents are the transition to parenthood, that is the birth of their first child (and the alternative choice of postponing childbearing), and the decisions regarding the eventual birth of subsequent children and the spacing of these births. Other **parenting** decisions, of equal importance to fertility, in this research include: choices of care arrangements for young children, schooling for older children and, in relation to that, choice of place of residence for the whole or split family. It also encompasses the languages spoken to children living abroad and, especially in mixed-nationality households, citizenship, the systems of values and culture, or even choice of the names (origin of the names, national or international usage, their spelling). Decisions concerning custody in the case of a relationship breaking up are also important for parents, and are made far more complex when more than one legal system applies to the family (Ackers & Stalford, 2004). The above listed issues occurring in time can be referred to as **family dynamics**.

The expression **migration project** is used following Recchi and Triandafyllidou to describe the “plan that a migrant consciously makes before moving and during the migratory experience” (2010, p. 146). The project is not static but can change over time and be adjusted to the current situation of the migrant. The plan can be made consciously on the basis of the subjective motivations, information, and resources possessed by the migrant. However, in certain cases, openness to arising opportunities and not making binding plans is also a conscious choice, such an attitude has been identified as “intentional unpredictability” (Eade, et al., 2007). The aim of studying the migration project is not to establish objective patterns of how the events of childbirth and migration are statistically related, but rather to explore the subjective ways in which the migrants perceive the options that were available to them and their families. The *subjective* does not have to

contradict the *rational*, but it adds relativity to the notion of rational action (Mills & Blossfeld, 2005). The migration project may become affected by developments concerning the migrant himself/herself (such as health condition) and their family (e.g. birth of a child, elderly family member needing assistance). It is also shaped by the external factors such as migration law (e.g. opening of the labour market), economic prosperity (e.g. demand for particular type of workforce), and welfare services (e.g. entitlement of immigrants to unemployment benefit) and the migrant's knowledge of them.

### 1.1. Varieties of migrants' family arrangements

The term “families affected by migration” covers a variety of situations and constellations of people in geographical space and time, especially when we take into account subsequent relationships and children being raised with a new partner in a new country. The dimension of uniformity/multi-ethnicity points to the fact that there are families formed by adults of the same nationality/ethnicity and families formed by partners of different nationalities. The dimension of togetherness/separation allows us to distinguish between families that move together and the ones who delegate a member to work abroad while the centre of family life remains in one country. The event sequence dimension allows us to distinguish between those who formed a relationship and then migrated, those who moved abroad to join a partner and form a family, and those who moved for other reasons such as education, a career move, temporary business activity and only after starting a new relationship in a new location decided to stay there or return.

In the following paragraphs the various types of families according to the above criteria are described and the choices that they face are presented. Single nationality (Polish) and mixed nationality families are accounted for separately for clarity, but the research covers them all in order to look for possible similarities.

#### **Single nationality (Polish) families**

When people are young and without spouses or dependents in the country of origin they can move fairly easily even if they are couples. Indeed this was the case soon after EU-accession, when the young generation of Poles often went to the UK or Ireland just after graduating secondary education, during, or soon after studies. As they often went for any job available, couples could move together – counting on being able to find jobs for both of them in one location.

However, when there are already ties in the country of origin, couples/families often decide to split temporarily. Examples of such ties are the work of one of the partners, either as a particular workplace that one partner does not want to resign from, or specific, difficult to transfer professional qualifications (first of all native language, history or law, some of the professions requiring national recognition of skills and certificates). These may be also children in national education systems, other family members cared for, or providing care to the household. Sometimes the initial situation after migration is so insecure that the family delegates one person to arrange everything and reunite once the conditions in the new home are appropriate.

Single nationality families may also decide to become permanently transnational, that is “families that live some or most of the time separated from each other, yet hold together and create something that can be seen as a feeling of collective welfare and unity, namely ‘familyhood’, even across national borders” (Bryceson & Vuorela, 2002, p. 3). The frequency of meetings can be very high, as presented in some press accounts of international commuters (Grzebałkowska, 2011), or lower depending on available resources and perceived needs of family members. A single nationality family affected by migration can also become transnational through the process of relationship breakdown. That is to say one partner may stay abroad, leaving the rest of family behind (or having them return to Poland). The relationship between personal migration preferences and family decisions as a result of aggregated individual calculations on the one hand and family stability on the other hand was analysed in detail by Mincer (1978), who introduced the concepts of tied mover and tied stayer.

The children may be involved in this transnational arrangement, such as travelling to visit the other parent or having an opportunity of joining the migrant parent at a later stage of their life, e.g. for higher education. However, even if modern means of communication and travel are available, prolonged separation has numerous negative consequences, especially for children separated from parent(s) (Carola Suárez-Orozco, Suárez-Orozco, & Todorova, 2010).

A separate group of families are formed when, in the conditions of large-scale migration from one country to another, as in between Poland and the UK, people of the same nationality meet abroad, often thanks to diaspora activities or informal migrant networks. Such a relationship can result in staying in the country of immigration or returning to the common country of origin.

### **Mixed nationality families**

In this section, relationships formed by an immigrant with a native person or by two migrant partners of different nationalities are discussed. These are quite distinct phenomena, as presented in the table below.

The migrant-native relationship is a well-researched family situation. It is asymmetric because the immigrant partner has to adjust while the native partner is “at home” with all of his/her local networks and resources; however the immigrant can make positive use of the situation to assimilate culturally and integrate with the native society more quickly through the networks of the partner (Scott & Cartledge, 2009). The risk however is that the partners might never get on an equal footing, with the immobile partner unable to understand their immigrant partner’s psychological situation. The problem that may arise for the native partner is losing his/her place in the local/family network if the “foreign” partner is not accepted. As a general rule, women coming from the East are accepted as partners by Western men. Thus more Polish women than men enter into relationships with non-Polish people when they are abroad, while in Poland more men than women marry immigrants from the countries east of Poland (Jaroszewska, 2003), (Górny & Kępińska, 2004).

The relationship between two immigrants living in a third country is not an exceptional situation in the many global cities attracting diverse immigration streams. In trying to avoid the arrangement that would make the immigrant partner disadvantaged in a relationship with a native (as described above), a mixed nationality couple might choose a third country as “neutral territory”. This tendency works along with the career factors in attracting mixed nationality couples to the global cities (Favell, 2008, p. 72). Sometimes the access to native partners is difficult, as immigrants might be viewed as inferior, poorer quality partners. Other migrants, of a different nationality, however, make the pool of potential partners in the immigration country larger. This phenomenon is often gendered: that is, the position of women and men of particular cultures often differs in relation to women/men of other cultures. For example, there is a lot of discussion among Poles living abroad about Polish women in relationships with Muslim men from the Middle East or South Asia living in Western Europe, while it is hardly discussed, or conceivable, for a Polish man to date a woman from such a cultural background (Siara, 2009).

The unsuccessful mixed-nationality relationships might be followed by the return migration to the country of origin. In the case of the countries analysed this usually means the return of a Polish woman to Poland – with or without a mixed-origin child and with or without remaining in touch with the father.

## **1.2. The relationship between migration and fertility decisions**

The research on the connection between international mobility and fertility stems from the earlier body of research on the effects of internal migrations, first of all rural-to-urban. Within this domain, since the beginning of the 1960s, five hypotheses have been proposed and studied on various populations on five continents. The hypotheses ranged from the decisive impact of early socialisation in the area of origin and the adaptation to the patterns dominant in the destination area; between the lowered initial fertility due to the disruptive impact of movement on the life of the potential parents and the elevated fertility immediately after migration when the move was motivated by union formation. Finally, self-selection of migrants according to socio-economic variables and personal preferences concerning fertility has been discussed (see Kulu (2005) for a historical overview).

To date, the interactions between international migration and fertility have been studied first of all among immigrant populations originating from economically less developed countries (usually with higher levels of fertility) and settling in more developed countries (with lower fertility). The rationale behind these studies is to estimate the demographic effects of immigration to aging societies (first of all the idea of replacement migration as a potential solution to population decline), costs of welfare services to be supplied to families of immigrant origin, and – partly – treating changing fertility patterns as evidence of cultural assimilation to the host society (Blau, Kahn, Yung-Hsu Liu, & Papps, 2008, p. 4).

Globally, majority of migrants come from the more populous, low-income countries, referred to in the development literature as “South”. According to the United Nations Development Programme the flows between the countries of the South account for 87 million people, the same as flows from the South to the North (high-income countries). Three out of four migrants in the world come from the South - where fertility is still high (IOM, 2013). However, among the myriad international migration streams there are also cases where migrants move from regions with lower fertility rates to countries with higher



fertility. One example is labour migration from Egypt to the Gulf States, which results in adopting the patterns of higher fertility observed in the host countries and the transfer of such patterns back to the sending society (Fargues (2006), the model elaborated by Beine, Docquier and Schiff (2008)). Another stream consists of migrants from Central-Eastern European and post-communist countries with the lowest low fertility (Total Fertility Rates (TFR) in 2012 were for example: 1.30 in Poland, 1.34 in Hungary and Slovakia, the values were slightly higher than in 2005) to Northern European countries whose TFRs close to the replacement fertility level of 2.1 (TFRs in 2012: Norway 1.85, the UK 1.92, Ireland 2.01, Iceland 2.04) (Eurostat, 2014f). The second case is especially interesting as migrants within the EU (or larger European Economic Area) can settle freely in the destination countries and bring or establish families there. Thus they can not only observe the local family model, but be subject to the local economic conditions, costs of child upbringing, costs and availability of birth control methods and, to a large extent, adopt local social norms surrounding child bearing.

Milewski (2007, pp. 861-865) discussed the following hypotheses related to fertility behaviour of the first- or second-generation migrants. **Disruption** assumes that due to temporary separation, stress, and difficult living conditions shortly after immigration, migrant couples show decreased fertility by comparison to the immobile population. An alternative hypothesis predicts a higher level of fertility among immigrant women, as their arrival and marriage formation, quickly followed by childbirth, are **interrelated events**. The third hypothesis, referred to as **adaptation**, predicts in the medium term a convergence of fertility patterns to those observed in the host society. The mechanism of adaptation is adjustment to the socio-economic conditions in the country of settlement, including a period effect in response to particular legal or institutional changes. The **Socialisation** hypothesis states that fertility is governed by norms and values absorbed in the country where one has been socialised as a child, and these remain unchanged over the life course. If we observe similar patterns of fertility among non-mobiles and migrants from a particular country living in different destinations (with different native reproductive behaviour) this confirms the socialisation hypothesis. As regards the second generation, born in the country of immigration but still socialised partly under the influence of their parents and – often – a community of co-ethnics, considering both socialisation and adaptation mechanisms results in predicting their fertility level to be somewhere between the levels of their parents and that of the host country. According to the fifth hypothesis,

particular fertility patterns may be observed among different migrant women in different countries because they have **(self)selected** for migration on the basis of characteristics that also influence their fertility: family oriented women choose channels of marriage migration and become economically inactive housewives and mothers, career oriented high skilled women choose countries where the native women also prioritise their professional lives, postponing or resigning from motherhood. A similarity of fertility patterns with natives is therefore caused by the fact that migrants choose the particular destination partly because they share or aspire to the way of living of the receiving country.

In a study of the Swedish population register, Andersson (2004) paid special attention to the time since immigration and country of origin, and measured risks of birth for each birth order separately. He observed elevated fertility in first two years after immigration (even during the first 12 months, which must include children conceived before immigration of the mother). In contrast, the risk of childbirth among women who stayed in Sweden for 6 years or more was lower than among the natives. From this he concluded that disruption of fertility was not observed in Sweden as the receiving country (potential reducing effect on fertility might be observed in the country of origin, in the form of postponing childbearing by women preparing for migration), instead, migration and childbearing seemed to be interrelated events. The patterns of fertility of longer-staying immigrant women was evidence of fast adaptation to the Swedish pattern (Andersson, 2004, p. 771). According to birth parity, immigrant women had a higher propensity to become mothers for the first time, as well as to give birth to their third child, whereas native Swedish mothers had higher second-birth rates. Patterns of fertility of Swedish mothers and of immigrants from Nordic countries varied in time in response to institutional changes, for example maternity leave regulations encouraging them to have a second child only a short time after the first. Immigrant women from other countries did not respond to this stimulus in the 1990s. Immigrants from Eastern Europe had especially low birth rates: although the probability of first birth was higher than that of natives, the propensity to have subsequent children was very low. In contrast, women from some countries (as diverse as Germany and Somalia), had higher fertility rates than Swedes **and** higher rates than women in their countries of origin. Andersson concluded that in Sweden the welfare regime promoted the adaptation of immigrant mothers to the Swedish fertility pattern treating residents equally; adaptation of fertility patterns of immigrants may not be that rapid under other welfare regimes.

Milewski tested some of the hypotheses sketched above with the German Socio-Economic Panel data, representative for four principal immigrant groups and natives as reference. She found an increased risk of a first child in the first year following immigration among married women. First generation women from outside the EU may be more prone to having a child directly after immigration in order to a) secure child benefit by giving birth in the receiving country, or b) use for maternity the period when they are not allowed to work anyway. Unmarried women that immigrate have a lower risk of having their first child. This was explained by the partner selection process starting only after arrival or immigration for non-family reasons, such as studies, which required postponing motherhood. Second-generation women, once married, followed the fertility patterns of native women. Differences between ethnic groups' fertility were explained by their different composition in terms of education and economic activity and not directly by ethnicity (Milewski, 2007, pp. 884-887). In sum, the results confirmed the hypotheses of interrelated events and adaptation, while the disruption hypothesis has been rejected.

It is worth noting that these hypotheses were set from the perspective of the receiving country and assumed settlement migration; the eventual childbirth after return from a period of residence in the receiving country has not been considered here. Yet, the mechanisms determining fertility proposed above are also worth applying to the intra-EU migrants. To what extent is migration and childbearing interrelated? Is the birth of a child consciously postponed until moving permanently abroad or until the end of a temporary migratory project? Does an unplanned pregnancy encourage sudden return migration? How long does it take for a couple to adapt to the new country before they decide to have a child, and do differences in the length of stay of the partners matter? Is elevated fertility in the initial phase observed – and, if yes, how low will it drop afterwards? Do long-term EU migrants follow the fertility patterns of the analogous natives?

In this context, the fertility-related attitudes and behaviour of Polish migrants in the UK is an extremely interesting research object. Poles living in Italy, the other case studied in this project, serve as a control group who have not been subject to a major change of fertility level or a welfare model affecting family life. However, late motherhood is a new element for them.

In a review of the previous studies on the fertility of female Polish immigrants, Janta (2013) reports that in Germany Polish women had the lowest completed fertility rate among all migrant groups studied and a proportion of childless women similar to that of

the natives. However, those in relationships with native partners had above average fertility, which was explained by reference to the self-selection and interrelated events mechanism of marriage migration. In Sweden, Polish women had a high propensity to start a family, but low progression rate to higher birth orders, due to not reacting to the stimuli with which the Swedish authorities boosted fertility among the population. As pointed out by Janta, these studies covered Polish migrants from earlier periods, who moved under different legal and economic conditions (for example, through marriage not labour migration), thus the reported patterns may not apply to the newest cohorts of Poles moving within the EU.

When looking at the fertility of migrants one cannot ignore those that consciously abstain from parenthood. According to Favell, mobile Europeans are childless more often than their less mobile peers and this allows them to maintain their cosmopolitan lifestyle. Voluntary childlessness is one of the ways in which the hypermobile Europeans avoid the standard trajectories in their professional and private lives (Favell, 2008, p. 125). It is questionable however, whether Favell compares them with all peers, that is, with those holding a comparable level of qualifications and professional activity (as in that case childlessness could be a result of mobility as an additional factor) or with peers on the opposite end of the spectrum: with little education, living far from urban centres, economically inactive. Nevertheless, Favell seems to be right when he points out that studying expats through the environment of international schools (a fairly obvious location to find this type of respondent) leaves mobile childless couples out of the picture (Favell, 2008, p. 125).

While the vast majority of demographic literature, including the studies on the effects of migration on fertility (e.g. (Milewski, 2007), (Beine, et al., 2008) consists of quantitative studies of large population samples, there have been calls for and attempts at applying qualitative methods derived from sociology to provide a deeper understanding of people's desires and experiences in the field of child bearing (Knodel, 1997). (Randall & Koppenhaver (2004) point out that qualitative research can help clarify if certain individual-level patterns, for example reproductive decisions, identified in large-scale quantitative surveys, are only present on the level of statistical correlations or if they are expressed by people as conscious individual-level strategies. On the topic of fertility examples of the qualitative method that have been employed include: in-depth interviews (Knodel, 1997), (L. Bernardi, 2003),(Randall & Koppenhaver, 2004), narrative interviews

(L. Bernardi, 2006), focus group discussions (Randall & Koppenhaver, 2004), as well as analysis of written accounts on the topic solicited by the researcher (Rotkirch, 2007). Such studies can provide valuable information on motivations, unfulfilled wishes concerning the number of children (fertility gap), and voluntary childlessness. They can also contribute new hypotheses to be later tested quantitatively on large datasets.

### **1.3. Parenting decisions**

Once the transition to parenthood occurs, parents make the migration decision not only for themselves but also for their offspring, and very often with their future in mind (Ackers & Stalford, 2004). Having preschool children is a relatively low barrier to international mobility, but only if one of the parents can provide care. At later ages, education becomes a key concern, as language barriers lead to poorer school performances, which might have prolonged negative results (Böhlmark, 2009). In light of the above, it is understandable that reaching school age by first child in a migrant family results in either return or relocation of the children with one or both parents – depending on the perceived relative quality of education in the home and host countries (Ackers & Stalford, 2008; Wong, 2007). Interestingly, parents of older (teenage) children may be forced to stay for a longer period in the country of immigration, even if their personal preference would be to return or further migration. This shows that the roles of being lead migrant, tied mover and tied stayer are not fixed but change during the process of family migration (Ackers & Stalford, 2008, p. 122). Considering that the above arguments are drawn from a project on mobile scientists, it would be interesting to establish if the education of children is given as much weight in the mobility decision making of migrant families outside academia.

The possibilities to successfully combine mobility and childcare do not depend solely on the parents themselves. Key sources of care are grandparents, who often join their adult children in the host country (Evergeti & Ryan, 2012; Nedelcu, 2007). In a country where childcare is assumed to be arranged within a family another option is native grandparents. When a family does not have the necessary resources in the particular country (money to cover costs of institutionalised care in a liberal welfare regime or family members in a familialistic regime), this can be perceived as a barrier to becoming parents.

## 1.4. Institutional context of migrants' family life

The welfare of individuals and families not only depends on the resources and actions of persons, but also on their combined efforts and interdependencies between economically active and inactive, care-giving, and cared for family members. The institutional setting of their host countries sets the context for their care, education, work, housing and old age provision, and to a large extent determines which strategies are available and optimal.

Smith (2004, pp. 273-276) frames the question whether family migrations constitute “choices and/or constraints”. It is an important question to what extent migration decisions are informed and the consequences of migration - intended. Qualitative research can go deeper into taken-for-granted norms and expectations (e.g. concerning gender roles) and their impact on migration decisions. The choices and their consequences depend on the structural conditions, which can be compared on the level of specific legislation, welfare regimes or gender ideologies in the countries of settlement. Qualitative approaches, ideally interviewing both spouses, give better access to these evaluations and internal dynamics and decision-making processes (Smith, 2004, p. 286). These in depth explorations may shed light on what at a glance seems non-rational decisions, e.g. dropping out of the labour market for the sake of better overall quality of life.

This research adopts an amended version of Esping-Andersen's welfare regimes typology (1999), which assigns the UK to a Liberal, and Italy to a familialistic Mediterranean regime. Welfare regimes affect individuals differently in various dimensions of their life courses (Mayer, 2004). For example, in a liberal state with a flexible labour market, prone to changing employers and not placing a premium on seniority, an immigrant may enter into a large market of poorly paid jobs, which, for young natives, are often their first, and they try to move between jobs to improve their position thanks to their own efforts. In comparison, in a Mediterranean state with a rigid labour market, in which entry depends on connections with the insiders and long term loyalty and seniority are awarded, the prospects of a successful insertion and career of an immigrant are rather dim. For this research project it is important how differences in welfare regimes result in differences also in e.g. fertility behaviour and childcare arrangements (Gosta

Esping-Andersen, 2007), intergenerational relations (Krzyżowski, 2011) or housing provision and financing (Allen, 2006).

In her research on female migrants within the EU15, Ackers (1998) showed that migrant women do not choose their migration destinations in advance according to the perceived attractions of ‘welfare tourism’, especially if they are young and single. However, *after settlement* they are often critical towards the arrangements offered in the host countries and gender norms of behaviour in the host societies. Thus, it may be inferred that welfare regimes are not important for the initial migration decision, but may be crucial for migrants’ parental decisions, future professional lives, and the decisions concerning staying, returning, or further migration. It is therefore interesting to look at the life courses of similar groups of migrants in countries with different welfare regimes.





## Chapter 2. Methods and techniques of data collection and analysis

This thesis uses the biographical method as its main approach to data collection and the constructivist version of grounded theory as its approach to case selection and qualitative data coding. The life course approach and biographical method serve as the basis of the method of analysis. These three frameworks are elaborated below in order to outline how the present research project can be situated in the context of theoretical debates in the above-mentioned methodologies.

I argue that analysing biographical narratives qualitatively, from the life course perspective, provides a useful framework for exploring how people simultaneously and in a long-term perspective manage their family developments and international mobility, as well as how the two interact and thus contribute to demographic change in at least two countries.

### 2.1. Grounded theory

Glaser and Strauss (1967) proposed the grounded theory method as a solution to the lack of any original theoretical contribution or systematic scientific strategies of enquiry in the field of qualitative sociology. The approach allows us to generate theory from data through rigorous step-by-step analysis taking place concurrently with data collection. The main steps of the original grounded theory approach included:

- detailed line-by-line coding of gathered material, preferably with action codes;
- selective or focused coding, leading to identification of categories and their characteristics and to the emergence and refinement of concepts;
- constant comparison within the case and with previous cases;
- theoretical sampling, starting with the theme of the study and then driven by the focus of the analysis until theoretical saturation (the stage where no generated category or its property remains empty);
- noting down the researcher's ideas and intuitions in the form of analytical memos from the very beginning of the project;

- aiming at an integrated theoretical framework.

By the 1990s, the two founders of the grounded theory approach differed significantly in their understanding of the method. While Strauss together with Corbin (1990) proposed many additional techniques of data analysis, Glaser refrained from applying any pre-existing concepts to data and proposed remaining close to the original approach: “Categories emerge upon comparison and properties emerge upon more comparison. And that is all there is to it” (1992 p.43, quoted after Charmaz (2000, p. 512).

The constant comparison method refers to the constant attempt to find additional, new cases for testing the temporary hypotheses based on previous case(s). In practice, Silverman (1994, pp. 258-259) advises starting the analysis with a limited dataset, coming up with categories and hypotheses and then testing these with gradually incorporated pieces of data, such as transcribed fragments of subsequent interviews. It entails comparing any pieces of data from another case, not necessarily a whole new dataset, as this is often beyond the reach of an individual junior researcher. Referring to Perakyla (1997, p. 206), Silverman also states that once an interesting phenomenon has been identified in a large dataset, shorter fragments of subsequent transcripts can be used to analyse the full variability of this phenomenon.

While leaving space for innovation, the emergence of new themes, and unexpected changes of focus, grounded theory – with its rigorous method – tried to adhere to the positivist standards of scientific enquiry set by the principle quantitative sociology approach at the time of Glaser and Strauss’ pioneering work. Despite the debates on the nature of science and knowledge of the following decades, the authors remained faithful to the objectivist idea of research where the external reality is unaffected by the researcher’s subjectivity. Yet, when undertaking scholarly activity in the 21<sup>st</sup> century one cannot take for granted the advancement of the theory of knowledge and pretend that the in-depth interpretation of qualitative data can be unbiased and untouched by the researcher’s biography, especially when the research enterprise includes subjecting oneself and one’s family to experiences similar to those of the interviewees. Therefore, I agree with Kathy Charmaz, the main proponent of the so called constructivist version of the grounded theory, who recognises that categories, concepts, and theoretical frameworks, rather than passively waiting to be discovered, “emerge from the researcher’s interaction within the field” and “reflect what and how the researcher thinks and does about shaping and collecting the data” (Charmaz, 2000, p. 522). Furthermore, the constructivist approach

does not share the original grounded theorists' idea of beginning the study without prior knowledge, it rather advocates recognising the theoretical preconceptions and sensitising concepts as a starting point of the analysis (which have been presented in Chapter 1.).

Another point of the critique of the original, objectivist grounded theory, as summarised by Charmaz, is that it fails to respect, portray and understand the interviewees and their stories, separating the experience from the experiencing subject (2000, p. 522). Only more recently has the approach been applied to compare analytically the whole cases and not sections of text isolated from the whole story to which they belong. "The narrative turn theorised and valorised respondents' full stories, unlike the grounded theory strategy of using excerpts of their stories to build theoretical statements", as Charmaz judged (2008). The proposed constructivist grounded theory allows the interpretation of facts and actions together with feelings, assumptions and meaning-making activities of human beings involved in the process under study (Schram, 2006, pp. 100-104). With the aim of generating theory through the comparison of human beings and their experiences, rather than from lines of text (Riessman, 2005, p. 100), I now turn to the biographical method.

## **2.2. Biographical method**

The first and most famous study using the biographical method in the early modern social sciences is *The Polish Peasant in Europe and America* (Thomas & Znaniecki, 1918-1920). At that time researchers analysed biographic sources such as letters, diaries, or even personal stories in newspapers. In the interwar period, Polish sociologists organised competitions to collect diaries of the social categories of special interest such as the unemployed (Bertaux, 1980, pp. 197-198). The main source in the biographic method is the autobiography, first of all produced orally during interviews. The use of this source has become widespread since the invention of the tape recorder and the introduction of refined methods of discourse analysis of the transcribed text (Fischer-Rosenthal, 1995, p. 223). The revival of the popularity of the biographical method in sociology in Europe began in the 1970s (research and methodological studies of Bertaux (1980)) possibly inspired by research from Latin America (Lewis, 1970). Another marked stage in the development of the method is the rise of the interpretative approach, concentrating on the analysis of the autobiographical narrative rather than seeking to reconstruct an external socio-historical

reality on the basis of several biographies from one social milieu (Fischer-Rosenthal & Rosenthal, 1997).

Autobiography of varied length is a form of account that is often allowed or even required in everyday life (examples can be job interviews, psychotherapy, refugee status or immigration interviews). Although it had been postulated that the self-reflection required by the autobiographical exercise is ideologically tied to the model of the modern European bourgeoisie, several studies have shown that the capacity to produce an autobiography is not limited to any particular social class (Bertaux, 1980, p. 216; Kohli, 1981, p. 62).

The value of autobiography for social researchers lies in the fact that it involves auto-selection, that is, the biographer's own interpretation of self in the context of the present. A narrative, such as an account of personal experience, has two functions (Kohli, 1981, pp. 64-65):

- referential – depicting the events, usually in chronological order, as perceived by the subject;
- evaluative – referring these events to the present context through their personal meaning.

An autobiography is not a static, cumulative structure in which with the passage of time new events are added to the previously deposited layers of experience. It is a continuous restructuring and reinterpreting of oneself, a current theory of the self serving to explain the past and orient oneself towards the future (Kohli, 1981, p. 63). This is in line with the modern developmental conception of self, in which the formation of personality does not end at achieving adulthood, but continues throughout the course of life (Kohli, 1986, p. 19).

The analytic approach to biographies depends on the goals of the researchers. When they are treated as a source of data about the socio-historical conditions in which the informants have lived, they are compared in order to reveal the objective knowledge about the shared structural conditions of the past (Bertaux, 1996, p. 133). On the opposite side are the approaches concentrating on the “how” of the account rather than the “what”, that is, examining the communicative schemes of the text, the sequence of narrative units and other forms, such as commentary, apology or break (silence) (Fritz Schütze, as discussed by Kaźmierska (2005) (2005, p. 366); and Riessman (2005)).

In a more in-between approach, not claiming the possibility of revealing the objective truth but also not focusing only on the narrative as a form, the researchers aim to “reconstruct both the lived life story as well as the self-presentation in the oral life story from the perspective of the present” (Fischer-Rosenthal & Rosenthal, 1997, p. 149). The analytic steps in the reconstruction of each case are as follows:

- picking the events out of the text;
- reconstructing the chronological order of the life history or a genogram of a family history;
- sequential analysis of textual structure of the narrated life story;
- detailed analysis of key text segments;
- sequential hypothesis building based on the premise of selectivity of social action.

The aim of the analysis is case reconstruction, consisting of an overall theory about the person’s biographic pattern and narration structure. Theory is then tested and developed through comparison with other cases, in the mode of the grounded theory (Rosenthal, 1993). This procedure of generating concepts through analysis of empirical data, corresponding with the grounded theory, is a recommended approach (Rosenthal, 1997, p. 24).

The biographic interpretative methods have been successfully used in international comparative projects (Chamberlayne & King, 1996) as well as in the particular field of migration research (Kovács & Melegh, 2001); (Lutz, 2008).

### **2.3. Sociological life course approach**

The life course paradigm, which since its emergence in the 1960s has gradually become a significant approach in sociology, similarly to the biographical method has roots in W. Thomas' work, as well as in theoretical suggestions of C. Wright Mills (referred to by Elder (1994). According to Elder, one of the pioneers of this approach, „life course generally refers to the interweave of age-graded trajectories, such as work careers and family pathways, that are subject to changing conditions and future options, and to short-term transitions ranging from leaving school to retirement” (Elder, 1985, 1994).

Three important notions in the sociological life course approach are transitions, trajectories, and turning points. **Transitions** are usually rapid changes from one state to another. Examples of transitions are entering the labour market, becoming a parent or retirement. As transitions are easy to operationalise and have the character of events, they are very suitable for event history analysis. Some transitions can have significant and perpetuating consequences over the future life course; this is especially true for negatively seen events, which strongly affect other spheres of life, such as becoming a teenage mother, unemployment or homelessness. **Trajectories** are longer phases of life in which transitions and events occur in a more predictable manner, as typical trajectories are institutionalised and largely inert. The education trajectory may include a few transitions between schools. Family trajectories may include more than one event of childbirth. **Turning points** are moments that change the direction of trajectories. They are not abrupt events, but the ones that in retrospect explain the change of path in one's life, marking the beginning of a new trajectory (Elder, 1985)..

The sociological life course paradigm proposes applying four principles to social trajectories of individuals over their life span (Elder, 1994, pp. 5-6; Elder & Giele, 2009, pp. 9-10):

### **1. Historical and geographical context**

Place and year of birth expose individuals to different historical experiences and ranges of opportunities. Individuals live their lives in historically particular economic, political, and cultural conditions.

### **2. Timing of lives and life stage principle**

Individual life course can be seen as a sequence of transitions and roles of varied duration in which the events that occur are timely or untimely with respect to age norms. The effect of the change of context on individuals' lives depends on where they are in their lives at the moment of the change.

### **3. Embeddedness of individuals in social relationships**

Humans live their lives in a network of social relations (family, friends, co-workers). Effects of changes on individuals depend on these relationships and individuals' actions also impact others.

#### **4. Human agency**

All of the above will not determine people's lives definitely as this fourth aspect emphasises individuals' choice and a degree of personal control over the course of their lives. Humans are conscious actors, able to construct their life courses and biographies in response to the constraints and opportunities they face.

These four principles can be easily applied to the lives of migrants. With respect to the subject of this dissertation it can be proposed that granting the right to free movement within the EU (as a result of the 2004 accession but in different years by different old member states) has created new opportunities for Polish citizens living in this historical time (1), but making use of these opportunities was easier for some, harder for others depending on their age and life stage, hence current social roles (2), and also facilitated (access to migration network) or made difficult (e.g. strong family ties, role of a carer to an immobile person) by social embeddedness (3), and last but not least depending on individual characteristics (4) such as ability to adapt to new conditions, degree of endurance to the initial hardship, decision making skills or goal orientation, but also to norms and values held (e.g. strength of attachment to their nation-state or individualism).

Shanahan and Macmillan (Shahanan & Macmillan, 2008) add two more guiding principles of the life course approach, which seem particularly useful for analysing international migrants: the situational imperatives principle, and the accentuation principle. The situational imperatives principle refers to the idea that new social contexts impose new social demands on how individuals play their social roles. This can be applied to moving to a host society that has different expectations concerning e.g. gender roles, or to non-mobile family members adjusting their behaviour after one member has migrated. The accentuation principle points to the mechanism that a change of social context triggers individuals to make use of and display more strongly the resources and learnt patterns of behaviour acquired over the preceding life history (Wingens, de Valk, Windzio, & Aybek, 2011, p. 12). However, in general terms these principles could also be incorporated into the first four proposed by Elder: situational imperatives being a combination of historical context, life stage, and social relationships, while accentuation is an aspect of agency.

The clearly structured life course pattern has become institutionalised in the modern societies of Western capitalism. From the point of view of these societies, chronological standardisation of the trajectories and transitions has become an efficient way of managing

generations of workers, their passage through education (preparation for work), working life and retirement, to give the field to younger generations. From the perspective of an individual, the standard life course has come to serve as a framework for managing and understanding one's life and sequence of social roles, making the sequences and timing of changes predictable (Kohli, 2007).

Mayer (2004) underlines that life course on the individual level has built-in endogenous causation and path dependency. Each transition is based on the previously acquired resources and experiences. However, through aggregation individual life courses affect the collective trajectories of the birth cohorts or generations. This may also affect other generations, for example if the grandparents start to organise their retirement in an individualistic way, their adult offspring may be forced to find a different way of arranging childcare. Individuals' behaviour when aggregated may also reproduce or change social structures. For example, even if the retirement age becomes liberalised, the individuals continue to guide the timing of transition to retirement by using the previous legal retirement age as reference – thus preserving the old pattern (Kohli, 2007). Diversions from a standardised life course of the Fordist era that have emerged since 1970s do not appear uniformly in all (Western) societies, the patterns of change, the spheres which are deregularised or not, depend on the institutional framework of the states, or their 'welfare mix' (Mayer, 2004); (Brückner & Mayer, 2005); (Kohli, 2007). This invites cross-national comparisons of life course patterns.

The life course perspective is very useful in studying effects of migration on individuals and families, as the timing of migration in one's life has an enormous impact on the future trajectories, the act of migration affects different family members differently depending on their current role and, in the longer perspective, the decisions of one generation affect the descendants (Clark, Glick, & Bures, 2009).

Taking the analytical approaches described above as a starting point, the enquiry attempts to balance the biographic narrative interpretative method's emphasis on the whole participants' lives as they choose to present it, their life course seen as interconnected with the macro context and meso-level ties, as well as the grounded theory's aim of building a theory allowing to understand the processes under study, across the cases. A migrant life course can be seen as a pattern emerging from personal life story (events and their



subjective interpretation captured by the narratives), linked with the lives of the person's significant others and interacting with the social and historical context of the countries of origin and settlement, evolving over time. The interviewees, coming from a particular population of migrants face similar challenges and choices, therefore comparing their actions and attitudes to particular situations should unveil some common categories and concepts within different cases.

## **2.4. Participants' selection**

The criteria for the recruitment of participants were aimed to yield a sample of Poles who have been affected by post-accession migration to the UK or Italy and who have managed their lives after settlement in the country of immigration in a variety of ways.

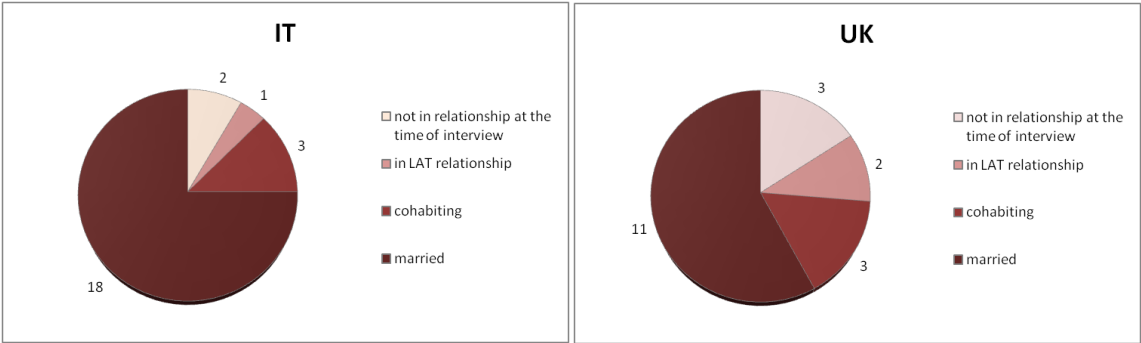
The main selection criterion was that at least one adult household member was a Polish citizen participating in post-accession migration to the UK or Italy. The opening of the labour market by the UK on 1<sup>st</sup> May 2004 was chosen as a cut-off date, however, the respondents were free to define in what way that date was important for their stories. Some interviewees who agreed to participate in the project recalled their earlier circular mobility or irregular stay during the interview, and underlined such changes as the reunification of the rest of the family with an earlier migrant or regularisation of their stay as taking place in or after 2004. For some, the new rights acquired thanks to Poland's EU accession were the factor that encouraged them to transform circular migration into settlement. The length of stay abroad of the migrant(s) had to be at least 6 months, so that short-term seasonal migrants or exchange students were excluded.

In relation to the family oriented perspective, including the potential childbearing and parental decisions, the interviewees had to be within reproductive age group (usually defined as 15-49 for women) upon their last (based on the time of interview) migration to Italy or the UK. Therefore, for both women and men (for the reason of comparability), an age limit of 49 upon migration was adopted as one of the recruitment criteria. However, the vast majority were much younger and migrated at the age of 25 to 35 years. The youngest ones upon migration were 19 - having just finished secondary education (4 interviewees).

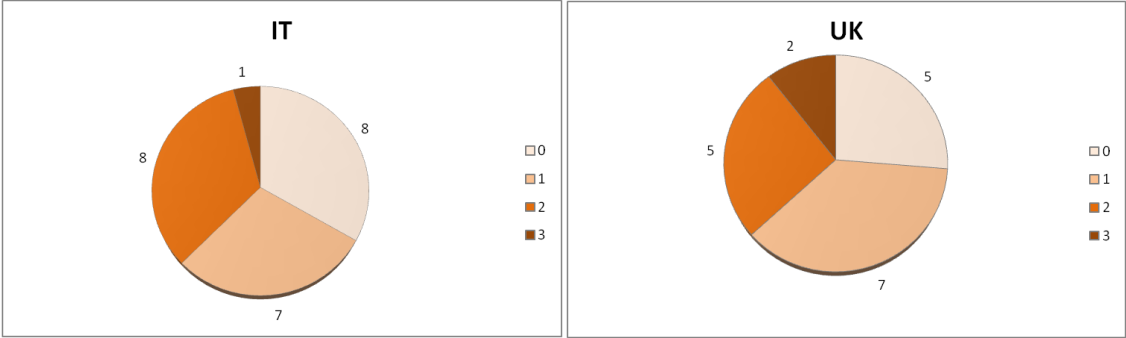
The range of relationship statuses and family situations of the interviewees is presented in Fig. 2 and Fig. 3. A few interviewees were not in a stable union at the time of

the interview, yet one or more relationships falling apart were usually a part of their life story. The number of children is presented excluding adult children who did not follow their migrant parents (there were two cases, when interviewees migrated only with their younger children). In addition to the presented number of children, four interviewed women were pregnant at the time of the interview (one in Italy, three in the UK), which was an important family development discussed in the interviews.

**Fig. 2. Interviewees according to their relationship/marital status**



**Fig. 3. Interviewees according to the number of children**



In order to reduce bias and to respond to some intuitions about what may affect the propensity to settle and have children abroad, the interviewees were recruited with the aim of covering the variety of socio-economic statuses, national composition of couples (mixed or one nationality couples, a host country native partner vs. immigrant partner) and family structures (presence, age and number of children, lone parents, household members other than parents and young children).

A statistically representative sample of the Polish migrant population has not been attempted here. In turn, the sampling was informed by a gradual emergence of ideas from the analysis. Therefore, as the project advanced, more attention was devoted to identifying

deviant cases and cases filling in gaps in the gradually developing analytical framework (such as searching for lone parents towards the end of fieldwork in the UK).

The size of the sample assumed during the fieldwork planning phase was about 20 interviews per country. However, “[t]he basic question in theoretical sampling is which case or group to turn to next in the analysis and with what theoretical purpose. Unlike the quantitative researcher, the qualitative researcher is expected to redefine the criteria governing the choice of comparison groups as the analysis proceeds on a case by case basis. The selection of cases cannot therefore be planned in advance, as is the case with investigations which use predominantly statistical methods.” (Brannen, 1992, p. 9).

In the course of the fieldwork in Italy, I conducted 14 individual and 5 dyadic interviews (i.e. couples) with a total of 24 people (of which 14 women). In the UK 19 people were interviewed (11 women and 8 men), including 3 couples. One of the couples in the UK planned the meeting and childcare arrangements on the day of our meeting in such a way that they had to be interviewed separately. In Italy the youngest (aged 30 or under) participants were the hardest to find, while in the UK the older participants (over 40) were difficult to find, which is in accordance with the age structure of the Polish immigrant population presented in the statistics in the next chapter.

Examples of theory-driven sampling in response to certain questions arising from the analysis included searching for single parents towards the end of the fieldwork in the UK, as none had been found earlier spontaneously. Another example was looking to recruit persons who had migrated to Italy for career reasons, not through working as a *badante* or because of a romantic relationship with a local man, which had been encountered most often. This new group was reached thanks to a networking site targeted at expats. Nevertheless, the timeframe of the fieldwork did not allow a return to Italy in order to find analogous deviant cases as were found in the UK, i.e. single parents. On the other hand, none of the recruitment methods and contact persons resulted in successful recruitment of a Polish person with a native (British) partner, while this was not a problem in Italy.

A variety of means were used for the recruitment of interviewees. Internet fora and social networking sites were consulted on a regular basis, as it is possible to find many thematic and local groups, followers of which can be easily identified by their nationality and place of residence. These sources were used to diversify the starting points, while additional interviews in the chosen locations were arranged thanks to the snowball method

– the personal networks of the interviewees. In the field, participants were also recruited during diaspora event such as Polish couples’ meetings in one of the consulates or a Roman-Catholic mass in Polish. Methods of recruitment are presented in Fig. 4.

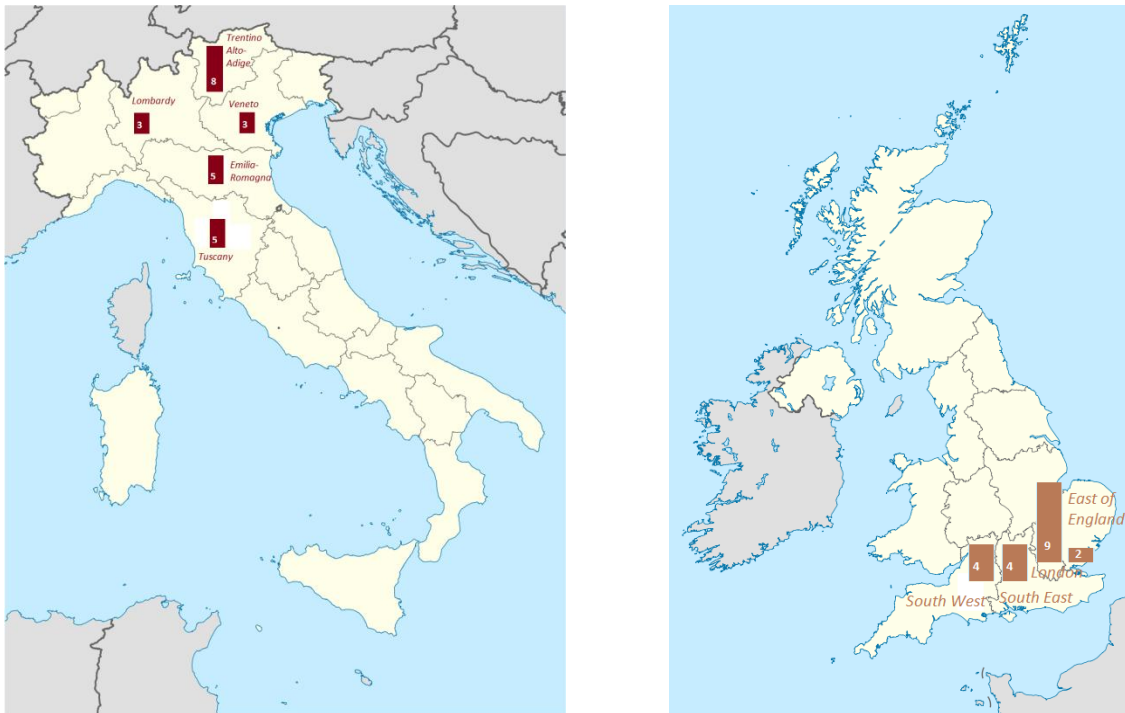
**Fig. 4. Methods of recruitment of the interviewees and number of interviewees.**



Using as starting points certain interviewees who were the first to respond to an online invitation or who were available via a personal network resulted in a concentration of interviewees in certain locations, which are summarised in Fig. 5. In order to tame this effect, the use of the snowballing technique was limited: each chain was closed with the maximum of two new interviews conducted thanks to a single interviewee, no further contacts were sought from these subsequent interviewees.

In both countries interviews were concentrated in certain regions, as presented in Fig. 5. In Italy, all of the regions where interviews were conducted have larger than average proportion of non-Italian residents; with respect to the Polish citizens, three are in the top five for the size of the Polish population in the region (over 7,000 people in each of the regions), two are in the moderate group (between 2,500 and 4,400) (according to 2011 census data, (Istat, 2014)). Similarly, in the case of the UK, three of the regions where interviews have been conducted are in the top five according to the number of Polish nationals, the fourth one is still in the top ten, with 56,000 Polish citizens (2012 data (ONS, 2013c)).

**Fig. 5. Number of interviewees in Italy and England by region of residence.**



Source: own elaboration, based on the maps of [Italy](#) and the [UK](#), originally by [NordNordWest](#), under [CC BY-SA-3.0](#)

In both countries interviewees lived in economically stronger and richer regions. The regional concentration of interviews made the comparison of cases easier and thus helped identify the differences between individual life stories; however it limited the possibilities of generalising from the research about the whole Polish immigrant population in each of country of settlement.

## 2.5. Techniques for data collection

The principle technique of data gathering used in this project was the narrative biographical interview. The interviews were all started with the following question „Can you tell me the story of how you got here?“. During the narrative that followed, the interviewer's role was active listening, giving only general, encouraging words if necessary. Afterwards, the story was expanded by asking probing questions derived from the initial narrative. Only in the last part of the interview were open ended questions posed, to gather (and only if these were missing so far) the ideas and perceptions of spheres of interest for the project, such as family plans, housing transitions and conditions, attitude

towards family welfare policies, ideas for the future and old age. To close the interview, the participants were invited to add anything they wished to say or found important.

This technique has offered several advantages for the proposed enquiry. First of all it uses a story as a natural form of sharing life experience in everyday life interactions. Second, it gives the interviewees freedom to structure their stories according to their perception of the logical sequence and importance of the events (Schram, 2006, p. 105). Finally, in addition to presenting facts and expressing life experience, the stories might present interesting patterns in their composition and narrative strategies (see for example (Kovács & Melegh, 2001). Exploiting this last characteristic however, requires detailed transcriptions that were not available in all cases, as not all of the interviewees agreed to the recording of their interview.

When the family's living arrangement and work routine made it possible, a family interview was conducted. This technique offers an insight into the dynamics of negotiations between family members (Górny, 1998). These interviews usually do not allow the full stories of both speakers to be recorded, however they do provide an insight into how the crucial themes are discussed within the couple and what issues emerge spontaneously.

In order to enrich the material gathered through narrative interviews, the fieldwork also included participant observation among the migrant families in their everyday life activities: in airports, playgrounds, Polish Saturday kindergarten and school, ethnic shops, churches etc. However, the crucial setting for the observations was the participants' homes. Because inviting acquaintances to one's home is much more straightforward in Polish culture than, for example, in Western Europe (which was even mentioned by one of the interviewees), most of the interviews were conducted in private apartments. This provided an opportunity to observe how 'home' is created abroad by migrant families, and which elements of the native culture are present in their private space abroad.

## Chapter 3: Post-accession migration from Poland to Italy and the UK in the demographic, family and welfare policies contexts

The aims of this chapter are twofold. First it presents an overview of the existing data on the scale and characteristics of the post-EU accession migration flows from Poland to Italy and the UK. Various data sources, from both sending and receiving countries, are confronted. The second part of the chapter puts these migratory flows into their contexts, with respect to the socio-demographic characteristics of the societies involved, economic conditions, and welfare state provisions. In the conclusion to the chapter I discuss how these national or local contexts may affect the long-term decisions of migrants and how they may shape their lives, in the spheres of work, housing, family development and welfare.

### 3.1. Demographic characteristics of post EU-accession Polish migrants

The group under study can be characterised using two sources of data: population census and annually published statistics, based on local population registers. The registers are run by local authority offices and are based on the registration of demographic events, such as births, deaths, marriages, and characteristics of people involved, such as age or education level of spouses or parents. Each resident is obliged to have a registered address, which serves the local authorities for establishing the need for public services, planning tax income and listing voters. This source of data is analogous to *anagrafe* in Italy, while it has no parallel in the UK. A limitation of this source of data for the aims of this research is that, contrary to birth, marriage, or immigration from outside the EU, the fact of emigration is rarely registered, despite the formal obligation to do so. With the numerous matters already involved with emigration, many people simply choose to avoid this ‘subjectively pointless’ visit to the town hall. Migrants who do not wish to ‘burn the bridges’ behind them by giving up a communal flat or selling property, have no motivation to declare their emigration, whether temporary (over 3 months) or permanent<sup>3</sup>. As a result, thousands of

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<sup>3</sup> My own family is a good example: we had not registered our emigration when I started my doctoral programme at the EUI. Afterwards, on many occasions, we informed the authorities about our residence abroad (e.g. during the 2011 population census, on the occasion of elections in which we participated through the consulate), yet in the basic

Poles living abroad are still included in the population of Poland published by the official statistics. In census data these people are referred to as temporary migrants, even if they have been absent for more than 12 months (Anacka & Okólski, 2010, p. 142).

In order to obtain an approximation of the number of temporary migrants outside Poland, the Central Statistical Office since 2007 has published estimates based on BAEL (Polish Labour Force Survey), EU-SILC, work permits, social insurance and residence permits data of the host countries. The estimated number of Poles living in selected host countries is presented in Table 2.

**Table 2. Polish temporary migrants in selected countries and regions on census day and at the end of year (in thousands).**

Country	2002 census	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011 census	2011	2012
UK	24	150	340	580	690	650	595	580	601	625	637
Italy	39	59	70	85	87	88	88	92	94	94	97
<b>Total-EU</b>	451	750	1 170	1 550	1 860	1 820	1690	1607	1693	1670	1720
<b>Total</b>	<b>786</b>	<b>1 000</b>	<b>1 450</b>	<b>1 950</b>	<b>2 270</b>	<b>2 210</b>	<b>2100</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2017</b>	<b>2060</b>	<b>2130</b>

Notes: 2002-2006 persons staying abroad for over 2 months, and since 2007 – over 3 months. Persons staying abroad longer than 1 year are also included, as long as they have not de-registered from their Polish place of residence. CSO's estimates, from 2009 onwards recalculated on the basis of 2011 census.

Source: (Central Statistical Office, 2013a, p. 3).

Since 2006, among the EU countries, the UK has ranked first with the largest stock of Poles, while Italy has consistently been in the top 5. It is estimated that 75% of these migrants stay abroad for over 1 year, and therefore should be treated as long-term migrants and, together with registered emigrants, as residents of their host countries (Central Statistical Office, 2013a, p. 4).

Decreasing stock of Poles abroad showed that there were more returns than new departures between 2008 and 2010, but afterwards the outflow once again outnumbered returns. Italy was an exception to this pattern, with estimated slow growth. As argued by the statisticians, the crisis rather caused the limitation of new migrations than pushing emigrants to return to Poland (Central Statistical Office, 2009). This hypothesis is in line with past experience indicating that recessions have more impact on the reduction of

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population register of our town we have remained residents, requiring provision of such services as e.g. a school place for our child. As a consequence, our return to Poland has not been registered.



inflow rather than on increasing return migration (Somerville & Sumption, 2009, pp. 29-30).

The data from Polish Labour Force Survey (BAEL) for the period 1999-2006, therefore also covering the period before the accession, on people who have been abroad for at least 2 months, have been compiled by Centre for Migration Research at University of Warsaw, into a dataset allowing for detailed characteristic of those migrants of whom information could be obtained from household members present in Poland (Grabowska-Lusińska & Okólski, 2009, pp. 76-79).

The post-accession migrants differed from the pre-accession migrants with respect to their demographic profile. In the early period after the accession (1 May 2004 - 31 December 2006) the prevalence of men increased from 57% before accession (data for 1999-2004) to 65% among those who migrated after accession. Post accession migrants were also slightly younger and more often came from large towns (Anacka & Okólski, 2010).

The most significant characteristic is the high share of people with tertiary education. It increased from 10% among pre-accession migrants to almost 17% among the post-accession ones (2004-2006), thus exceeding the proportion in the whole Polish population equal to 12% (in all cases - population aged over 15). This educational profile shows that migration was very attractive for graduates with high level of human capital. However, the most common level of education was basic vocational, especially among male migrants. Although its share diminished after accession, it was still higher than in the total population (26%).

**Table 3. The level of education of Polish migrants (aged 15+) by sex, in %**

Highest completed level of education	Total		Male		Female	
	before accession	after accession	before accession	after accession	before accession	after accession
<b>Tertiary</b>	10	<b>17</b>	8	14	12	<b>22</b>
<b>Technical secondary and post-secondary</b>	29	30	27	32	32	28
<b>General secondary</b>	13	14	7	9	21	24
<b>Basic vocational</b>	37	31	48	<b>38</b>	23	19
<b>Lower secondary or less</b>	11	8	10	8	12	8

<b>Total</b>	100	100	100	100	100	100
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Source: simplified version of data presented in (Grabowska-Lusińska & Okólski, 2009, pp. 100-101 #302).

Research conducted by (Anacka & Fihel, 2013) on the LFS data for 1999-2009, has shown that among the post-accession migrants, people aged 40+, with basic vocational education and coming from rural areas have higher propensity to return to Poland. Polish migrants who had been in more traditional destinations (e.g. Germany, Italy) had a higher probability of return than those who had migrated to newly opened labour markets (i.a. the UK, Ireland). The results of their analysis support the thesis that younger, better educated people, with urban origin, who went to the new destination countries are less keen to return. The proposed explanation is that they make progress in the country of immigration, or even if they don't - for them their current countries of residence remain more attractive than Poland (due to e.g. higher salaries and welfare benefits compared to the costs of living on an acceptable level).

The most recent source of detailed data on emigration from Poland is the 2011 National Census of Population and Housing. The census was conducted between April and June 2011, with 31<sup>st</sup> March 2011 as the census day. According to the first published results (Central Statistical Office, 2012), the population of Poland on that day was 38.3 million people, 95,000 more than in the 2002 census. However, in order to overcome the above-mentioned problem with the lack of registration of emigration, the 2011 census introduced the category of resident population. This group excludes those among the registered residents who have been abroad for at least 12 months and includes immigrants with temporary status who have been residing in Poland for over 12 months. Census data report resident population equal to 37.2 million; around 1.14 million less than the registered population.

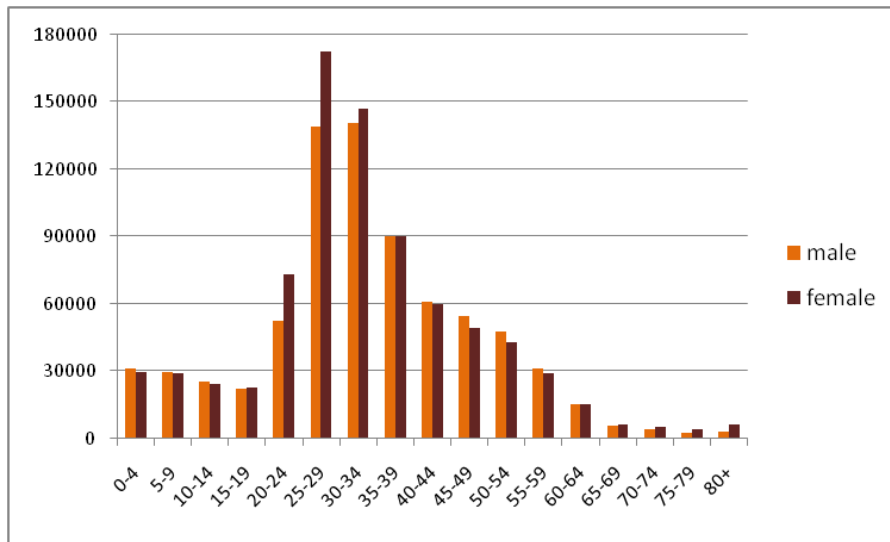
On the census day, over 2 million Polish (registered) residents had been abroad for over 3 months, and 78% of those Poles (1.56 million) were long-term migrants, absent for over 1 year. In practice, some of them may no longer treat Poland as their country of residence (their current countries can also treat them as residents), provided they do not declare emigration to the local administration of their registered place of residence, they are included in the population of Poland (Central Statistical Office, 2013b, pp. 49-50).

The census used administrative sources of data to gather basic information about the whole population and a representative survey conducted for 20% of dwellings to gather detailed information. While the primary demographic characteristics of emigrants (sex,

year of birth) have been drawn from administrative registers, the information about the current country of residence was obtained from other persons living in the same address. In addition, for empty flats information about emigration of the residents was obtained from neighbours, with no details. In total, for 1/3 of emigrants there was no information on the country of residence, hence it was imputed based on the other 2/3 and the regional structure of countries of emigration, other information was imputed based on the representative survey (Central Statistical Office, 2013b, p. 27). Data gathered from informed household members cannot be treated as representative for all migrants, as most probably those who left well-informed family members in Poland are different on many dimensions from those who left as whole households. Information on the reason for emigration is a good example of census data with very low reliability as it has been collected only for 370,000 out of 2 million emigrants. Nevertheless, according to the relatives in Poland, 73% of migrants left for work related reasons, 19% for family related reasons, and 6% for education. The majority of family migrants went to join a family member or reunite the family. Interestingly, 19% were reported to have left to start a family abroad (Central Statistical Office, 2013b, p. 54).

The majority of migrants were female although the difference was only 2 percentage points (compared to 8 percentage points in the 2002 census). In the subgroup of migrants absent for more than 3 but less than 12 months, there was a small majority of men. Considering the particular countries of residence, as imputed based on the available data on 2/3 of emigrants, women constituted over 66% of migrants in Italy, but less than 50% of those in the UK. The dominance of women was pronounced the most among young adults (aged 20-34). The vast majority (64%) of migrants were of so-called mobile working age (15-45), but there was also a significant proportion of children (13%) - see Fig. 6. Among migrants there were 46,000 children born abroad between 2004 and 2011 who have never lived in Poland, but were registered only with the local administrations in Poland (Central Statistical Office, 2013b, pp. 59-61).

**Fig. 6. Migrants from Poland staying abroad for over 12 months by 5-year age groups and sex.**



Source: own elaboration on the basis of Table 51 in (Central Statistical Office, 2013b, p. 192)

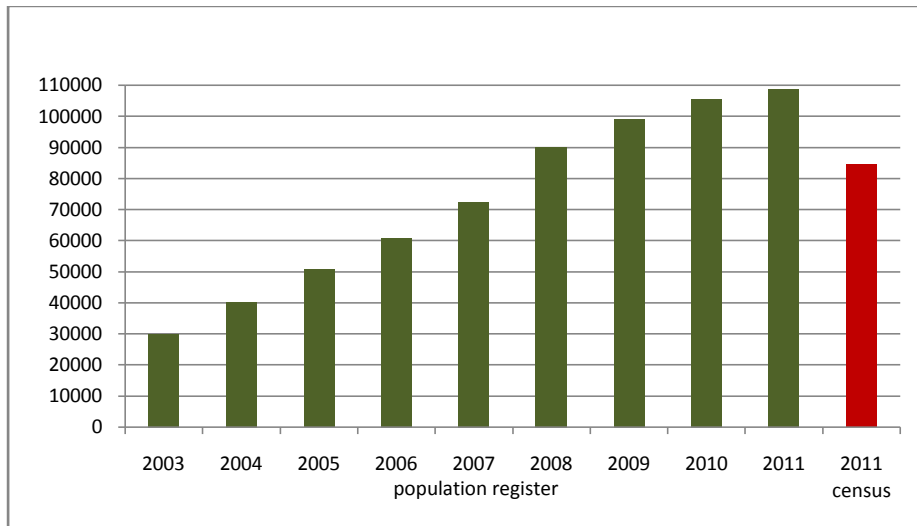
As regards the legal marital status of migrants aged 15 and over, single, never married (34%) and divorced persons (7%) were overrepresented by comparison to the total population of Poland, while married people (45%) were underrepresented, which was interpreted as a result of greater propensity of single people to migrate (Central Statistical Office, 2013b, p. 63). However, this may also be a consequence of migrants' younger age structure and of the fact that among younger adults a growing proportion of partnerships are not formalised.

### 3.2. Polish immigrants in Italy

Although it was not a particularly hot topic in the media, migration from Poland to Italy was quite significant after 2004. In the light of the Polish CSO estimates (Table 2) the number of Poles in Italy grew rapidly in the first years after EU enlargement, despite the fact that during this period the Italian labour market was not fully open to Polish citizens. Yet, it must be underlined that part of the increase in Polish residents in Italy observed starting from 2004 was due not to new post-accession moves, but to regularisation of previously irregular immigrants (Rosińska-Kordasiewicz, 2005, p. 10). Since 2006, while Polish estimates showed a slowing down of growth of the stock of emigrants from Poland living in Italy, the Italian statistics of Polish citizens in the population register (*anagrafe*) showed a steady increase (see Fig. 7.). However, the 2011 census yielded a much smaller number of Polish citizens (84,619), closer to the amount estimated by the Polish CSO. One

explanation for this may be the naturalisation of Polish citizens in Italy in the period between censuses: unless they deregistered with the Polish authorities, they are still an emigrant part of the population of Poland, while they are no longer counted as foreign citizens.

**Fig. 7. Number of Polish citizens living in Italy, 2003-2011.**



Notes: 2003-2011: figure for 1st January, calculated on the basis of the population register (*anagrafe*). 2011: census data (reference date 9th October). Earlier years have not been recalculated on the basis of the census. Source: (Istat, 2013),(Istat, 2014).

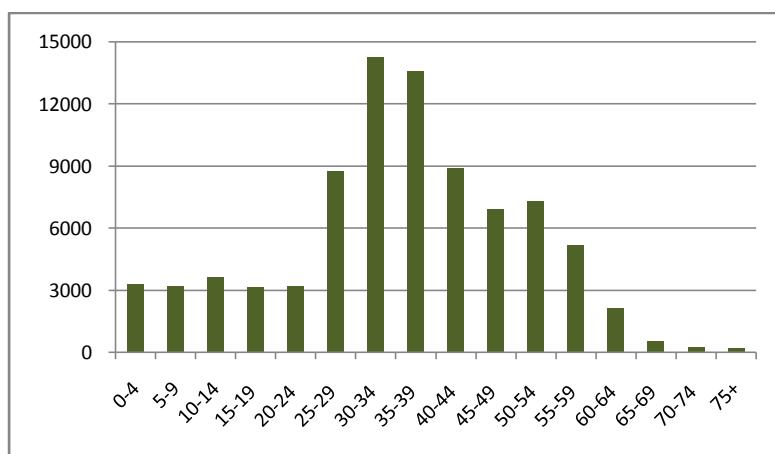
In 2010, with over 100,000 registered residents, Poles were among the top 10 foreign nationalities in Italy, comprising 2.4% of its stock of foreign residents (Caritas/Migrantes, 2011, pp. 93-94). According to the population register, in 2010, compared to other immigrant groups, the Polish were overrepresented in the centre (Lazio, Emilia Romagna) and south (Campania) and relatively less concentrated in the north (Lombardy, Veneto, Piemonte) of Italy (Caritas/Migrantes, 2011, p. 102). In 2011, the largest population of Polish immigrants was found in Lazio (16,692), Emilia Romagna (10,480), Campania (8,381), Tuscany (7,702) and Lombardy (7,139) (Istat, 2013).

The largest share of Polish immigrants work in domestic services and the care sector (32.3%), construction (13.3%) and industry (11.6%). According to qualification level, 41.9% are unskilled labourers. At the same time, Poles are the only large immigrant group in Italy with over 10% of highly qualified professionals (Caritas/Migrantes, 2011, p. 239).

According to the Italian data compiled by IDOS, among the Polish immigrants, there were 77,603 women<sup>4</sup> in 2010. With 71.2% of women it is the second most feminised nationality group in Italy. The vast majority of Polish women – 69,602 – were employed. Apart from work, Polish women often reside in Italy for family reasons: in 2010 Polish was the fourth most popular nationality of foreign brides married by Italian men (Caritas/Migrantes, 2011).

According to the Italian census data presented in Fig. 8. the most numerous age groups among Polish citizens in this country were people in their thirties; there was also large number of people of immobile working age (over 45 years old).

**Fig. 8. Age structure of Polish citizens in Italy, 2011 census data.**



Source: (Istat, 2013).

The number of Polish nationality children (0-17 years old) in Italy was estimated to be 18,000 in 2005 (Kowalska-Angelelli, 2007, pp. 5-6) and only 12,158 in 2011 (Istat, 2013). In 2011, the number of Polish nationality children born in Italy was 596, and in 2012 563 Polish nationals were born, which is 0.7% of the foreign citizenship children born in Italy in 2012 (in 2011 - 0.8%). Polish nationality ranked 23rd among foreign nationalities of children; the ranking is lead by Romanians (16,405 Romanians were born in Italy in 2012, 15,500 in 2011). Data on mothers' nationality is presented only in aggregate form. In 2012, non-national mothers gave birth to 101,609 children, 19.0% of the total number of births, compared to 18.4% of births in Italy in 2011. Foreign women give birth in Italy at an younger age than the native women: the modal age of a foreign mother in 2012 was 27 years, 50% of children born by foreign mothers were born to

<sup>4</sup> The Italian data state an even higher proportion of women among immigrants from Poland (71.2% compared to 66%). Taking into account the imputation of census data on the country of residence for 1/3 of emigrants from Poland, the data from the Italian sources seem to characterise people actually living there more accurately.

women between 25 and 32, whereas the modal age of a native Italian mother was 34 years and 48% of the children of Italian women were born by mothers aged 30 to 36 (own calculations based on data available in an online database (Istat, 2014)).

### 3.3. Polish immigrants in the UK

Several sources of data can be used to estimate the number of Polish immigrants in the UK<sup>5</sup> since 2004: Annual Population Survey (APS), Labour Force Survey (LFS, conducted in countries of the UK separately), International Passenger Survey (IPS) for the flows and the 2011 Population Census. In interpreting these data one has to be aware that different categories can cover not only recent immigrants, but also the post WWII diaspora and their descendants – second and third generation Polish citizens born in the UK.

According to the 2012 data, Poland is the second most common country of origin among the foreign-born population in the UK, with 646,000 immigrants. As regards nationality, Polish citizenship has the top ranking both in the entire UK (700,000 people) and in every single region of England and country of the UK<sup>6</sup> (tables 1.4 and 2.4 in ONS (2013c)).

The population born in Poland is concentrated in the southern and eastern parts of England. The largest numbers reside in London (143,000), followed by the South East (89,000), the East of England (67,000) and the East Midlands (65,000). Scotland has 64,000 residents born in Poland, while the fifth region of England, the North West, has 63,000 (Table A in ONS (2013c)).

The stock of Polish citizens in the UK is affected by migration in both directions and natural population change. According to the IPS, since 2004 Poland has been in the top 10 of the most common countries of last residence of international migrants declaring intended long term stay (over 1 year) in the UK. Since then, the peak inflow from Poland was registered in 2007 (88,000) and the smallest - in 2010 (29,000). Since 2006 Poland has also featured among top 10 countries of destination stated by persons leaving the UK for at

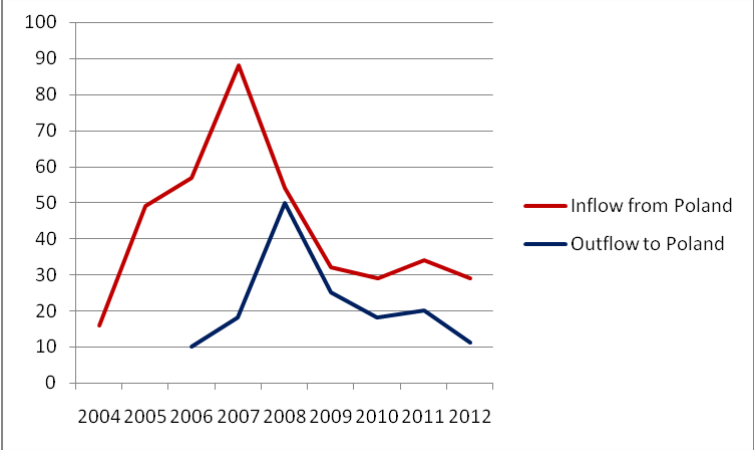
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<sup>5</sup> The system of official statistics in the UK is not uniform. Whenever statistics for the whole UK were not available, the numbers for England and Wales were used, as the majority of Polish immigrants live in England and that is where the interviews were conducted.

<sup>6</sup> ONS estimates based on Annual Population Survey and Labour Force Surveys conducted in countries of the UK. Only for Northern Ireland was the estimation of the number of Polish nationals not precise enough to be used for practical purposes.

least 1 year. The outflow was the largest in 2008 (50,000). Upon these flows the largest net inflow of long-term immigrants from Poland was registered in 2007 (70,000), and the smallest - in 2008 (4,000) (ONS, 2013a). Since the EU enlargement, despite the economic crisis, the annual balance of flows between Poland and the UK has remained positive for the UK (see Fig. 9.).

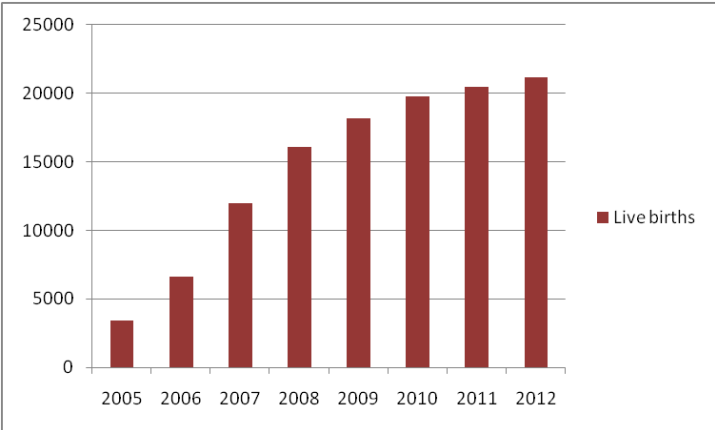
**Fig. 9. Long term international migrants who are not British citizens, 2004-2012, estimates based on IPS (in thousands).**



Source: own elaboration of data from (ONS, 2013a).

In 2005, when Poland was for the first time among the top ten of the mothers’ countries of origin, there were 3,403 births to mothers from Poland (Fig. 10.). In 2010, with almost 20,000 births, Poland became the top country of origin of foreign-born women who gave birth in England and Wales. In the subsequent years, mothers born in Poland also ranked first among foreign-born women for the number of children born in England and Wales – 20,495 in 2011 and 21,156 in 2012 (ONS, 2013b).

**Fig. 10. Births to Polish-born mothers in England and Wales, 2005-2012.**

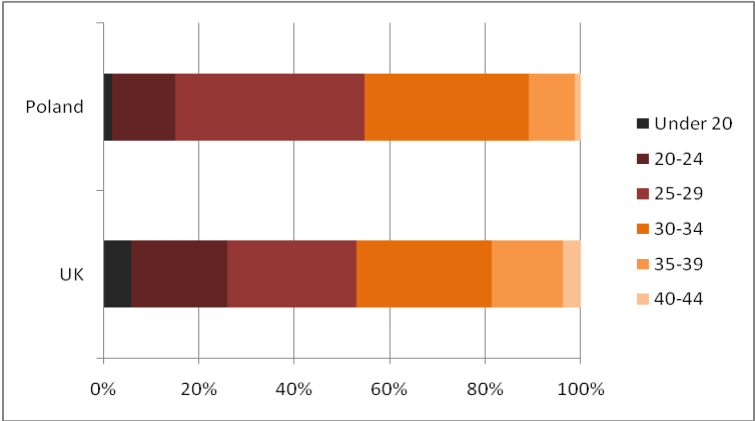


Source: (ONS, 2011), (ONS, 2013b).



The age structure of Polish- and UK-born mothers is different, even though in both groups the majority of children are born before the mother's thirtieth birthday (Fig. 11.). Among mothers born in Poland, childbearing is more concentrated between the ages of 25 and 34 (74%), whereas giving birth before 25 (especially teen parenthood) or after 35 is less common than among native mothers. This concentration reflects the age structure of Polish immigrants to the UK. There were also cases of late motherhood among immigrants to England and Wales: in 2012 mothers from Poland aged 45 or over gave birth to 11 children.

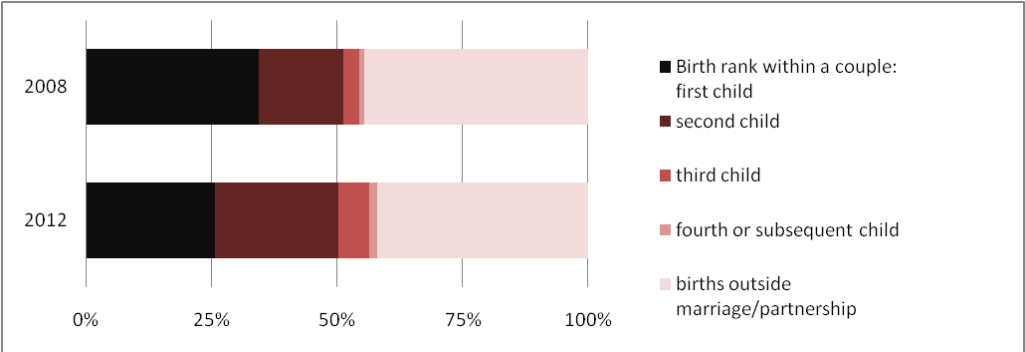
**Fig. 11. Births to mothers born in Poland and in the UK by mother's age, in England and Wales, 2012.**



Source: elaborated from (ONS, 2013b).

Over half of children born to Polish mothers were born in married couples or registered partnerships (55.4% in 2008, 58.0% in 2012). For these children birth order data are collected, which allow for a comparison of the structures of families of Polish origin, in which children are born in England and Wales (Fig. 12.). In 2008, 34.3% of all children of Polish mothers (and the majority of children born to mothers with husbands/registered partners) were the first birth for the couple. In comparison, in 2012 the share of first children was smaller, while the proportion of the second, third and fourth or subsequent children of a couple was larger. This pattern suggests more of a long-term development of the families of women born in the UK, with a growing propensity to have bigger families.

**Fig. 12. Children of mothers born in Poland by mother's marital status and number of previous children in the couple (birth order), data for England and Wales 2008, 2012.**

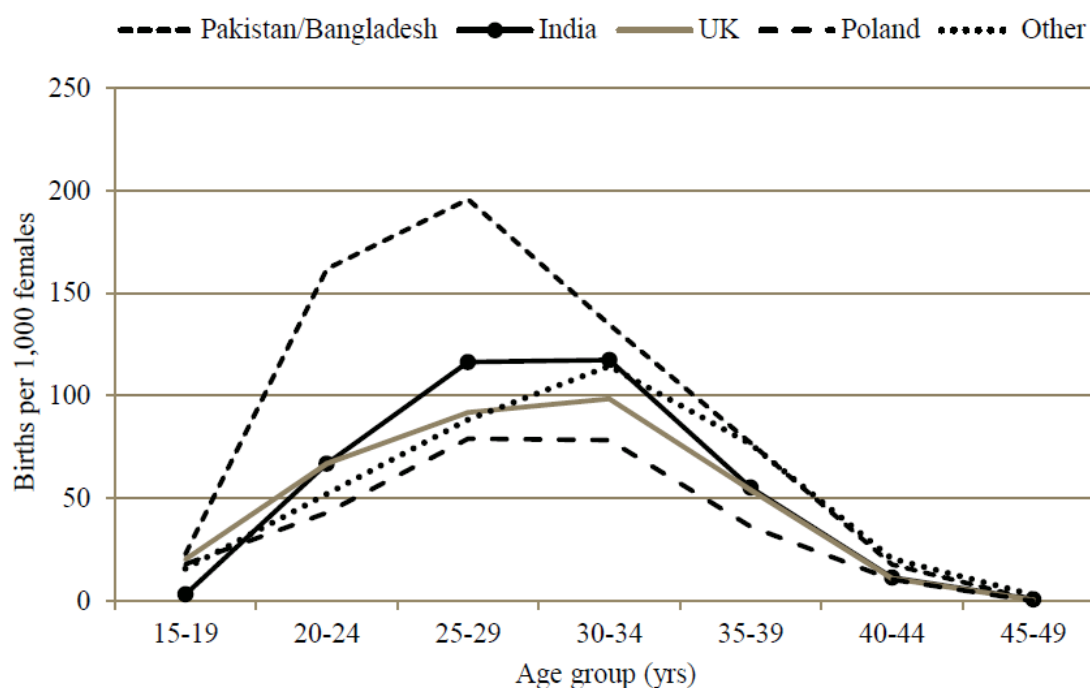


Source: elaborated from (ONS, 2013b).

Analysis of British birth registration data combined with the APS allowed the ONS analysts (Zumpe, Dormon, & Jefferies, 2012) to calculate general fertility rates (GFR) of foreign-born women from the five most common countries of birth in the UK. GRF of women born in Poland was estimated at 95 per 1000 women, similar to Indian women, significantly lower than that of Pakistani-born women but higher than that of UK-born women. The total fertility rates could not be calculated for particular countries of origin. In general TFR of foreign-born women was 2.28 in 2011, 0.4 higher than of native women. However, the gap has been closing, as the TFR of the foreign-born has been decreasing significantly.

Waller et al. (2012) analysed fertility of immigrants from various countries basing on 1997-2010 LFS data concentrating on women and their children living in the same household (Own Child Method). As it includes the children up to 15 years old it captures women's fertility over a long period before the survey. On the other hand, it does not capture children not living with their mother. The analysis produced age specific fertility patterns for various groups of women (Fig. 13); in comparison, the ASF of Polish women was consistently below the natives or immigrants from other countries, while close to the patterns observed in the country of origin.

**Fig. 13. Age specific fertility of immigrant women in the UK, by their country of birth, 2004-2010**



Source: reproduced from (Waller (Waller, et al., 2012, p. 15).

Waller concentrated on short-term effects of migration on fertility, so births to women childless upon immigration occurring in the period of 3-5 years after settlement were analysed. Among women from Poland the ones aged 15-24 were almost all childless, among 25-29 years old - 80%, 30-34-year-olds around 52% and 35-39 - over 60% childless (they might have left their teenage children behind). Fertility of Polish women immediately after immigration was not elevated, the catching up was visible after 5 years of stay in the UK, among women at least 25 years old. Waller proposed, that it was the more established pre-2004 immigrants that drove the number of children born to Polish mothers up after EU-accession.

If the age-specific fertility of Polish women remain similar to the ones observed in Poland, in the long run the massive inflow of Polish women in reproductive age may drive the TFR in the UK down – in fact, this may be the cause of the significant decrease of the TFR for foreign-born women from 2.43 to 2.28 between 2010 and 2011. On the other hand Waller et al. did not study births of higher order to women who arrived in the UK with one or more children born in Poland. Furthermore, as the LFS samples were getting smaller with each year, the estimation of fertility after 2001 was not as precise as for the earlier period. If the latter is true, then an increase in Polish women's fertility in the UK cannot be excluded.

Precise 2011 census data on the structure of population allowed the ONS to produce country specific total fertility rates (TFR) for foreign-born women. According to 2011 data for England and Wales the TFR of women born in Poland was 2.13, compared to 2.21 for all non-UK born women and 1.84 for UK-born women (Dormon, 2014). This number is much higher than the TFR in Poland, contrary to the findings of Waller et al., however, this may be a consequence of the fact that TFR is more affected by period fertility than the Age Specific Fertility (ASF).

Birth registrations also give data about the father's country of birth<sup>7</sup>. In 2010, 14,847 children were registered as born to a mother and father both born in Poland. In addition, 772 children were registered as having a Polish-born father, but not a Polish-born mother (ONS, 2011). In total, in 2010 there were 20,534 children born in the UK with the right to a Polish passport<sup>8</sup>. In 2012 the number of children born in the UK with both parents born in Poland amounted to 15,446. An additional 5,710 children had a mother from Poland and a father of a different origin and 986 had a Polish-born father and a mother of a different origin. The proportion of different regions of origin of parents of children with one parent from Poland is presented in Table 4.

**Table 4. Origin of the other parent of the children with mothers and fathers from Poland, births in England and Wales, 2012.**

Country of birth of the other parent	Polish father		Polish mother	
	number	% of total	number	% of total
Total	16 432		21 156	
Poland	15 446	94,0%	15 446	73,0%
UK	333	2,0%	2 436	11,5%
EU15 (exc.UK)	71	0,4%	339	1,6%
New EU (exc.PL)	274	1,7%	294	1,4%
Middle East&Asia	90	0,5%	610	2,9%
Africa	83	0,5%	686	3,2%
Other	135	0,8%	1 345	6,4%

Source: elaborated data from (ONS, 2013b).

As there are no detailed data on marriages and partnerships in the UK by nationality or origin of partners, the data on parental couples offer an interesting approximation of the relationship formation or at least the mating patterns of immigrants from Poland<sup>9</sup>. Only 6%

<sup>7</sup> Father's data may not be registered for births outside marriage registered solely by the mother. In 2012 father's data was not registered only for 5.7% of children.

<sup>8</sup> This does not take into account the children born to second-generation Poles living in the UK. Of course the children born to Polish-born parents do not have to be only of recent migrants, but can be children of earlier waves of migration, e.g. of families who emigrated from Poland in the 1980s.

<sup>9</sup> Relationships with women in reproductive age; some of the relationships might not have lasted long or even involve cohabiting.

of Polish-born fathers had a child with women from countries other than Poland. Among these mothers, women born in the UK were the most common, followed by women from other new EU member states. The regions of origin of the fathers of children born by women from Poland are more diverse. 27% of children born in the UK to a mother born in Poland had a non-Polish-born father. Among these mixed-origin parental couples, over 40% of fathers were born in the UK. Other groups that stand out are fathers of non-European origin, born in Africa, the Middle East, and Asia. Summing up, immigrants from Poland predominantly procreate within their own immigrant community. In addition, Polish women have children with native UK citizens more often than Polish men do. The remaining Polish women choose first of all non-European partners, while men from Poland have partners from Central-Eastern European EU states.

Another source of data on Polish nationality children on the territory of the UK is the number of passports for children below 5 issued by the Consulate. Since 2006 the validity of such passports is only one year, so the recent data can serve as an annual approximation of the stock of small Polish children residing in the UK. In 2008, 12,845 of these passports were issued, while in 2011 the number increased to 21,500 (Truszkowski, 2012).

Another approximation of the number of demographic events among the Polish people living in the UK comes from the statistics of the Polish Catholic Mission (PCM). This is a Roman Catholic authority for Polish language religious services provided on the territory of England and Wales. The data do not cover the religious practices and events in which Polish Roman Catholics participate within the ordinary British Roman Catholic parishes. Another limitation is that the monitoring of the size of the Polish Catholic community started only under the authority of the current leader of the PCM, Reverend Stefan Wyleżalek, who entered his office in 2010. For the earlier period his data (Wyleżalek, 2012) is reconstructed from general parish books. The size of the community attending ordinary religious practices in the Polish language was 44,257 in 2010, and 43,044 in 2011<sup>10</sup>.

The number infants baptized was 4,050 in 2010 and 4,094 in 2011. In addition there were (respectively) 982 and 863 procedures of preparation for baptism, when the ceremony

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<sup>10</sup> This number is referred to by church statisticians as *dominicantes*. It is obtained by a headcount during masses on one of the ordinary Sundays (without any important festivities, such as Christmas). It is meant to reflect the number of regular churchgoers.

itself took place in Poland<sup>11</sup>. These numbers correspond to approximately one third of the number of children with both parents originating from Poland.

The statistics of marriages (Table 5.) show an increase in the post-accession period from 30 marriages contracted by the PCM in 2002 and 172 in 2004, to a peak of 2,353 in 2009 and then a slight decrease in 2010 and 2011. Interestingly, there is a growing number of mixed Christian marriages (when a Roman Catholic marries another Christian person, e.g. member of the Church of England), of up to 172 in 2010, and of marriages with a so-called disparity of cult (i.e. marriages between a Roman Catholic person and a non-Christian – according to Rev. Wylężalek these are most often Roman Catholic women marrying Muslim men) which reached 117 in 2009 and 106 in 2010. Post EU-accession diversity contrasts with the earlier period, when there were only 20 marriages with a non-RC person, either Christian or not, contracted within the PCM between 2002 and 2004 (Wylężalek, 2012).

**Table 5. Marriages contracted within the Polish Catholic Mission to England and Wales, 2002-2011 (selected years and compositions of couples).**

Religion of spouses	2002	2003	2004	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
<b>Total</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>121</b>	<b>172</b>	<b>1 077</b>	<b>1 889</b>	<b>2 353</b>	<b>2 164</b>	<b>2 063</b>
of which:								
Roman-Cath.	26	112	165	932	1 673	2 087	1 883	no data
Mixed Christian	4	7	3	83	124	148	172	no data
Roman-Cath.+ non-Christian	-	2	4	58	90	117	106	no data

Source: (Wylężalek, 2012).

It is worth adding that the marriages or baptisms that take place in the PCM can be treated as the events in the life of those Polish immigrants who maintain their Polish identity – as shown by attending Polish-language religious services – but have the focus of their life, including family life, in the UK. There are also those who choose religious services in English rather than Polish, as well as those who travel to Poland to celebrate their religious ceremonies with their family. When migrants move between countries with different religious composition, the increase of mixed-religion marriages is a symptom of

<sup>11</sup> The Roman Catholic Church has its procedures of preparation for the sacraments (which can be treated as rites of transition and mark the important life course transitions from the point of view of a sociologist). These preparations are sometimes lengthy (e.g. attending a course for a few weeks before marriage), sometimes require confirmation of person's religious practices in their usual place of residence. Hence some migrants undergo these preparations in the UK and collect documents from their local PCM church, and then travel to Poland to have the ceremony there, usually for the comfort of the invited non-mobile extended family and friends.

integration with the host society – in all its diversity. Yet paradoxically, mixed-religion marriages presented here are contracted within ethnic church structures, offering religious service principally in the minority language.

In the British education system, Polish children are classified according to their ethnicity into ‘Any other white’ group counting over one million pupils. More precise information about the first language (the one spoken at home) shows that there were over 40,700 Polish-speaking children in British schools in 2010. Many Polish children also attend Polish Saturday schools – specific diaspora educational institutions. In 2011, in the UK there were about 130 of such schools with over 16,000 pupils. In London, out of c.16,000 Polish-speaking children in state schools (school year 2010/2011), only 5,000 attended Polish Saturday schools. In smaller towns and provincial areas the proportion of children attending Polish schools is much lower (Lasocka, 2012).

The presence of older students of Polish origin is also visible in national examinations. According to British press around 2,500 students passed a GCSE in Polish in 2012 (Douglas & Davis, 2013), and 3,933 sat this exam in 2013 (Ratcliffe, 2013). „The Department for Education statistics show Polish is now the sixth most popular foreign language in schools, with 10 times as many pupils taking it as a decade ago” (Douglas & Davis, 2013). These students are predominantly of Polish origin and study their mother tongue in Saturday schools or at home, as it is hardly taught in British schools as a part of the regular curriculum.

A8 immigrants, including Poles, have a higher education level than UK nationals. The British 2010 LFS has shown 39.9% of them had left full time education aged 21 or more, which is treated as proxy for having tertiary education. Moreover, only 2.2% of A8 immigrants aged 15+ had left school before reaching 16 years of age, compared to 15.8% UK nationals and 12.5% immigrants from EU15 (Bettin, 2012, p. 58). According to 2006 LFS data, together with the Americans, the Polish were among the most hard-working immigrants (on average 41.5 hours per week). At the same time, Poles were situated on the very bottom of the salary hierarchy, accepting on average GBP 7.30 per hour (IPPR, 2007, pp. 20-21). The low salary is a consequence of working predominantly in low skilled professions. Between 2006 and 2010 the proportion of A8 nationals who had a ‘white-collar’ (highly skilled) job increased only slightly, from 16.9% to 18.0%; while in both analysed LFS editions over 50% of UK nationals, old EU nationals and third country citizens worked as white-collar. The statistics show that only one in three A8 immigrants

with the highest educational credentials is a white collar worker in the UK: 32.3% in 2006, and slightly more - 35.5% in 2006; compared to around 80% among UK nationals and EU15 nationals with comparable education (Bettin, 2012, pp. 59-60). Such a structure of actual job qualifications explains the average low wages mentioned above.

According to the WRS data for May 2004 - March 2009, the main sector in which the applicants from Poland found employment was “Administration, business and management” (255,800, i.e. 41%), the next sector was “Hospitality and catering” (111,905, i.e. 18%), followed by “Agriculture” (55,080, i.e. 9%), and “Manufacturing” (45,870, i.e. 7%). However, the first sector includes workers employed by work agencies and then sent to work in unregistered sectors (Home Office, 2009, p. 22). Looking at actual jobs declared by all WRS applicants from accession states<sup>12</sup>, showed process operatives (factory workers) as the most popular job, followed by painter/decorator and waiters and bar staff (Iglicka, 2009, p. 10). In 2007 only 14% of Polish-born (including earlier waves of immigration) were employed in public services (IPPR 2007, p.31).

The LFS data on economic sectors of activity of various nationality categories of workers in the UK analysed by Bettin (2012, p. 72) show that the most popular sector for A8 nationals is “Manufacturing and energy” (24.7% in 2010), followed by “Wholesale, retail and motor trade” (15.8%) and “Hotels and restaurants” (14.9%). This distribution, different from the one of post-2007 immigrants, for Bettin (2012, p. 71) is evidence for specialisation, as manufacturing industry and hospitality seem to have rather firm position in employing post 2004 accession migrants, while trade and retail have growing popularity<sup>13</sup>. According to LFS data for the period 2007-2014 (first quarter) the level of employment of population aged 16+ born in A8 countries fluctuated between 76% and 81%, compared to the total employment rate of the UK population varying between 56% and 60% and employment rate among all UK residents aged 16-64 - between 70.5% and 72.7% over the same period (ONS, 2014).

The subsequent sections aim to compare the situation and changes in the three countries affecting the socioeconomic situation of young adults and families with children.

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<sup>12</sup> In the WRS data from the period of peak numbers of labour migrant registering, Polish citizens constituted 71% of applicants in 2006 and 2007. During the economic crisis the proportion of Poles among WRS applicants declined to 51% in 2009 and 45% in 2010. WRS was abolished at the end of April 2011.

<sup>13</sup> There is a significant discrepancy between the two sources of data on sectors employing migrants with respect to “Agriculture” which employed 8-9% of WRS applicants, but only below 2% in LFS for 2006, 2008 and 2010 analysed by (Bettin, 2012, p. 72).

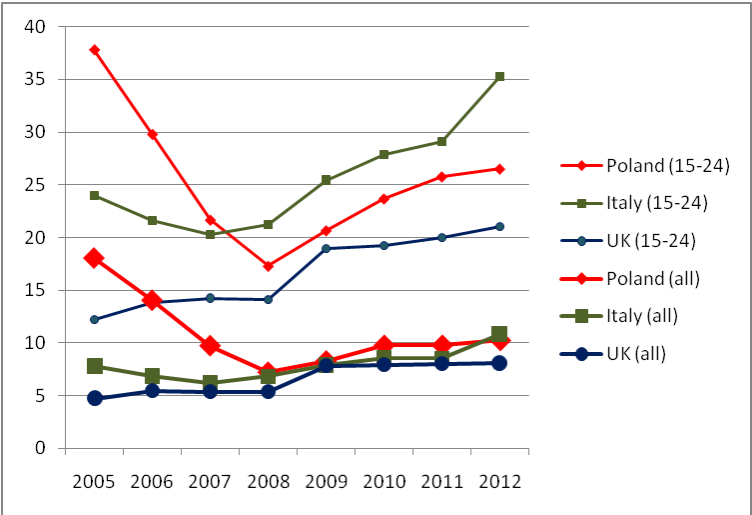


The analysed spheres are: labour market performance, interdependence with parental generation (in terms of co-residence and relying on grandparents for childcare) housing situation and welfare provisions.

### 3.4. Labour market trends in Poland, Italy and the UK

In the early years after 2004 enlargement the situation of young adults (15-24) entering the labour market was worse than that of prime age adults (25-54) in all three analysed countries. Tthe Polish population, especially young adults, suffered from unemployment much more than the population of the two other countries. owever, the developments since 2004 changed the situation in the labour markets of the presented countries (Fig. 14.).

**Fig. 14. Unemployment rate (%) among total and young (15-24) workforce, 2005-2012.**



Source: own elaboration of the data in (OECD, 2013a).

By 2008, five years since EU accession, the unemployment rate in Poland was reduced so much that it almost reached the same levels as in Italy and the UK. In particular, the youth unemployment rate dropped by 20 percentage points, making the labour market situation of the youth in Poland better than in Italy.

Since the beginning of the economic crisis, unemployment in all three countries has increased (in Poland and the UK by 3 points, in Italy – by 4). It has hit especially the young workforce: according to the official European statistics the unemployment rate in the age group 15-24 rose by 6 percentage points between 2007 and 2011 (Eurofound,

2014b, p. 9). Yet the young Italians in 2012 had to face an unemployment rate 20 points higher than in 2007 (see Fig. 14).

The economic crisis has only aggravated the problems with the functioning of the Italian labour market. F. Bernardi and Nazio (2005, pp. 353-354) summarise the reasons for the difficult situation of the youth in terms of the labour market regulations. In the post war prosperity era, Italian workers gained a high level of protection. When the economy started to demand restructuring and more flexibility, it could only be directed against the new, unprotected entrants to the labour market. The younger cohorts of the workforce have to face a higher risk of precarious work arrangements, such as non-renewable 2 years' training contracts, forced *de facto* subordinated self-employment or employment through agencies. This was especially pronounced during the early phase of the economic crisis when, according to Labour Force Survey data, the youngest workforce in Italy experienced a 17% decrease in employment, while the workers aged over 45 saw a 3.2% increase (change between Q2 of 2008 and Q4 of 2009) (Schiattarella, 2010, p. 108).

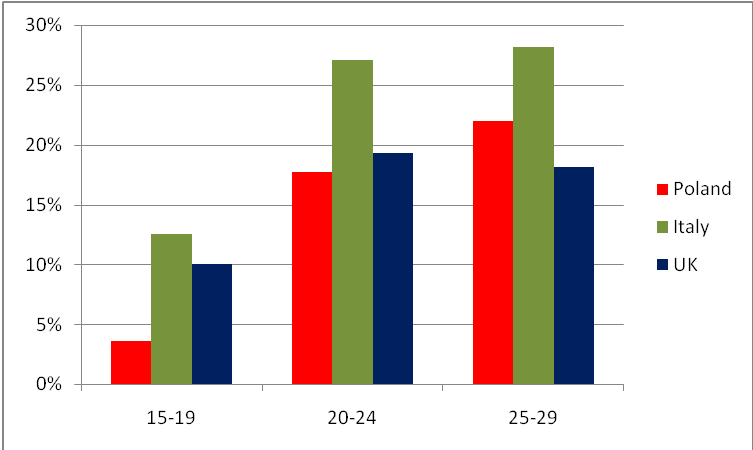
On the other hand, in the UK the level of employment among young people might be higher, but the quality and long-term stability offered by their jobs is lower than that experienced by their parents' generation. One may undertake work beneath one's qualifications and ambitions as a stop-gap job after graduation, however, this may turn into a dead-end job or a trajectory of moving (shifting) between such jobs. According to Bradley (2005) employment agencies offering cheap temporary workforce play an important role in shaping a section of the labour market offering low paid, precarious work to the young. The same agencies have employed the largest proportion of new immigrants from the accession states.

Some analysts point out that in Italy there is no simple dichotomy between employment and unemployment. A significant part of workforce (estimated at 2.5 million) in fact has periods of discontinued employment and their status changes every few months. The notion of semi-employment (Gatto & Tronti, 2010) can be first of all applied to the underprivileged groups of the labour force: young, foreign born, unskilled.

While the level of economic activity of the youth is usually lower than of the population of prime working age, the economic crisis has drawn attention to the phenomenon of young people remaining neither in education, training or employment (so-called NEETs). The highest share of NEETs in all age groups is observed in Italy (Fig.

15.). In the youngest group, the situation among Polish youth seems the best, but this is a consequence of the legal obligation of being in education or training until 18 and the later age of leaving upper secondary school (19 years of age). In the age group 25-29, when even those who pursued higher education (straight after secondary school) had already graduated, the proportion of NEETs in Poland is higher than in the UK (OECD, 2013b).

**Fig. 15. NEETs as a proportion of young population by age groups, 2010**



Source: own elaboration of the data from (OECD, 2013b).

The variables affecting the proportion of NEETs are education and immigrant status. In 2011 there wasn't much difference in the percentage of NEETs among the population aged 15-29 in Poland or Italy. In contrast, in the UK the difference was 14 percentage points: with 9% among holders of higher education diplomas and 24% among those with the lowest education. On the other hand, in 2012 foreign-born youths had the same share of NEETs as natives in the UK, while in Italy the foreign-born youths were 12 percentage points worse off and the gap was wider than in 2008 (OECD, 2014b).

### 3.5. Selected family living patterns

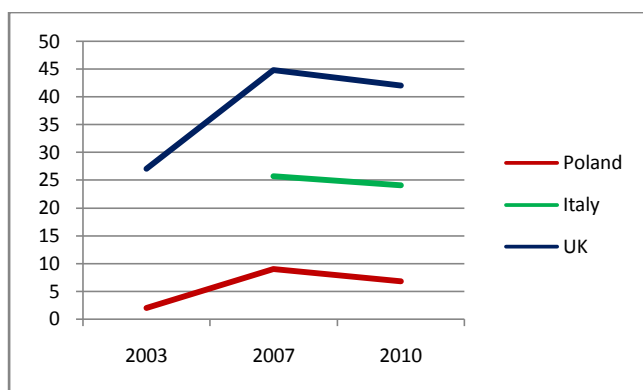
Women's fertility patterns reflect not only values and aspirations, but also the family welfare conditions. Polish women begin childbearing much earlier than Italian and British women. The mean age of women at the birth of their first child was 25.5 years in Poland (2009), 29.9 in Italy (2007) and 30.0 in the UK (2006) (OECD, 2014a). The mean age at childbirth indicator is the lowest in Poland – 28.9 years, followed by the UK – 29.8 and the highest in Italy – 31.4 (2012 data from Eurostat (2014c)). The total fertility rate

(TFR) of women in Poland over the past decade has been consistently the lowest among the three countries, and it has varied between 1.22 in 2003 and 1.40 in 2009. In Italy this indicator changed between 1.29 in 2003 and 1.46 in 2010. Fertility has been the highest in the UK, growing from 1.70 in 2003 to 1.92 in 2010 and 2012 (Eurostat, 2014c). On the level of statistics, starting to have children at a younger age does not mean women will have more children in their reproductive careers.

Care arrangements for small children and (pre)school aged children is one of the most important and costly difficulties for young parents. The share of childcare costs in post-transfer/tax income of an average family (full earner, low earner, 2 children below 3) was estimated at 28.1% for UK and 39.3% for Italy in the mid-1990s (Gosta Esping-Andersen, 1999, p. 66). It is probable that those whose income is below average, such as unskilled and precarious workers, and above all lone parents, have to face the dilemma of whether to work or not, if the child care takes up a larger part of the salary.

The provision of formal (institutionalised) childcare to children under 3 is very different in the three discussed countries (Fig. 16). In Poland it covers under 10% of children and there was only little advancement between 2003 and 2007 and a reduction by 2010. In contrast, in the UK the coverage of the youngest group with formal care increased significantly, from 27% in 2003 to 45% in 2007. Italy, where one in four children is under such care, lies in between the two. However, once a child in Poland is covered by such care, the average weekly attendance is 35h, compared to 29h in Italy and 16h in the UK. This shows a different function played by formal childcare for the smallest children – in Poland and Italy the number of hours allows the parents to resume employment (at least part time), while in the UK it is rather treated as education and socialising sessions within the time when childcare is provided in a different way (OECD, 2014a). Low usage of formal care in the UK can be a result of high costs and insufficient compensation (Janta, 2014, p. 6).

**Fig. 16. Enrolment rate (%) of children under 3 years of age in formal care.**



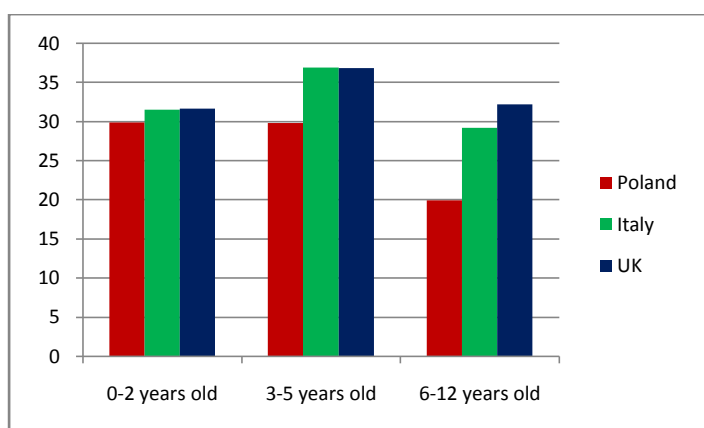
Source: own elaboration of data from PF 3.2 in (OECD, 2014a).

In 2010, in the next age group 3-5, Italy was the leader with 93% of three-year-olds and 97% of older children enrolled in formal childcare. In the UK, 83% of three-year-olds attended such institutions, 98% of four-year-olds, and 99% of five-year-olds, who at that age start school education. Poland again lagged behind, with 49% of three-year-old children enrolled in formal childcare, 61% of four-year-olds, and 70% of five-year olds (OECD, 2014a). Only after 2010 did the rate for children aged 5 increase, as they have been covered by obligatory preschool preparatory year and are entitled to a place in local public institutions.

More recent data (2008 EU-SILC compiled by OECD (2014a)) revealed the patterns of informal care arrangements for children of different ages (**Błąd! Nie można odnaleźć źródła odwołania..**). The proportion of smallest children (0-2 years old) for whom the parents arrange some form of informal care<sup>14</sup> is very similar in all three countries. For children between 3 and 5 it remains the same in Poland, whereas in Italy and the UK it increases. Among young school-aged children (6-12 years old) some informal care is provided for 20% in Poland, while in Italy and the UK this is around 30%.

<sup>14</sup> Informal childcare is care provided “by grandparents and other relatives, friends and neighbours, and unregistered child-minders, nannies and au pairs” and “unregistered by the state for quality control, child protection and/or taxation” (Janta, 2014).

**Fig. 17. Proportion of children (%) with informal care arrangements, by child's age, in 2008.**



Source: own elaboration of data in PF3.3, (OECD, 2014a).

However, the average number of hours of such caring arrangements was only around 4 hours per week in Poland, above 3 in Italy and below 3 in the UK. Also data for 2010 presented by Janta (2014, p. 9), show that the percentage of children for whom informal care is used for over 29 hours per week exceeds 10% only in Poland and Italy in the case of children below 3 and only in Poland - for children between 3 and formal school age; in UK intensive informal care was provided to less than 5% children in both age groups. The low intensity of informal care suggests that such assistance is used in emergency and occasionally, rather than regularly. These numbers might be so low because such arrangements are used for many hours, but only during school holidays.

The most common informal childcarers in Europe are grandparents. Their involvement depends on many factors, the ones increasing the probability and intensiveness of their involvement are their younger age, better health, higher level of education and socio-economic status - but on the other hand - being economically inactive, living in proximity and being from the maternal side. The patterns of childcare depend also on co-residence of generations, which differs between European states: in Northern (except Ireland) and Western Europe only 15% of respondents aged 55+ lived together with their grandchildren, while in Central and Eastern and Southern Europe this proportion was 48% or more (ESS data for 2004-2010, quoted by (2014, p. 9). Among parents, especially the lone ones, those working unusual or irregular hours and financially deprived rely on grandparents help.

An important factor for the financial situation and organisation of everyday life of families with dependent children, especially the smallest ones requiring the presence of a carer, is the employment of mothers (Table 6.).

**Table 6. Maternal employment patterns by number of children and age of the youngest child, 2011.**

	Female employment (25-54)	Maternal employment (child <15yrs)	Maternal employment by age of youngest child			Maternal employment by number of children		
			< 3 years	3-5 years	6-14 years	1 child	2 children	3 children or more
<b>Poland</b>	71%	66%	54%	67%	74%	69%	64%	50%
<b>UK</b>	75%	64%	57%	61%	73%	71%	66%	38%
<b>Italy</b>	59%	55%	53%	51%	57%	58%	53%	39%

Source: compiled from (OECD, 2014a).

In general, the pattern of maternal employment in Poland and the UK is very similar, while the Italian mothers (and women in general) lag behind. While in all three countries only slightly more than half of mothers of children under 3 are employed, when the youngest child grows up, the employment rate of mothers in Poland and the UK increases on a par with the prime age female employment rate when the children are at school age. In comparison, the employment rate for Italian mothers improves only slightly and remains lower than the total for women. Nevertheless, the fact that over the half of Italian mothers of small children work, most of them full time is possible thanks to the reliance on intensive care provided by family and improving formal care offer (Blome, Keck, & Alber, 2009). In comparison, British mothers tend to work part-time and shorter hours, that is why limited formal childcare available satisfies their needs and grandparents only offer occasional or less intense care (K.Glaser et al. (2013), according to Janta (2014).

Looking at mothers with multiple children (3 or more) it can be observed that the British and Italian mothers have a similar, low employment rate, while half of Polish mothers of 3 or more children are employed (Table 6). However, many factors may influence this pattern, low employment rates can be due for example to the impossibility of combining caring for multiple children with work, but also thanks to generous family benefits, while high employment rates may result from the economic necessity of women's work to support a large family. Also gender division of roles between parents affect employment patterns. Janta (2014, p. 14) reports 2013 data showing that British fathers (aged 20-49) are around three times more likely than Italian or Polish ones to reduce their working hours due to care for the youngest child in the household, despite the fact that majority of mothers in the UK already work part-time.

An important aspect of the transition of young people to adulthood is moving out of the parental home. The economic crisis has drawn exceptionally much attention to the problem, as between 2007 and 2011 the proportion of young (18-29) Europeans living

with their parents rose, from 44% to 48%. In both Poland and Italy this proportion increased by 10% and as the result more than the half of Polish and four out of every five Italian youngsters live together with their parents. Yet the trend is not uniform, on the contrary, in some EU countries the percentage of co-resident young adults actually decreased in this period. One of such countries is the UK, with a drop from 30% to 26% (European Quality of Life Survey data presented by Eurofound (2014b)). It is possible that the economic crisis has only accentuated the patterns well established in these societies.

The previous analyses, based on ECHP data collected in 1994-2001, have shown that the age of leaving the parental home is affected by the features of the country (social structure, institutional arrangement, cultural norms) and of the individuals (first of all education, gender and birth cohort) (Schizzerotto & Lucchini, 2004, p. 47). Below I present an analysis of home-leaving behaviour based on more recent data, which unfortunately has not been collected in Italy.

**Poles move out of the parental home relatively late and not universally (**

Table 7. and Table 8.). According to ESS Round 3 data (2006) 13% of Poles over 30 and 10% over 40 still lived in their parental homes. The largest group (among those who moved out and were over 30) started independent living between 20 and 24 but around 20% of women and 30% of men move out at age 25 or above. The mean age of leaving parental home was 22 (with standard error 5.6).

The British youth start to leave home much earlier than Poles. Among those aged over 30, only 3% continue to reside in their parents' home. The mean age of leaving the parental household was 20.7 (with standard error 5). Around 45% of the British leave their parents' home as teenagers (aged 19 or less). Only 13% of women and 17% of men moved out at the age of 25 or older.

**Table 7. Share of the population over 30 who have not left the parental home for more than 2 months in Poland and UK, 2006.**

Has s/he ever left parental home for > 2 months	Poland		UK	
	female	male	female	male
still in parents' home	11%	16%	3%	3%
left parents' home	89%	84%	97%	97%
N	631	548	1100	868

Source: own elaboration of data from (ESS Round 3, 2006).



**Table 8. Age of first leaving parental home (if yes) among population over 30 in Poland and UK, 2006.**

Age of first leaving parental home for >2 months	Poland		UK	
	female	male	female	male
17 or less	14%	16%	13%	18%
18-19	20%	14%	32%	29%
20-24	44%	42%	42%	36%
25-29	14%	20%	9%	11%
30 or more	8%	8%	4%	6%
N	560	463	1063	844

Source: own elaboration of data from (ESS Round 3, 2006).

Cavalli (2000) explains the pattern of late moving out of the parental homes by Italians from the point of view of the role of the young in their families. The authority of the parents has weakened; the majority of them cease to impose limits on their offspring's behaviour quite early on (especially as regards sons). The co-existence of generations takes place on new, more equal terms. The young have more bargaining power for example due to their higher level of education. Good living conditions among the middle class mean that the co-residing young person enjoys a personal space out of the control of the parents. It is also not a collective household in the economic sense. The young adults rarely contribute his/her salary to the cost of food, housing, or utilities. Instead, they can have higher income to spend on personal needs and leisure activities. Making a transition from such an arrangement to independent housing would mean a significant lowering of the living standard (Cavalli, 2000, pp. 203-204). This adds to the impact of the disadvantages the young are facing on the labour market and very high costs of renting or buying a dwelling (F. Bernardi & Nazio, 2005, p. 355).

For young adults starting independent living, the financial help of their parents may be a crucial resource. The ESS allows us to assess this assistance from the point of view of the parents who have children living independently (Table 9.). The British parents are most polarised: almost as often as the Italians give "a lot of support", but also the share of non-supportive parents is the largest. Polish and Italian parents declare financial assistance equally often, but the former are more modest regarding the scale of this support.

**Table 9. Financial support to children not living in the parental household, 2004.**

	Italy	Poland	UK
A lot of support	14%	10%	13%
Some support	36%	40%	29%
No support	50%	50%	58%
<b>N</b>	<b>210</b>	<b>506</b>	<b>773</b>

Note: Question asked to respondents who have their own/adopted/foster/partner's children of any age not living in the household.

Source: own elaboration of data from (ESS Round 2, 2004).

### 3.7. Housing conditions in Poland and chosen host countries

Housing conditions form people's everyday environment, contributing largely to the quality of life and future plans (e.g. readiness to have another child if a dwelling is comfortable and spacious) and aspirations (e.g. need to earn for a larger/independent flat or for renovation). According to European Quality of Life Survey, the housing conditions in eight NMS from Central Eastern Europe are perceived much more negative than in the EU15, with the mean number of problems 1.4 in Latvia to 0.8 in Poland and a few other states compared to 0.6 problems on average in EU27. Overall satisfaction with housing in EU27 is 7.7, but in Latvia it is only 6.6 and in Poland and Bulgaria - 6.9 (Eurofound, 2014a). In addition, while in the Western states ownership is usually an indicator of the good quality of housing and high socioeconomic status, in the post-communist states, which experienced a rapid privatisation of neglected state-owned housing, the picture is more complex (Eurofound, 2014a).

Between 2007 and 2011, the housing situation of the population according to tenure structure in Poland changed significantly. The proportion of the population living in owned dwellings, with no mortgage increased from 59.7% to 73.7%, and in dwellings bought with a housing loan, from 2.9% to 8.4%, whereas the proportion of tenants of dwellings with non-market rents (social, communal, employer owned housing) dropped from 34.9% to 14.5% (Eurostat, 2014b). However, further spread of ownership has not reduced housing problems, as probably a large part of this was not due to new housing construction but to inhabitants buying old, previously rented flats. Only 7% (less than 1 million) of Polish dwellings surveyed during the 2011 housing census had been built between 2003 and 2011.

**Fig. 18. Housing tenure in selected countries (%).**



Source: European Quality of Life Survey 2011, graph based on (Eurofound, 2014a, p. 105).

Compared to the UK and Italy, the Polish population enjoys a higher percentage of house owners without any loans (Fig. 18). Looking only at these data one would be surprised to find Poles migrating abroad to live in rented accommodation and compete on the real estate market with the local population. However the perception of housing quality in Poland is very negative in comparison to the other countries.

Shortage of space is the most common housing problem indicated in the whole EU (15%); in Poland 23% of respondents pointed to it (compared to 19% in the UK and 13% in Italy). The problems which ranked second among Poles (both chosen by 15% of respondents) were damp and lack of place outside (which reflects the widespread residence in high rise blocks of flats) (Eurofound, 2014a, p. 107).

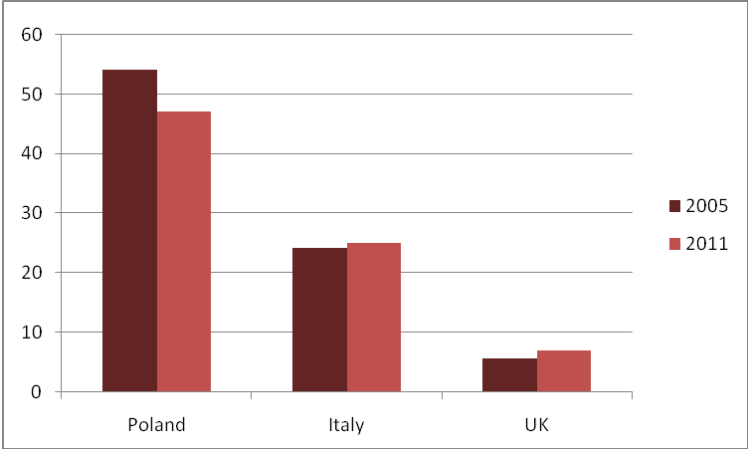
According to 2011 housing census data, average useful floor space per occupant was only 23.8 sqm in Poland, compared to 40.7 sqm in Italy and the number of persons per dwelling is 3.05 in Poland versus 2.4 in Italy (CSO, 2013), (Istat, 2013). However, old and new dwellings differ enormously with respect to space available to inhabitants: 7% of the population, living in new (built in 2003 or later) dwellings have on average 40 sqm per person, while dwellings built between 1945 and 1978, home to 39% of the Polish population, provide less than 21 sqm per capita (CSO, 2013).

Overcrowding<sup>15</sup> is therefore a persisting problem in Poland. Although the situation has improved slightly since EU accession, it still affects almost twice as many inhabitants

<sup>15</sup> “A person’s living conditions are considered as overcrowded if the household does not have at its disposal a minimum number of rooms equal to: one room for the household; one room per couple in the household; one room for each single

as in Italy and almost seven times more than in the UK (Fig. 19.). There is still shortage of living space, compared to other analysed countries.

**Fig. 19. Proportion of population suffering from overcrowding (%).**



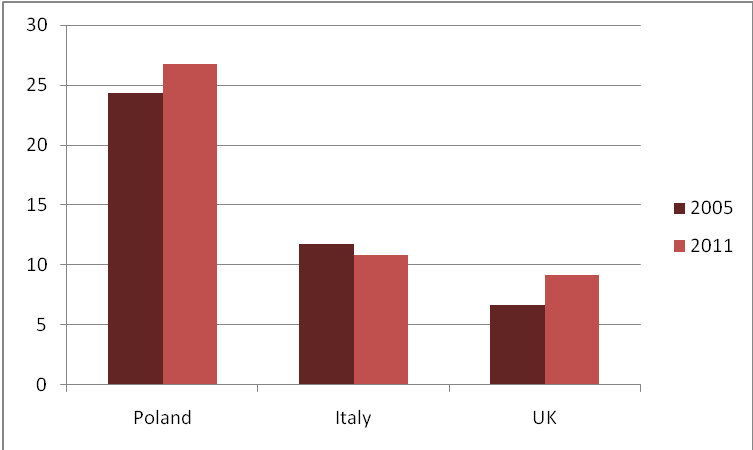
Source: (Eurostat, 2014d).

Part of the explanation of the overcrowding is the prevailing household composition (Fig. 20.). In Poland a quarter of the population lives in households composed of three adults and at least one dependent child. Such households are for example three-generational (include a 'grandparent') or contain a young adult who has not left the parental household; alternatively, if the middle generation is a single person not a couple, there may be two grandparents, or more adult children. Such households are home to the largest proportion of the population in some post-communist states (Bulgaria, Romania, Croatia). A much lower share of the population lives in such households in old EU countries, such as Italy or the UK. In 2011, compared to 2005, the share of such households in the population of Poland, as well as of the UK, increased (Eurostat, 2014a).

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person aged 18 or more; one room per pair of single people of the same gender between 12 and 17 years of age; one room for each single person between 12 and 17 years of age and not included in the previous category; and one room per pair of children under 12 years of age.” (Rybikowska & Schneider, 2011, p. 3).

**Fig. 20. Proportion of population living in households composed of three adults and at least one dependent child (%)**



Source: (Eurostat, 2014a).

The type and quality of housing differs also according to age, income and level of urbanisation. Already before the economic crisis certain groups have been identified as most at risk of housing problems, among them young people in Poland and Italy with delayed transition to independent housing, elderly people and rural residents in Poland and other NMS who lacked resources to repair their dwellings, people on low income in certain NMS (including Poland) and Southern Europe (among them Italy) (Eurofound, 2014a, p. 106).

The reasons for the poor quality of housing in Poland are complex. The shortage of housing space was brought first of all by the massive destruction and devastation during World War II. In the following period of under-urbanisation and under planned economy not enough new houses were built and the ones that were constructed were first of all high-rise blocks of flats. For economic and ideological reasons the flats were very small. The shortage of funding resulted in the use of poor quality materials and cheaper infrastructure solutions. Rents not determined by actual maintenance costs meant that after construction the buildings were not properly taken care of. As a result, Poland has a large legacy (37%) of neglected and unfriendly high-rise blocks from the period 1970-1990 (Norris, 2008).

After the transformation, residential construction lagged behind the commercial development. For more than a decade the financial sector and regulations were unfavourable for the middle class and first-time homebuyers, and limited demand resulted in low investment in residential buildings (Norris, 2008). Only after the turn of the century has the picture slowly started to change, when the worldwide boom in the real estate sector

financed from easily available mortgage loans reached Poland. Additionally, the government “Family on their own” programme, launched in 2007, aimed to help first-time buyers to borrow money for a modest (in size and value) flat. Yet already in 2008, the economic crisis hit first of all the financial sector, reducing the availability of credit and hence, the demand for flats, especially newly built housing.

The above data shows the size of the gap in the quality of everyday living conditions between Poland and the selected receiving countries. In the light of the data it is understandable that the chances of achieving a good standard of housing – a healthy and comfortable environment – are much better in the host countries under study than back in the home country. Enjoying better housing conditions abroad might be one of the factors that prevent post-accession migrants from returning to Poland.

While real estate market developments have been at the core of the economic crisis from 2008 onwards, they had also contributed a lot to the migration decisions. House building, home improvements, and redecoration have always been among the aims that the Polish migrants fulfilled thanks to work abroad. Poor access to independent housing (little community housing, expensive rents) and frequent dependence on parents were among the factors driving (especially) the young Poles to emigrate.

There is indirect evidence of the investment of capital earned abroad in the Polish housing market. Supposedly, the higher purchasing power of labour migrants for some time helped to sustain the extremely inflated prices on the Polish real estate market. In addition, some migrants might have decided to invest in houses in the host countries. According to 2007 data (IPPR, 2007, p. 24) 21% of the Polish-born in the UK lived in housing bought on mortgage or loan, however, only those who arrived before 2000 were taken into account. Considering the more recent migrants, the British authors stated: “house ownership may be determined not only by whether migrants can afford to buy, but also linked to the short-term nature of their migration to the UK. Polish migrants may not see the need to invest in buying a house and prefer instead to rent, perhaps also saving up to pay for a house back home” (IPPR, 2007, p. 23). Here is one example of such a decision-making on the part of a post-accession migrant worker:

*“A Polish diarist recorded debating with his fiancée whether to buy a house in London or return to Poland where they would like their future children to grow up. Two months later, after a visit to Poland, they had decided to buy land and build a house there:*

*'Time spent there confirmed my belief that my place after all is in Poland and not in London' (Polish male construction worker)."* (Spencer, Ruhs, Anderson, & Rogaly, 2007, p. 82)

The crisis might have made the migrants who had just taken on a mortgage more fragile, making them unable to meet the monthly payment due to job loss or increased costs of living in the host country. Those who had been planning to buy a home thanks to migration could be affected in a variety of ways. The credit crunch could make it impossible to fulfil their buying plans, but, on the other hand, the crisis dramatically lowered the value of the Polish zloty against foreign currencies, thus bringing back some of the lost value of the migrants' savings in euros and pounds sterling.

### **3.8. Family welfare regulations**

As family formation and childbearing hypothetically have a large impact on long-term decisions of migrants, this section aims to compare in detail what sort of welfare provisions and policies apply to families at this stage in the three countries under study.

From the point of view of the prospective parents the crucial regulation is the eligibility, length and level of financial support during the maternity and parental leaves. In Italy, since 2000, maternity leave is 20 weeks long – compulsory for employees, optional for self-employed, free professionals, project and contract workers if they have paid social security contributions for a sufficient time before giving birth. The leave should begin at least 4 weeks before the birth, so it guarantees the mother the right to stay with the child for the first three months after its birth. The level of financial support is 80% of earnings; for civil servants and employees covered by some collective agreements it is 100%. There is no paternity leave. Parental leave provision is 10 months to be taken by the child's 8<sup>th</sup> year. However, if the father takes at least 3 months, the total amount available increases to 11 months per child. For the first 6 months the parents on parental leave receive 30% of their earnings, afterwards the financial support is means tested. The parental leave can be divided into shorter periods or taken in the form of part-time (reduced hours of work per week over a certain time). Since 2004, self-employed parents who are replaced at work can receive a tax relief of EUR 1,693. In addition to parental leave, employed parents,

irrespective of gender, can take unpaid leave for family reasons which is unlimited until the child's third birthday and limited to 5 days per year per parent for children aged 3-8 (Solera, 2009, pp. 216-217).

In Great Britain, since 1999 employed women are entitled to a minimum of 26 weeks of ordinary maternity leave. Women who had served at least 1 year of continuous employment with the same employer have the right to a further 26 weeks of maternity leave. Mothers are entitled to Statutory Maternity Pay, if they were employed continuously since before the beginning of the pregnancy, earning over GBP 102 per week – the amount above which one enters the National Insurance contributions. The level of financial support is 90% of earnings for the first 6 weeks, and for the remaining 33 weeks – up to 90% average earnings but not more than GBP 128.73 per week (Directgov, 2012).

In 2002 British fathers were granted the right to paternity leave, if they had at least 1 year of continuous employment with the same employer. The entitlement is 2 weeks within the child's 8<sup>th</sup> week of life. The financial support of the fathers is 90% of average weekly earnings, but not more than 112 GBP per week. Since 1999, insured mothers and fathers who served at least 1 year with one employer can take 13 weeks each before the child's 5<sup>th</sup> birthday. This parental leave is unpaid. It can be taken at once, in blocks or as reduced working hours. Emergency leave for family reasons is unpaid and the duration is left to negotiation with the employer within reasonable limits (Solera, 2009, p. 218).

In Poland there has been a lot of change in terms of family-related leave in recent years. Between 2009 and 2011 the statutory maternity leave was 20 weeks for a single birth, 31 weeks or more for multiple births. Since January 1<sup>st</sup> 2012 the mother for whom social contributions had been paid (employed, self-employed) is entitled to 4 weeks of additional maternity leave for one child, or 8 for multiple births. As a result of gradual prolonging, in 2014 the total maternity leave is at least 26 weeks (for one child). The maternity leave can start no sooner than 2 weeks before the expected delivery date. The salary is 100% replaced over the whole maternity leave. During the maternity leave the mother also accrues the right to paid annual leave. There is also another 26 weeks of so-called additional leave, which is paid 60% of the salary; alternatively, the mother can decide from the beginning of her maternity leave that she intends to stay at home for 12 months with 80% remuneration. The paternity leave was introduced in 2010, initially as 2 days. As of 2012 it is 2 weeks fully paid leave to be taken within the child's first year. In addition, the father can take over the unused part of the paid maternity and additional



leaves after the mother had used 8 weeks. Yet the entitlement to maternity leave depends on the mother's employment situation, so that the partner of e.g. a freelancer or an unemployed mother can only take 2 weeks of his paternity leave (Infor.pl, 2012a).

Parental leave is up to 3 years long, to be taken within the first four years of child's life. It is unpaid, with two exceptional sources of financial support: in very low income families, employees on parental leave can receive a care benefit of PLN 400 per month (it is around 30% of net minimum wage); for the parental leave period the state pays social security contributions (on the minimum wage level, not proportional to the parent's previous earnings), so that this period counts towards the old age pension entitlement as a 'working period with contributions'. Only since 2012 have self-employed women been covered by this last provision. Parents who are neither employed nor self-employed but work on so-called civil contracts with no social security, are not entitled to any benefits related to leaving work for child care.

Summing up this section, the Polish state seems to be the most generous to mothers, guaranteeing a long, fully remunerated, maternity leave. However, the Italian provisions cover better the workers with more precarious types of contract. British provisions are the least friendly to mothers, offering wage replacement only for the 6 weeks recovery period and only a small benefit afterwards. During parental leave, Polish parents can stay out of work the longest (almost four years), followed by those of the British parents who had at least 1 year of continuous employment with one employer before the leave (up to 18 months if both parents qualify). In both cases the parental leave is unpaid, however the British parents receive child benefit, regardless of whether they stay at home or not (see below), while in Poland only in the poorest families stay at home parent receives a small family allowance (circa EUR 100). The Italian parents can take the shortest leave to care for their child in person (only up to 16 months), but they are assisted financially for longer, although on a decreasing level. To somebody used to the Polish provisions, the British ones seem unbearable – as if the family needs the mother's wage it forces her to return to work before the child is 2 months old.

It has already been stated above that some Polish and Italian parents, if employed, can be eligible to means-tested benefits in the parental leave period. In Italy since 1999, in low-income families new mothers who are not entitled to paid maternity leave linked to employment status, can receive a financial benefit during the child's first five months. The level of the benefit is very low compared to 80% of earnings for working mothers: in 2011

it was only 383 EUR per month (Irpef.info, 2012). There is also a means tested family allowance, since 1999, covering not only families of employees but also of self-employed or freelance workers (Solera, 2009, p. 215). The level of the allowance in 2011 was for instance 211.75 EUR per month for the poorest families (with an annual income of less than 18,000 EUR for a nuclear family of 4 members), for families with higher income (over 30,000 EUR per year) it was below 100 EUR per month or less. Before 2006 families of 4 with annual income over 48,000 EUR did not receive any family allowance (Irpef.info, 2012). There is no childcare allowance in Italy. Some local authorities finance additional benefits or one-time payments on the occasion of the birth of a child.

In Poland, there is no financial assistance towards childcare costs, even the poorest families lose the allowance when the parent returns to active employment after parental leave. Places in cheap state-run nurseries are scarce and usually assigned to those in the most difficult situations (lone parents, unemployed, and disabled persons' families are given preference). This leaves the average double earner families reliant on private provisions, which can cost most of one parent's salary. The poorest families in Poland can qualify for a small child benefit (worth around 12 EUR), combined with other needs-related social assistance (money for school textbooks, for heating, free lunches in schools). There is an extra allowance on the occasion of the birth of a new child of PLN 1,000 (about 230 EUR), for each child, regardless of parents' income and an additional PLN 1,000 in very poor families (with an income of below PLN 504 per person per month). In addition, some local authorities decided to fund assistance to their residents – parents of newborns (in cash or in kind). All of these allowances were introduced in 2005, with the hope of boosting fertility (Infor.pl, 2012b).

The British allowance system<sup>16</sup> stands in contrast to the two described above. There is a universal child benefit, the amount of which in 2011 was GBP 20.30 weekly for one child and GBP 13.40 for each additional child of a couple. Since 2003, low income families with children below the age of three can claim up to 70% of the amount spent on registered childcare (capped to GBP 175 per week) in the form of Childcare Tax Credit (HM Revenue & Customs, 2014). Some employers in the UK offer their employees childcare vouchers.

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<sup>16</sup> The chapter describes the conditions which applied in the time of the interviews (2012) and preceding years - which were the context of the participants' experience in the UK.

Another policy field that is important for the level of income of families is the taxation system. In Italy there is no reduction in tax for dual earner families. If one spouse is dependent, there is a means-tested credit on the other's income tax. Parents (both, if both work) are entitled to tax credit for each child. In 2002 the amount varied between EUR 285 and 516, depending on income. There is no additional relief for lone parents or customers of childcare services.

In the UK each taxpayer has a right to some tax-exempt income. Married couples and unmarried parents (cohabiting or lone parents, but not cohabiting childless couples), are entitled to additional tax exemption. Additional tax reduction depends on joint income and consists of Working Tax Credit and Child Tax Credit. In 2013, maximum amounts for the low-earners were equal to GBP 1,920 per family, plus GBP 2,720 per child plus additional GBP 545 for a child below 1 year old. Families with joint income between 6,420 and 40,000 GBP per year were entitled to 41% of the above stated credits (HM Revenue & Customs, 2014). Since 2013 the highest earning parents (or their partners) receiving child benefit, have to pay additional tax, which in practice annuls the child benefit for those earning over GBP 60,000 per year.

In the Polish tax system the situation of married couples is halfway between the Italian and the British case. Each person has a right to some tax-exempt income and this is transferable within married couples. The percentage rate of the tax depends on the joint income; in some cases having a low-earning or dependent spouse can move a well-earning person to a lower income band, reducing the tax rate significantly (from 32% down to 18%). Cohabiting couples do not qualify for this relief, while being a lone parent with dependent child(ren) can reduce income tax similarly to having a dependent spouse. Since 2007 there has been a separate tax credit for having children, equal to PLN 1112.04 for each child, deducted from the tax on the parent(s)' income. The amount of the relief is such that the low-income families with multiple children often cannot use the full deduction (it exceeds the tax they owe), getting nothing in return. Since 2013 the tax relief is higher for third and subsequent children. At the same time Poland has also touched the highest earning parents (PLN 56,000 single parent or PLN 112,000 joint income of a married couple), who are not entitled to child tax relief if they only have one child.

From the family point of view the taxation system in the UK seems to be the most favourable. It offers an additional exemption to couples who are married or cohabiting and jointly raise their children. In dual-earner households the amount of joint income still

allowed to enjoy some working and child tax-credits is quite generous. In comparison, in Poland the taxation discriminates cohabiting partners and offers child tax-relief even to the high-earners while for the families with low income the child tax-relief remains only on paper, as they cannot deduce it fully (with nothing in turn). The Italian system is the harshest to families: it punishes them if the second of the spouses undertakes employment, and it does not acknowledge cohabiting couples or lone parents. The child-relief is very low (compared to UK) and, as in Poland, is not fully used by the low earners.

### **3.9. Conclusions: migrating into different socio-economic contexts**

From the above analysis of the socio-economic context in Italy and the UK it can be seen that the former is much more similar to Poland regarding its family life patterns, welfare regime and opportunities for young adults. The UK is a much more liberal country, where young people have more opportunities, as well as more responsibility for supporting themselves.

When considering moving to Italy, the crucial factor is whether the migrant has access to a local support network – the most attractive strategy seems to be marriage migration. This ties the immigrant to the Italian’s extended family, giving access to their economic and social capital. As for labour migrants without (at least in the initial phase) ties to the Italian society, the conditions seem very unfriendly. The chances of finding a job and employment security are limited. The welfare of migrants is diminished by high costs of accommodation. For a young immigrant who has to support him/herself it is difficult to compete for jobs with young Italians who use their salaries mainly to enjoy the “golden age” of youth (Cavalli, 2000, p. 203). The immigrants are restricted to the jobs rejected by the natives.

The UK is a country with a high demand for unskilled labour for services, industry, or even agriculture. The young people who go there can satisfy their basic needs even on a minimum salary, especially if they share rented flats, which is also common among the natives. The UK seems a to be favourable place to survive early adulthood, living independently and even enjoying some leisure activities – which would be inaccessible with a similar unskilled job in Poland. Yet it no longer offers opportunities to make significant savings (due to the strengthening of the Polish zloty in relation to the British

pound, in 2004 it used to be 7:1, in 2010 around 4.6:1, in 2013 c.5:1). Therefore the migrants who want to start/reunify with their family are faced with a choice. If they find their professional lives promising and a space for improvement of salaries, they might prefer to stay in UK. However those who would probably stay in the unskilled jobs have to face very high costs of childcare if it is to be bought on the market. An alternative is return to Poland, where they can rely on inactive family members for help.



## Chapter 4. Managing childbearing in a new country

Fertility patterns have been changing radically since the late eighteenth century. Although the process has occurred globally, the modern pattern of natural change has occurred very differently between regions and societies, as it has depended largely on the level of socio-economic development and, partly, on the dominant cultural values. As a result, in today's world, populations with markedly different levels of fertility coexist. Migrants moving between such regions (for example, from rural to urban areas, but also across national borders) can experience a 'journey in time' in terms of the demographic characteristics of their places of origin and destination.

According to the theories of fertility proposed by R. Freedman and R.A. Easterlin, and integrated by Okólski (2004, p. 223), on the macro level fertility is affected by social norms (which are changing in the process of modernisation) regarding the ideal number of children, birth control, health, marriage patterns, and childcare. The micro level is formed by individuals' preferences for having (demand for) children, fecundity (the ability to procreate), and costs of birth control. These factors affect the observed fertility via such variables as length of a stable relationship, contraception, abortion and length of post-partum infertility (J.Bongarts, as referred by Okólski (2004, p. 221)). Additional factors, identified by Foster (2000) in the biosocial approach – a modern take on the idea of the innate maternal instinct, supported by genetics – are the 'nurturing' gene and the factors affecting its expression in early development, hormonal and environmental effects of previous fertility (positive/negative experiences with pregnancy, labour and nursing), and modifying effects of the partner's attitude, financial situation, perceived utility of having a (further) child, costs of child upbringing, alternative cost of foregone career years and age of the prospective mother.

Among the above-described theories only Foster gives some place and importance to the temporal aspect of fertility, especially to the impact on further childbearing and alternative cost. The life-course approach to fertility, as presented by Huinink and Kohli (2014), elaborates on the timing of childbearing in one's life and its impact on the whole subsequent life. Childbearing decisions have a huge impact on the remaining life course, as parenting is a long-term commitment, accumulating enormous cost over decades, causing also significant opportunity cost of other actions not undertaken, especially for women in

the professional sphere. Decisions on the number of children are influenced early in lifetime by the model to which individuals have become socialised through cultural norms and values, size and functioning of the family of origin. They are also revised upon confronting the initial vision of parenthood with the reality experienced once the first child has been born. The desired number of children depends also on the aspirations regarding the desired 'quality' of offspring and the cost the parents are able to bear. The higher the level of education and household income achieved before childbearing, the higher the aspirations regarding the offspring, but also the resources that can be invested in them.

Family formation and timing of childbearing seems less constrained by institutions than education or working life. However, as the other spheres have their optimal schedules and fertility is connected with them, they also impose a timeframe on the reproductive sphere. Having a child too early may endanger completing the desired level of education and securing a stable job and career path. On the other hand, postponing childbearing for too long, or making a decision to remain childless, have irreversible consequences, once the prime fecundity stage is over. Therefore the perception of conditions suitable for childbearing is prone to change over time. While in early adulthood, education and entry into the labour market are given priority over fertility, at some point, earlier for women than for men, criteria to be met (such as the quality of the partner, professional position, housing conditions) have to be relaxed or the risk of remaining childless must be accepted. The timing and spacing of children are also affected by cultural norms, institutional setting (for example parental leave regulations) and information derived from observing the consequences in the lives of the other people, who made certain choices earlier.

In the context of mobility, it has to be analysed whether the process of migration leads to postponing childbearing, by e.g. temporarily disrupting professional and residential situation, and what consequences it may have depending on the age of the migrants, or otherwise. Settlement in a new country can offer new conditions that allow the fulfilment of the desired fertility, previously blocked by disadvantageous situations in the country of origin. While the norms and motivations have been formed earlier, during socialisation in the country of origin, their revision under the influence of observed family patterns in the host society cannot be excluded.



The theoretical considerations above suggest how the timing of migration and the particularities of the receiving society can affect migrants' fertility. For example, postponing fertility in the period around migration has different consequences depending on the age of the migrating woman. The availability and cost of various birth control methods are country specific: they are more widespread in the UK than in Italy, and especially than in Poland. Normative social pressures can be different, including attitudes to motherhood in circumstances that would be perceived as 'unusual' and treated ambivalently in Poland: in the UK, life is relatively easy for young single mothers, while the Italian society is accustomed to relatively older mothers. The costs of child upbringing in the UK are reduced by child benefits and tax credits, although in the longer perspective raising high-quality offspring, profiting from the renowned British education system, requires the largest financial investment of all three countries, which could result in limiting the number of children.

Parenthood is an important but not always central theme of the majority of the interviews. The attitudes to the arrival of the first child or to becoming a parent in general were predominantly positive. None of the interviewed parents described having a child as a mistake, undesirable, or representing a dramatic turning point in their life. None of the childless interviewees expressed a decision to remain so forever – although, for a few having children at the time of their life when they were interviewed seemed unlikely due to their relationship situation.

The situation of a Polish family in Italy, seen from the perspective of the husband and father will serve as an introduction to this chapter. The first section of this chapter presents the course of deciding for the first and/or subsequent child in couples that have consciously planned their parenthood while living as migrants. The different ways of reconciling pregnancy with other domains of life, especially women's work, will be presented. The following section will present the perception and management of the family situation among migrants who have faced an unplanned pregnancy. The third section analyses the cases of migrant families in which the desired children, for various reasons, cannot be conceived. In contrast with the above-mentioned groups, in a few interviews with childless people, both men and women, the topic of becoming a parent was not developed, apart from very general remarks about other people's (not their own) parenthood. I will try to show how these interviewees perceive parenthood.

Gustaw and his wife are former temporary labour migrants who had decided to settle in Italy and start their family there; they have one preschool age son. Since 1999, Gustaw has worked as a manual labourer in various parts of Italy on 5-month-long contracts. He was married in 2001 and his wife is a nurse by profession – although she had worked as a carer in a different part of Italy. In the past, they had been separated for periods of up to six months and could only spend holidays together. Gustaw's wife had decided to find work as a nurse in Italy. In order to achieve this aim, she used her time as a carer to learn Italian and also underwent a one-year-long procedure of preparing her professional credentials from Poland for recognition in Italy. Finally she was recruited by an agency to work as a nurse in northern Italy, where the couple moved in spring 2006. Gustaw also found employment in his original profession (as a carpenter), which even got them their first home together in Italy – a flat rented from his employer, above the workshop where Gustaw worked. By this time, their perspective had become about investing in the family's future:

*We had treated it as a stay for a couple of years, in order to save money for an apartment.* (Gustaw, IT)

This period of stability led to the arrival of their first child in July 2008. In Gustaw's account it is presented as a long-awaited moment, for which there were finally favourable conditions.

*Our son came into the world seven years after we got married. I have always wanted to have a child; earlier in 2006 my wife got a job as a nurse in Trento, a better, more stable job.* (Gustaw, IT)

Apart from the financial security provided by the wife's employment, the couple also prepared for their child with respect to the housing conditions.

*When my wife was pregnant we moved out as there was sawdust in the flat above the workshop, it was unhealthy.* (Gustaw, IT)

His wife's better (and more secure) job, by contrast to his own poorly paid job, is used as the explanation for why Gustaw has become the principal carer for the baby.

*After three months of maternity leave she returned to work while I stayed with the baby.* (Gustaw, IT)

Gustaw's use of "I" instead of "us" ("*I have always wanted to have a child*") and his wife's prompt return to work gives the impression that he was the one more in favour of having the child and the one more attached to the baby, which resulted in such an atypical (certainly for Italian and Polish cultures) division of roles between the parents.

When Gustaw undertook seasonal work in local agriculture, the family arranged short-term childcare from relatives and friends. In the following months, they further adjusted to having a child. When their son was admitted to a crèche close to home, Gustaw found a job nearby. Again, this job is poorly paid, but it allows him to collect his son from nursery and save on additional childcare costs.

*I can take my son there and collect him, I just tell the farm owner when I need to leave. The salary is not high. Working 9 a.m to 5 or 6 p.m. elsewhere I would earn EUR 300 more, which would be spent on extra childcare for him. [...] this way I can raise my child by myself, I pick him up everyday, there's no stress.* (Gustaw, IT)

Again, the housing conditions have been improved:

*At first we lived close to the centre, but for the last 18-months we have lived in another district, because it is close to my wife's work, and she can walk there. It is quieter, nicer, and more peaceful. We rent the ground-floor flat of a house. There are two spacious rooms for children and a terrace. Since last September, our son has been going to a crèche near home and soon he will go to nursery school.* (Gustaw, IT)

Their new flat is presented as more appropriate for family life, which is proved by such features as: being within walking distance of work and the nearby crèche, being on the ground floor, and having a terrace. It is significant that Gustaw mentions children (in the plural), despite only having one child. Indeed, Gustaw speaks of the planned new arrival.

*We wanted to have another child, so that [our son] could have a sibling with a small age difference, so that they can play together.* (Gustaw, IT)

The timing of the second pregnancy was chosen with respect to the children's welfare (the expected benefit of having a sibling). However, in July 2010, when their first child was two, Gustaw's wife miscarried. The term of the lost pregnancy is not stated, however, it is evident that the family moved to their latest, family-friendly home in early 2010, just before or early into the pregnancy, showing an even closer link between the choice of housing and the preparation for another baby.

Gustaw was interviewed in June 2011. From the perspective of almost a year since the sudden end of the pregnancy and loss of the baby that the couple had longed for and prepared for, this event is a breaking point in their life story. Before this event, his family had progressed as planned and it had fulfilled the desired model. When talking about the time after the miscarriage he speaks of uncertainty. First he introduces the miscarriage in contrast to their earlier plans:

*We treated it [migration] only as a temporary arrangement, for a couple of years, to save up for an apartment. Now we do not know what the future will be like. My wife miscarried in July 2010 and, so far, she still hasn't got over it.* (Gustaw, IT)

Then, when asked about any plans related to their housing situation, he says:

*We had thought of buying a flat, as renting is not economical in the long run – but life turned out differently.* (Gustaw, IT)

While many other interviews for this research project contain an important element of chance, pure luck, or events taking an unexpected turn, in contrast, Gustaw's story is one of a step-by-step progression, suddenly interrupted by life taking its own direction, against their plans. While the medical or psychological consequences of the miscarriage for his wife are not discussed in the interview, Gustaw himself, at that point in his life, seems to be a man who had subordinated his life to having a desired model of family life, and then, because of factors beyond his control, found he cannot be a father to yet another child, cannot enrich the life of his son with a sibling and does not know what to do about a home for his family (whether or not to buy, and if yes – how large, where).

This story is an apt introduction as it contains the elements of planned parenthood, unexpected turns of events and unfulfilled fertility plans, which will be discussed, respectively, in detail below.

#### **4.1. Factors taken into account in planning childbearing**

The prerequisite to planning children is the basic idea that one wants to become a parent. While in this research it cannot be proved who had a strong 'genetic' inclination towards having a child, it is evident that the interviewees displayed different levels of enthusiasm towards children, ranging from an 'I have always wanted to have children'

attitude to 'it was the right time to do that' decisions. One example of the former attitude was presented in Gustaw's words in the previous section. Another, more elaborated example is the following declaration:

*At some point I felt that really – you know, I like children a lot, whenever I could I used to babysit for my friends' children, I like children a lot and I somehow cannot imagine life without a child.* (Krystyna, IT)

Sometimes the dream is about not only a child, but also a specific number of them:

*To be honest, in the past, before my first C-section, we had dreamed about having four children. Then I was convinced that I would not be able to, after the second C-section, that I wouldn't be able to have more than three... Here, I have learnt that I could, so I don't exclude it, maybe in future there will be one more.* (Patrycja, UK)

However, these declarations of the desire to have children might be exaggerated and projected to the past based on the life experiences of the speakers. Although at the time of the interviews Patrycja had three children, Gustaw had one, and Krystyna had none, they all share the experience of an unsuccessful pregnancy, of not being able to have a child they long for. Perhaps because the desire is unsatisfied, it is more articulated.

Patrycja is not the only interviewee who talked about the desire to have a large family. Sandra, the mother of one toddler, also gives an above-average number; in her own words, this aim is based on the size of her own and her partner's families of origin:

*I definitely want to have a large family. Myself, I have two siblings, William has four, this is our model... we would like between three and five children.* (Sandra, UK)

The imagined number of children can also be verified by the experience of dealing with everyday family life, like in the case of Igor, father of two, or Liliana, mother of one toddler.

*I used to think it would be fun to have a big family, like five children, but now I see that without support, grandparents, it is not feasible.* (Igor, UK)

*We don't fare badly as parents. There were plans of the second child, but as long as I don't have parents here, any assistance, I am absolutely against it. I cannot imagine going for a walk, shopping, or anything with two children.* (Liliana, IT)

In contrast to the statements about the desire to have children, one couple with a son, aged 3, stand out:

*Interviewer: Have you thought about having another child?*

*Barbara: I have always wanted one child. Only one.*

*Borys: And we were not even fully convinced about having this one. There was no certainty about it.*

*Barbara: I had no maternal instinct or hormones. It was a **rational**<sup>17</sup> decision. Now I am not convinced that I **do not** want another one. Neither is he. I am thinking 'maybe'... but then I remind myself that I would like to get back on the professional path.*

*Borys: There is no pressure, no such model. We are both the only children in our families.*

*(Barbara and Borys, UK)*

Barbara refers to the idea of hypothetical biological fundamentals for a desire to have a child. She has not noticed such a longing in herself, and her husband underlines that even the one child they had was not seen as compulsory. The argument of the size of family of origin is used here again, this time to justify having only one child. Potentially, they could have had a fulfilling and satisfying life without any children. The rationality of the decision could be Barbara's age (she was turning 30 and she got pregnant when she was 32) as well as not having a demanding job at that moment. Elsewhere they also speak of their neighbourhood in Poland, a new residential estate, where all the inhabitants were young couples who started to have children around the same time.

*Borys: In Warsaw in our neighbourhood everybody had mortgage loans in CHF, everyone had children at the same time, groups of parents with their strollers ready to go outdoors.*

*Barbara: I was afraid of them.*

*Borys: We weren't interested in it.*

*(Barbara and Borys, UK)*

In their own words there is an evident attitude of distancing themselves from their neighbours and yet, in spite of not feeling an urge to become parents, they still followed their neighbours' path.

Borys is not the only interviewee to use the word 'pressure' in the context of childbearing. The pressure of others expecting a person to become a parent can come from

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<sup>17</sup> In the direct quotations from interviews, the words stressed by the interviewee's are printed in **bold**. Words to which I want to draw attention and refer to in the analysis are underlined.

the general social norms, or be expressed on a lower level – especially by one's extended family. Below is an account of a 37-year-old woman living in Italy.

*I don't feel the pressure to have a baby, women just 2-3 years younger than me don't even have partners, they don't think of children.* (Emilia, IT)

As in Emilia's statement, thinking about children is preceded by thinking about a stable relationship. The two elements are also combined in the social and/or family pressure to start a family. As the social norms regarding the right age for starting a family differ between countries, migration may help to avoid the social pressure and stigma of not being 'settled down' yet. Of course this may also result in an opposite problem, that one is perceived too young to be a parent. The interviewed women who experienced others' surprise or criticism about their decisions to start a family, use the argument that it was the meeting of the right partner, not being of a given age, that was the basis for their decisions.

*I was simply very lucky to meet such a great guy so early.* (Joanna, UK)

The idea of planning can be identified by varied remarks related to time and age as well as preparation and conditions to be satisfied before deciding to have a child. Among the (at that time) childless interviewees, this planning attitude can be identified in the words of a 30-year-old man living in London with his partner.

*Interviewer: Have you ever thought about having children?*

*Adam: We thought and deliberated on it. But first we want to be independent financially. Many of our peers already have their own flats, they are independent – we aren't. And we still want to study. My girlfriend has a sister here, me – nobody. But with time, with a bigger flat, we could get somebody to come and live with us to help with childcare. She also wants to finish her studies, so we are postponing it for 2-3 years.* (Adam, UK)

Adam abandoned his studies in Poland at the moment of moving to London and only after a few years, under his girlfriend's and mother's pressure, did he decide to finish them. His girlfriend was starting postgraduate studies financed by her employer.

A young London female, interviewed early in her pregnancy, also speaks about various aspects of being prepared before a deciding to have a child:

*We had been waiting to achieve financial preparation, to get professional experience, enough to look for a job elsewhere. And mentally, to be ready to move out from*

*London – London is good for students, young workers in corporations, with long working hours.* (Joanna, UK)

Despite her young age, she and her husband had already prepared for a child, thanks to a few years of work in London, which gave them professional experience and enough savings for a deposit to buy a home, even in UK, if they decided to do so.

While some interviewees talk about 'financial preparation', others name a stable professional position, a work contract. This condition applies to both women and men.

*I would like to have another child, but I don't have a work contract, I am only self-employed, so it is not a good situation. However, when the professional situation is clarified, when William gets a full-time job, not only temporary ones, and when I manage to get a work contract, then I am ready for more children.* (Sandra, UK)

*We have always wanted to have another planned child, but my wife wanted to postpone it until I got a job.* (Piotr, IT)

The level of financial security allowing for a child differed between the interviewees, while the ones quoted above equate it with home ownership, or a stable professional position of both partners, others are happy with enough income to satisfy everyday needs.

*We have planned to have a baby, in Poland we wouldn't have been able to decide to do it, here it's not a problem. In practice, I had to buy everything new, as I had nothing left from my older children, nothing for an infant. I could buy everything I wanted, the kind I liked. In principle I can – it's not that one throws money away, but I can afford **what I want to have**. It is an incredible **relief**, psychologically, there is no stress that I would not have something I need.* (Patrycja, UK)

Giving siblings to the child that one already has is another important factor in making the decision about another child.

*To be honest, we think about it [another child], but for now we will see how everything settles down, when I return to work, how it is going to be with this baby boy, but certainly, I would like him to have a little sister or brother.* (Beata, IT)

The age difference between future siblings is also taken into account, as in Gustaw's statement (the initial story of the chapter) about the small age difference allowing the children to play together.



Patrycja, mother of three, had wanted to have four children. She had planned to try to have her third baby five years after the second one. Yet she had to adjust to her health condition.

*We had wanted to start trying for the third one when the second son was 5. But I had endometriosis<sup>18</sup> and my doctor recommended getting pregnant sooner. So the boy has just turned 5 and we already have her with us.* (Patrycja, UK)

A more important medical issue in Patrycja's case was a difference in medical directives regarding caesarean section (C-section) births. In Poland, doctors discourage women from having more than three C-sections, so having already had two C-section births seemed to prohibit Patrycja from reaching her desired family size. Yet the doctors in the UK surprised her with their more relaxed attitude.

*Although I am not sure yet, I have dreamt about having four children, as has my husband. I had thought the C-sections made it impossible, but here it turned that I could [have more than 3 C-sections]. It was a funny situation, as the doctor who was sewing up my belly asked me when there would be a fourth one [laughing] and I said 'I don't know, the third has only been born' [laughing] So it turns out I can have a fourth one, no problem about it. I don't see any financial barrier, if there is the third one, there can also be another one. With respect to my health, it is possible. In Poland it had been assumed I could not. That's why I don't exclude that we might think about another one in a couple of years.* (Patrycja, UK)

Patrycja was positively surprised by the English doctors' opinion – and the UK healthcare system in general. This positive experience might contribute to her open attitude about subsequent children. On the other hand, personal negative experience(s) of giving birth can also be a deterring factor.

*Helena: My first labour was very hard. I have always wanted more than one child, a couple or more, but after that traumatic experience I opposed it for a long time. I wanted it and did not want it at the same time. But in the end we've got our second and one never knows...*

*Henryk: She had really difficult labours. Immediately after the second, I declared I would not go there should there be a third one [laughing].* (Helena and Henryk, UK)

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<sup>18</sup> A condition that in the long run can cause infertility, while in the short-term perspective pregnancy can stop the condition from worsening.

The last time-related aspect of planning is the woman's age. Emilia, quoted earlier in this chapter, in her late 30s, compares the norms around the age of women giving birth.

*[I know] two Polish women – both with small children. (...) They both had children earlier than the Italian women do, but as in Poland you say that around 30 it is your last chance, in Poland it would be [considered] late, in Italy – it is early motherhood.*

*(Emilia, IT)*

Another interviewee analyses the advantages and disadvantages of the typical Italian late parenthood in comparison with the Polish pattern (although it has to be noted that this woman comes from a town in the most traditional, and fertile, south-eastern region of Poland).

*... On the one hand it might be better, because in Poland children are born very early, my friends already have two or three children, we think of children very early. On the one hand it is good, as they have enough parties, prepare themselves economically, as a child costs money, to feed a child, nowadays really you have to have a base, a good economic situation, otherwise it might be hard, so I think it is good. On the other hand it might not, as I have always wanted to be a young mother, for whom it is normal that she wants to play, go and play with her child. It seems that it is better for the child but it is not definite, as it depends on a person's character.*

*(Krystyna, IT)*

The Polish and Italian patterns of parenthood often combine smoothly as there is an age difference between partners, with the Italian husbands being older than the immigrant wife (Guetto & Azzolini, 2013). This way when the couple decide to have a child a woman is in the „right” age according to the Polish norms, while the man is in a typical age for a father in Italy (40+), so both cultural norms are satisfied. In this study that applies to Beata, Krystyna, and Liliana. On the other hand, women in their late 30s can feel more relaxed about postponing motherhood.

## **4.2. When life does not go the way it was planned**

Among the interviewees who have become parents without having planned to, none of them discussed it in negative terms. Only one interviewee explained how surprised she and her partner were to find out about the pregnancy, despite using contraceptives.

*As of course Marta was not planned. Of course according to the plan we first settled in the apartment in 2008, my siblings and parents came to visit us and see our place, and then in June... of course, how on earth, how it was possible at all, I took pills, we weren't planning a child, and yet I told him I was pregnant. He didn't believe I was pregnant until he took me to the hospital to see one of his colleagues [laughing]. He asked me „How did you know?“ Well, one knows... I just knew I was pregnant, and everyone at home was happy.*

*(Liliana, IT)*

When Liliana got pregnant, the couple had already been in a romantic relationship for some time and it was a few months after Liliana had moved to Italy to reunite with her partner. In the meantime, they managed to buy a flat, larger than the one-bedroom flat her partner had rented for himself. However, not all aspects of their life together had been sorted as they wished, for example they didn't manage to get married, as planned.

*And even before I got pregnant I had been saying that we should get married, as that is how my parents had brought me up. We had decided to be together, we had known each other for some time, 2 years, we had been together, so we could get married.*

*(Liliana, IT)*

In two interviews, men speak about their girlfriends getting pregnant when it had not been planned. In both cases the interviews were conducted after the couples had separated.

*Finally, she got pregnant – unplanned. Of course both sides are responsible for a pregnancy, but she could have at least informed me.*

*(Franek, UK)*

*In December I met Eva, the mother of my daughter. I was 21, she was 4 years older. (...) In March 2007 she got pregnant. I was happy, although I was naïve; I thought I could manage. Now I think I was too young. We had no time to get to know each other – this turned out to be crucial.*

*(Oskar, UK)*

Franek, after initial surprise, was overwhelmed by the fact that his first child was to be born, and did everything according to his partner's wish. However, this did not save the family, as they broke up after returning to Poland and the son's mother gained full custody, excluding Franek from the child's life. Franek returned to the UK alone. Oskar's young family fared better. Although the couple did break up eventually when their daughter was approximately 3-4 years, they share custody, live close to each other and co-operate as parents. Oskar had moments when he thought about returning to Poland alone, but in the

end he decided to stay close to his daughter and conditions his potential moves (within the UK, return migration) on the choices of his child's mother.

Others with similar experiences did not reveal how unplanned the pregnancy was: whether their contraceptive methods failed or if they had not used any. Even if the baby was unplanned, the parents could make sense of it, like Kamila, a footloose single woman in her early 20s:

*Danny is just the fruit of great passion, a night of desire. At some point I told myself 'If only I had somebody to work for, this supermarket job would start to make sense.' And two weeks later I found out I was pregnant. He was born in 2008. We still have trouble with his daddy.* (Kamila, UK)

In the interview she presents her unplanned lone motherhood as the best period of her life and she highlights that this has been possible thanks to the welfare benefits offered by the British state.

*Maternity leave was the best time of my life – freedom and liberty. I had no inclination for career or self-development. Just a peaceful time with my child. (...) During maternity leave we were at home together – getting a lot of money from the state, I remember I was shopping all the time, socialising, walking. Standard maternity pay and social benefits were so high I had nothing to worry about. Now it is harder, but still it is nothing compared to Poland. There is a lot to be grateful for.* (Kamila, UK)

The couples adapted in different ways to the fact of expecting or having a child. The first step was usually moving to a flat better suited to the new lifestyle or financial situation.

*It will have to be reorganised a bit, that's why we are moving to a slightly smaller flat, a lot cheaper. I won't get any more money and Monika will not be able to work anymore.* (Marcin, IT)

*We were renting an outstanding flat: brand new, nice, New York City style. We lived there for 1.5 years. Our daughter was born in December 2009 – and the flat turned out to be too small, so we moved to a house with a garden and lived there for a year. And then, my husband has siblings in this district, so it was better to move again, closer to them.* (Celina, UK)

The long-term effect of an unplanned pregnancy is revising the previous life plans and postponing some moves, such as home buying or going to work.

*To buy a house, we need to save – they say 5% might be enough. Then we may start trying to have another child. We wanted to buy earlier, but it turned out that we got a child first.* (Celina, UK)

Dorota, had three children, including a toddler, when her husband left for the UK, she and her children followed after a few months. She speaks about her professional hopes in connection with the move to the UK, but she got pregnant soon after arrival; she was interviewed towards the end of her fourth pregnancy.

*I had also hoped to **develop** myself professionally when the children go to school. I have an MA in English philology so I felt, let's say, that I was losing time at home, with 2 or 3 small children there was no time to look for something for myself. So I thought I would have more opportunity here to use the language. (...) But for the moment, I am not speeding that up, professionally... although that's what I had planned...* (Dorota, UK)

For a family with children, another unplanned pregnancy is not such a big change, when salary and benefits guarantee financial security. In speaking about her unexpected pregnancy Dorota is much more self-confident than when she speaks about her professional plans. Twice, she referred to her experience with having subsequent children.

*Having another baby was not a big change even in Poland, especially when you had stuff from before. And here I think it is going to be easier as there will be the child benefit for the fourth one right from the beginning.* (Dorota, UK)

The mother's peace of mind is reinforced by the awareness of benefits available for a new family member. It is also worth pointing out that her assessment of the cost of an extra child is limited only to what the interviewee has already experienced (buying clothes and shoes, paying for extracurricular activities for her eldest son, aged 7) and the total costs of education are not mentioned. So the time horizon is quite limited in this case.

Life not going as planned can also mean that the couple cannot have any (or any more) children. The following section presents the accounts of interviewees dealing with infertility or other barriers to childbearing.

One of the interviewees in Italy who spoke the most about her desire to have children was Krystyna, quoted earlier in this chapter. However, she and her husband couldn't conceive a baby and they started to think about adoption. She presented many moves in their life as serving the purpose of becoming parents, for example getting married in advance with the view of the requirements of the adoption procedure.

Due to the waiting period before qualifying for adoptive parents, Krystyna agreed to try in vitro fertilisation (IVF) proposed by her husband. For the immigrant woman, IVF was not a procedure she was very accustomed with. She explains it with her lack of knowledge, pointing to the fact this procedure is not as institutionalised in Poland (at least it was not before her emigration) as in Italy.

*I can tell you, it wasn't easy... for sure, I had not been entirely convinced about IVF, as I had not known what it was all about. Later of course you become informed, you ask questions, you look for a place where you can do this. Back in Poland it is not very common... perhaps it is becoming more widespread... here it is reimbursed by the state. Of course you can do it privately too, but with the state [refund] you have to wait a long time, there is a waiting list, but it can be done.* (Krystyna, IT)

The description of Krystyna's IVF procedures is very developed in the interview. The issue seems to be full of paradoxes. The first one is that the interviewee perceives infertility as a common problem, much more common than earlier. She speaks of waiting lists for a state-funded procedure, about the crowds of people, including young ones in the clinic. Other female patients were a source of information, emotional support and hope in effectiveness of the procedure.

*I met many girls who had in vitro fertilisation. I talked to them about it, because I wanted to know what it was like.* (Krystyna, IT)

Krystyna felt she had not been fully informed about the procedure, which is especially underlined in her opinion about her first doctor.

*Although that doctor who did the first two fertilisations – I wasn't satisfied with him, he treated us badly, because he wasn't giving us some information, which I needed, or maybe it was me?... because I didn't even know what to ask about, so it was so hard. It is the doctor who needs to help you, calm you down, help you understand some things, and he wasn't doing much of it.* (Krystyna, IT)

The underlined pronoun 'us' is the only time she uses a plural form for them as a couple undergoing IVF. While the interview as a whole is full of examples of strong affection from Krystyna's husband, around the IVF procedure they are lacking. It is significant that the interviewee talks about the treatment as predominantly her own, individual experience. Even if at some point she mentions that the original medical problem was on her husband's side, Krystyna says nothing about him being tested or treated, visiting the doctors with her or how he feels about the process; instead she concentrates on her diagnosis.

*[Artificial] fertilisation in itself is not hard, but it is a great trial for a woman, as the problem comes from my husband, so let's say that ... although until recently I had thought I was healthy, had everything in order, it turned out that I was not, that I had a problem in my uterus, for the first fertilisation they had not conducted one examination (...) I have done three fertilisations and nobody had done this examination [before], so I say 'Dear God, I have always had this problem!'* (Krystyna, IT)

Despite the medical procedures around IVF, the couple do not exclude the other solution. It is interesting that Krystyna hopes to use her nationality as an asset in arranging an international adoption specifically from Poland.

*So we have a goal that if we go for adoption, then [it would be] a child from Poland, as in Italy there is no such possibility. I mean you can try for a domestic adoption, but here there are no children for adoption, no chance, Italians usually adopt internationally. So I thought about [adopting in] Poland, as I am Polish so it could facilitate adoption, the fact that I speak the language of the child, the culture, everything can make it easy for me; especially as in Poland there are children for adoption, unfortunately, and it is possible.* (Krystyna, IT)

Yet bureaucracy required for adoption turned more complicated than medicine around IVF, and Krystyna admits she couldn't concentrate on both strategies and her work at the same time. However, she emphasises her determination to have a child.

*One way or the other I will try to have a child. I will do everything possible to have a child. I know that sounds very egoistic, but I think I love children - it might turn out that I will not have one, that I will not succeed, it's possible - but at least I will know I have tried, I have done everything possible to have a child.* (Krystyna, IT)

To sum up, in this immigrant woman's case it is worth looking at her dedication to the tough IVF procedures, despite her initial lack of familiarity and knowledge about it. It might have been even harder for her, if she didn't grasp the medical language (lacking school education in Italian) to communicate effectively with the medical staff and/or if she felt the most of the burden of the treatment – although this was not explicitly mentioned. Another interesting issue related to her status as an immigrant is the idea of turning to the country of origin as a solution to the lack of children eligible for adoption in the country of residence.

One of the interviewed couples talks about not having another child because they perceive too many obstacles in their current situation. While their only son expresses a wish to have siblings, they seem to be coming to terms with the fact they are getting too old for more children:

*Halina: We had thought about having another one, but after [son's health problems] I was afraid. He asks for two little brothers. But how could we put a baby here? [referring to the uncomfortable flat]. The Italian women always have a safety net...*

*Hubert: They have a mother, a father here, and ours are in Poland. If there is a strike in school, there is a problem, who is going to pick up the child?*

*Halina: For me, being past 35, I am too old.*

*Interviewer: But don't the Italian women have children at your age?*

*Halina: The Italians are used to it. They give birth later, as they live longer. We live shorter, so we have to give birth earlier.* (Halina and Hubert, IT)

In this passage Halina and Hubert employ first arguments specific to their situation (experience of child's illness, poor quality flat) and then more objective, immigration-related (lacking the safety net of relatives, pattern of early childbirth dominant in the country of origin) barriers as arguments explaining their inability to decide for having more children.

### **4.3. Impact of pregnancy on women's economic activity**

The impact of pregnancy and maternity leave on a woman's professional situation depends on the regulations regarding the national level, the employment conditions of a



particular profession, and the employing company's own policy. These three factors have a different importance in each country, depending on the welfare regime.

A perfect example is a Polish woman working in Italy who, having gleaned information from other female workers, first secured a job offering favourable arrangements to pregnant employees and only afterwards had a baby. Interviewed when her baby was about four months old, she says:

*I applied for this job in particular because I heard from colleagues that it is very good with respect to pregnancy and the period after giving birth. Basically, as soon as I got pregnant I took sick leave, and was paid 80% of my salary, until two months before the due date. So I was paid while sitting peacefully at home, even getting the 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> salary, as if I were working. From two months before giving birth until seven months after giving birth I will receive 100% of the salary for being at home. It is like that because this is 'a rischio' [hazardous] job, dangerous so to say, because of the detergents, and working in a hospital, so you cannot work there if you are pregnant. So for the time being we are well settled.*

*(Beata, IT)*

Beata's job (cleaning in a hospital) is officially recognised as work in a hazardous environment, which is banned for pregnant women. In such a case, a pregnant employee who cannot be moved to a non-risky task by her employer can obtain leave on medical grounds, keeping most of her salary, which is paid from the public welfare system. Beata even commented that workers in only slightly different roles do not enjoy the same privileges related to pregnancy.

*Not everyone has these conditions. I can only speak about the jobs I know. I know that it is the same for nurses, they go on sick leave from the first day. While for example girls who clean homes, legally, with contracts, do not have these entitlements, because lavoro domestico [domestic work], like cleaning private houses, is not defined as a dangerous job – even though you also use detergents. I don't know why it is treated completely differently.*

*(Beata, IT)*

Beata's strategy was to choose among the jobs available to her one that gave her comfort and financial security during pregnancy and a longer paid maternity to stay with her baby. She got pregnant only after obtaining the desired status. The key to her strategy is gathering information from other women in similar positions, which can also be seen in the wide female social network that she speaks of in other parts of her interview.

A counter example is a woman from Northern Italy who worked in a less regulated sector as a waitress. With reference to her first pregnancy she talked about having to resign from work due to harmful conditions. In addition, due to her lack of seniority, she was not entitled to any paid maternity leave.

*Once pregnant, I resigned from my job as a waitress, as at that time people used to smoke in restaurants. I had worked for too short a time to get paid maternity leave.*

*(Ola, IT)*

Another woman working as a waitress in Italy got pregnant while she only had an 'alla chiamata' contract (similar to the British 'zero hours'). This contract, creating no obligation for the employer, gives her no protection and no paid maternity leave.

*Monika:[...] my employer still does not know I am pregnant. It simply makes no sense for him to know, I don't feel obliged, in the sense that I only work when I am needed.*

*Marcin: He doesn't call anyway.*

*Monika:[...] and now I am not needed, so I don't feel obliged to inform him. [...] Also, he is not obliged to give me any additional income for being pregnant, or any lighter treatment, as I am not a regular employee. If I worked more than four hours I would be entitled to an extra break or something similar, but with this kind of contract and as they only need me for a few hours, I plan my day to have strength for work and rest at home at other times.*

*(Monika and Marcin, IT)*

Although a year earlier Monika had contributed to the household budget with her job as a waitress during the high season, at the time she was interviewed she has not been asked to come into work, therefore during the pregnancy and in the foreseeable future the couple depend on Marcin's income from the university, where he is a doctoral student. Monika's lack of income is a result of a precarious work contract, not her unwillingness to work during pregnancy.

For freelancers, such as musicians, there are also no entitlements for pregnancy or maternity leave. In addition, when contracts depend heavily on networking, they risk jeopardising their professional position even by just a few months of inactivity.

*If we speak about any artistic activity, it is rather difficult to combine [work and childbearing], in a sense, that there is a risk [...] that, when you have a baby and you perform less, or only selected things – I know women who were pregnant and then*

*performed just three months after giving birth, but it is you who has to make effort to make it work, here there is no protection, I don't depend on any institution. [...] Unfortunately, I have to say that both in Poland and Switzerland it is all more humane, as it is often said, a woman declares “Ok, I've just had a baby, so I have a break and I don't perform for 6 months or a year” and afterwards everything gets back to normal, but here, once you fall out of the social circle, not only professionally, but also socially... (Teresa, IT)*

Due to relationship problems, Teresa was not considering childbearing around the time of the interview, so she does not concentrate on the entitlements for mothers. Instead, she puts this issue into the wider context of lack of job security in her field in Italy. She repeatedly contrasts the working conditions for musicians (specialising in her specific type of performance) in Italy with other countries she knows (Poland, Switzerland), where employment is more institutionalised and philharmonic orchestras are employers, not only performing organisations. Despite living in Italy, for financial reasons Teresa has registered a company in Poland and issues the invoices for her performances from there – as a self-employed musician. It can be inferred that this choice can also give her some minimum Polish social security protection in case of pregnancy or illness, however she does not mention such an argument.

While Beata's security is guaranteed by state regulations and the social insurance system, Iwona, a skilled manual worker living in the UK, enjoys favourable conditions created by her employer.

*When I was pregnant, they kept asking me if they could make things easier for me at work, buy me a more comfortable chair for example, but there was no need. The Health and Safety Officer asked me if I was getting the right support. At first, I was so full of energy I even worked overtime. Later, there was an outbreak of swine flu and a few employees got ill, so the director called me and said that due to a risk of the swine flu spreading on site, they would prefer me to go on maternity leave 2 weeks early. But I didn't want to shorten the time I would be able to spend with my baby. Then they offered me an additional 2 weeks paid leave, not affecting my maternity leave. In the end, I gave birth earlier, so I didn't use it, but that's what they offered. (Iwona, UK)*

In this passage there are elements that show that the company was concerned about the pregnant woman's situation (consultations with the Health and Safety Officer, offering her extra leave to reduce the risk of contracting the disease) but at the same time allowed

her to remain productive (offering to adapt the workplace, allowing her to work overtime when she felt capable of doing so). The British employer invested in the employee's personal wellbeing, instead of keeping her at home at the expense of the state. Privileges linked to pregnancy are a part of a larger package of benefits offered by the employer. The rationale behind this, as suggested by Iwona, is that this company can afford to care so much as it has very few young workers – potential mothers.

*The majority of women who work there are over 50, there is only me and another woman of reproductive age.* (Iwona, UK)

The industry where she works is feminised, but currently not many young women are trained to enter this trade, so the pool of skilled workers is approaching retirement and will be difficult to replace. However, in other professions more popular among young people in the UK attitudes to pregnant female employees are also positive. Two highly skilled professional women speak of the reaction of their employers to their pregnancies in a very similar, positive way.

*Interviewer: What was the reaction in your workplace?*

*Celina: Good...Good. My boss is a really good man – well, he looks like a Santa Claus, so how could he be mean? [laughing] No, I had no problems at work, quite the contrary, my boss was cooperative, I worked virtually until my due date, I came back after maternity leave, took no sick leave – I had no problems. Everything went quite smoothly.*

(Celina, UK)

*When I talked to my boss – as I had to tell him, to get time off work for all the doctor's appointments, because I didn't want to lie and say that I was not at work for some other reason – he was really touched, he almost cried out of emotion, he told me he felt almost like a grandfather, he told me if I ever felt ill I could go home... I was surprised by such a reaction [...] There is support and I know that when everybody learns the news, nobody is going to be nasty to me because of the pregnancy.* (Joanna, UK)

The above quotations from women employed in the UK reveal the common attitude of treating pregnancy not as a problem but as a time when, given good health, one can work as much as before. It has to be underlined that none of the interviewees experienced any complications that might for example require a long sick leave, so it is not possible to assess what the entitlements and reactions would be to a pregnant employee unfit for work. However, the Italian interviewees also had straightforward pregnancies and yet they saw it

as normal that they would stop working during pregnancy for health reasons, even if it meant losing income.

Sandra, one of the interviewees living in the UK became pregnant towards the end of her postgraduate studies. She realised that no one would employ her in her new profession during pregnancy, but despite that she looked for any opportunity to gain professional experience.

*When I finished my Master studies I was already pregnant. I knew nobody would hire me if I was pregnant, but I didn't want to cheat potential employers. It is hard to find a job in my profession, only 20% of my classmates do something related to our studies – so I have been really lucky. I was applying for unpaid internships, offering to work for free. My future boss was looking for somebody for a large project in the second half of the year. And I got this job in the second half of my pregnancy. The deadline was two days before my baby was due.... and then he called me 6 months after I gave birth, asking whether I could come back and work for him for a couple of months. And again in January 2012, he asked if I could come back for a while. And this way I have been working for him since January.*

*(Sandra, UK)*

Sandra's decision is in line with the earlier accounts of Polish women in the UK continuing to work as normal during pregnancy. As proved by the subsequent contracts from the same employer and doing work related to her studies (which only a minority of her classmates managed to do), Sandra's unpaid work was an investment that clearly paid off. However, it has to be noted that Sandra is in the fortunate position of having parents who can afford to support her financially. Secondly, she did both her BA and MA studies in the UK, and had been insider in the British labour market for a long time before this crucial period.

When an immigrant woman has no job, using that time to have a child may be a solution. For Natalia, whose husband got a contract as a highly skilled specialist while she was still on maternity leave from her job in Poland with their first child, it seems like a good way of spending her time out of the labour market.

*I was at home with my son. We were saying to each other that it might be a good moment. To raise two small children quickly and then rush back to work.* (Natalia, IT)

Two other interviewed women, Liliana in Italy and Dorota in the UK got pregnant relatively quickly after moving to the new country, yet in contrast to Natalia their

pregnancies were not planned, but rather the result of a lack of (or failure of) contraceptive methods. Those unplanned pregnancies happened in couples with a male breadwinner (a Polish immigrant man in Dorota's case, and in Liliana's case a man naturalised in Italy, with a good profession). However, when the immigrant woman in a couple was the main breadwinner or the husband arrived to join her (Gustaw and his wife, Piotr and his wife, Daria and Daniel) there were no unplanned pregnancies immediately after family reunification. From this it may be concluded that if the couple's financial security depends on the woman's salary, pregnancy is more strictly (and successfully) avoided.

#### 4.4. Conclusions

The interviewees' attitudes to childbearing can be placed in the framework of the theories of fertility summarised at the beginning of the chapter. They spoke of different personal levels of desire to have children: some admitted they were not entirely sure they wanted children, others couldn't imagine life without them. Their own number of siblings was usually a reference point. Following Freedman's model, health norms and medical standards, depending on the country, were an important factor, restoring hope in achieving the desired family size. Contraceptive methods (or, specifically, their failure) were mentioned only by one mother. Others did not refer to the availability of birth control in the country of immigration. Instead, unplanned pregnancy was a recurring motif in the interviews, but it was usually accepted quickly, and the parents adjusted to the new situation, which often meant moving or postponing other plans. The social pressure regarding fertility was also discussed, and it usually concerned the norm of the 'right' age for motherhood.

On the couple level, the important categories discussed with reference to childbearing were having the right partner, the utility of another child, especially as a sibling to the first child, financial resources (income from work, but also welfare benefits as an alternative source). A good professional position, or stable job was an important condition before having the first or next children although an alternative idea was using the moment of a break in a woman's career (for example after migrating as a trailing wife) to have a child before going back to work. The cost of raising a child was not really mentioned, and when it was it concerned a short-term perspective, regarding the cost of

providing the necessary equipment for an infant etc. In contrast, the long-term costs, especially of education, were not discussed as a criterion for limiting the number of children in the family.

Experiences related to giving birth and caring for a infant were also discussed, and for one person positive experiences were described as an argument in favour of having another baby. The age of the mother was also discussed, but in a flexible way, some women argued they were not 'too young', as others judged them, another compared herself with the native Italian women to show she had plenty of time to have a child in the future, another felt she was too old to give birth, as if she was ageing faster than her Italian peers.

Some of the new criteria derived from the interviews in this research project are first of all the availability of family assistance (its lack is a factor discouraging women from having more children), entitlements for mothers (on the national, sector, and company level) and housing conditions. In addition, the availability of solutions to infertility (IVF, adoption) is a new factor affecting whether someone who has been unable to conceive can continue to hope to have a child.

Of the mechanisms driving the fertility of migrants, the analysed interviews provide examples of higher fertility shortly after immigration, and adaptation to the patterns observed in the host society (postponing in Italy, enjoying single motherhood with welfare assistance). The ease with which the birth of children is accepted by the interviewees living in the UK, and their readiness to have more children, show signs of convergence with the British model of higher fertility than the level prevailing in Poland. The interviewees do not explicitly explain their move to the UK in terms of being able to afford more children, but they often present their move as a way to achieve a normal family life (financial security, spending free time together), to escape financial strain, or find any path to improve their situation for their family. As they succeeded, they can afford to have the desired number of children – if they stayed in Poland, there would be a high probability of experiencing the fertility gap (less children than desired). No such positive effect of migration has been discussed by the interviewees in Italy.





## Chapter 5. Providing care for small children

The period of family life when parents have to provide care for young children is one of the most demanding in the life cycle. The parents have to balance the needs of the children, professional work and the financial assets of the household, sometimes being able to rely on assistance provided by the state or other family members.

In an attempt to identify intergenerational policy regimes in Europe, with respect to responsibilities towards children, Saraceno and Keck (2010, p. 685) assigned Poland and Italy to the group of familialism by default, and grouped the UK as a more (but not among the most) de-familialised regime. This is because Saraceno and Keck took child benefits into account, which in the UK are much more generous than in Poland or Italy. The amount of welfare money available for parents differentiates the UK from the other two and allows families living in the UK to buy more care instead of providing it on their own.

The need for domestic and care work in high-income countries has generated a huge demand for female workers from less developed countries who were suitable to fill the needs of the Western societies thanks to either professional skills, such as nursing (Kofman & Raghuram, 2006) or simply because as women they were destined to perform reproductive work. This has resulted in “care drain” in the sending countries, as dependent family members (children, the ill or elderly people) were left without their mothers and daughters to care for them (Hochschild, 2000). According to Parrenas (2005) the care was offered rather by other women, mostly grandmothers, than undertaken by immobile men.

However, the physical absence of migrant mothers did not mean lack of care and affection from their side, which was thoroughly studied by the researchers of transnational parenting, e.g. Hondagneu-Sotelo (1994). A perfect example of the fruitfulness of applying gendered and transnational perspective to parenting is the way Urbańska (2010) deconstructed the moral panic around the topic of so-called euro-orphans - defined as children separated from one or both parents absent due to economic migration. During the first few years after EU enlargement and post-accession outflow from Poland media and experts, especially in education, elaborated on the destructive impact of emigration on Polish families, condemning first of all the migrant mothers. Families which adapted to labour migration of their members were condemned from the perspective of a traditional Polish family: nuclear and co-residential (Urbańska, 2010, p. 84). The silencing of the

euro-orphan hysteria can be explained by the reunification of migrant families abroad and has given place to the interest in Polish women giving birth abroad, thus reducing the demographic potential of the country.

Urbańska's response to the public discourse on the euro-orphans was based on the idea of "transnational parenting" or "nonresidential mothering" as a rightful mode of parenting, if the absence of a parent is aimed at fulfilling the needs of the family and if adequate care is provided to the child (2008, p. 78). In her extensive research on migrant Polish mothers, Urbańska (forthcoming) has documented the practical ways in which women who go abroad to work, care and provide for their children. She has even observed the use of temporary migration as a way of preparation (through accumulating savings) for the birth of another child, thus showing that women's emigration does not have to result in lower birth rates in the country of origin (Urbańska, 2010, p. 78).

On the other hand, immigrant families who raise children in the country of settlement may also employ grandparents as carers for shorter or even longer periods, if the country of origin is perceived as a better environment for upbringing of the offspring.

This chapter presents the complexity of these issues starting with the story of Iwona and Igor, a Polish dual-earner couple who have had two children since they arrived in England. In subsequent sections, ways of organising childcare and norms and attitudes towards this issue are presented.

Iwona and Igor were, respectively, aged 36 and 32 at the time of the interview. They had been a couple in Poland, but were not cohabiting. They were unsatisfied with their financial prospects in their town and decided to go to the UK with the aims of gaining professional experience, learning English, saving money for starting a family and, initially, helping a close relative living there who had become a single mother. Iwona and Igor both found cleaning jobs immediately after their arrival, and subsequently changed these jobs for better ones. In 2006 they got married and in 2007 Iwona got pregnant. They had planned to return to Poland, where Igor would find a job while Iwona would stay with the child in her parents' home, enjoying the maternity leave earned in her British job. Yet unexpectedly, Igor was offered a job in his profession and they decided to stay in the UK.

*Around 2007 there was a boom in construction [in Poland], I would have no problem getting a job and I wanted to work in my profession. (...) We had planned a superb holiday – but in February she was already pregnant, so we went for holidays sooner than planned. She was to go and spend her maternity leave in Poland. When we got back from these holidays, I got a job offer from a construction company. (Igor, UK)*

Beyond this point in the life story, return to Poland is not discussed.

The first phase of caring for a new baby is covered by Iwona's maternity leave. First, she has standard maternity pay, as provided by the UK state regulations. In addition, her employer offers a period of unpaid maternity leave, allowing the employee to stay at home with her child longer.

*The maternity leave is 3 months long, paid at 90% or 100% of your salary, then the standard payment would be some £500 over the next period, the total maternity leave is 9 months. But my company offers an additional 3 months of unpaid leave so I can stay at home for 12 months and then I have to declare whether I will come back, for how many hours, and I can adjust my working hours. (Iwona, UK)*

At this point, the couple decide that she will return to full-time employment while the child will go to nursery. This is quite costly, but the financial burden for the couple is reduced by childcare vouchers, an entitlement for working parents, which can be used to cover a part of the costs of daycare.

*We both work full time, and each of us is entitled to £240 per month of this childcare voucher. We used it to cover the cost of nursery and we had to pay the rest.(...) somehow we managed for 14 months. Then our daughter was born. (Iwona, UK)*

The birth of the second child and another one-year-long maternity leave allows the couple to reduce the expenditure on private nursery, as the older child stays at home too. However, this less costly period is followed by a great financial challenge for a dual-earner couple: bearing the cost of private care for two children at the same time. In the UK when the older child turns three, this is partly reduced by the state funded Early Years Programme covering the cost of 15 hours of education per week (out of over 40 hours that are necessary for the parents to work full time). Nevertheless, as the cost remains high, the couple comes up with another solution, this time affecting the father's work as well.

*I went back to work in January. They [the two children] went to the nursery for 4 days, and each Friday one of us stayed at home, taking turns, using our annual leave. Then he went to school, we somehow managed to survive that period. (Iwona, UK)*

Outside the maternity leave periods, the father is involved in childcare on a daily basis. As Iwona has a long commute from their town to the factory, it is Igor, whose workplace is located more conveniently, who drives the children to the nursery and collects them.

*I bring the children to the nursery, it is open 8-6 and I work 9-5. My wife works 40 kilometres from here. (Igor, UK)*

The parents' problems are resolved only partly when their first child reaches school age, as the classes finish earlier than a full-time working day. To keep both full time jobs, the parents again use paid services.

*There is a pre- and after-school club with extra activities the child can choose from. The cost of the school club per session is almost the same as the nursery. Once the child gets older, he can go home alone – as it is very close. (Iwona, UK)*

However, the organisation of the school year brings another challenge to dual-earner couples: the summer holidays. As the mother bitterly admits, it is impossible to cover all weeks when the child is out of school, even if the parents' used all of their accrued annual leave and never spent holidays together.

*What will we do over summer holidays? It is 6 weeks, you can't cover that with annual leave. Maybe we will be taking care in turns with other parents? My sister was leaving her daughter in Poland for the entire summer. In total, there are 12-13 weeks of school holidays; an employee has 25 days of annual leave, so even two parents' leave is not enough. (Iwona, UK)*

When the state-funded school and privately bought activities are not enough, the only solution is turning to relatives and friends who can offer their free time to take care of the others' children. In the interviewee's social milieu it can be observed how the social capital is employed to provide childcare. The first example is Iwona's sister, a single mother, who used to send her young daughter to Poland to spend the summer with her grandparents. The interviewee does not openly criticise her sister, but elsewhere she presents her understanding for the inability of the senior generation to help her with the children.

*My parents have already used up their caring capacity. They had four of us, they are now retired. My dad says he likes to work in the garden. My mother says she hasn't got enough patience and imagination anymore. My mother-in-law is keen to come and live with us, but she has her partner and her own mother to take care for. We cannot be selfish when she has other family obligations. I know a family who live with their mother-in-law and she takes care of the child – but there it is only one child.* (Iwona, UK)

As the outcome of these opportunities and limitations, Igor's mother has come to stay a couple of times to take care of the grandchildren during half-term breaks. It is also planned that she will spend a part of the summer with them. Nevertheless, the young parents try to cope as far as possible without her help and allow her to perform other social roles in Poland. The problems that could arise from sharing a household with the Igor's mother are not mentioned but this is another potential factor deterring young couples from asking their parents to move to the country of immigration and help them.

Another solution employs the local network of friends over the school holidays by taking shifts in caring for children from a few families. This is possible thanks to the variety of working patterns which can be attributed to the relative popularity of part-time employment in the UK.

*We also ask friends for help during school holidays. Among our friends, each family has a different arrangement. For example one mother stays at home, because her husband earns a lot. In another family the woman works on weekends, in yet another – she works for two nights then has two nights off. I don't know about the English families, maybe they use the grandparents? (...) I don't have contact with the other parents, as the majority of mums pick up their children at 3:25 p.m., they probably don't work. The parents who work full time pick up their children later, from the after-school club.*

(Iwona, UK)

However, it is not mentioned that relying on friends should involve some reciprocity, and Iwona and Igor, with their two full-time jobs plus commuting cannot contribute much time to this informal shared childcare scheme. As they were interviewed early in the first summer of their son's school, they could not determine if the plan would work in the longer term.

The above account shows the complexity of the task of combining childcare with full time work and the flexibility with which the immigrant couple approached it in order

to “survive it” as Iwona put it. The following quotation from the mother links the high financial – and emotional costs – of sending two small children to a nursery to the long-term objective of the couple. The motifs of the parent's concern that somebody else, a stranger, is taking care of the children and the feeling of regret that most or all of their salary goes to childcare costs are also worth underlining, as they are repeated in other interviews.

*After I returned to work for the second time, when we were paying the nursery for the two children for 4 days per week, my whole salary went on that. I had remorse – what for? Somebody else is with them, I don't get to see them for the whole day – but we had planned to take the mortgage. If only one of us was working, we wouldn't have got the mortgage, that's why we have kept two full-time jobs, even with children. (Iwona, UK)*

Iwona and Igor's family has been chosen as the leading case for this chapter, as for keeping two full time jobs through the period of pregnancies, maternity leave and caring for small children, they have employed a variety of solutions, using different resources available to them.

## **5.1. Childbirth seen from the point of view of before having children**

The attitudes to the provision of childcare expressed by childless migrants contrasted with those of the representatives of migrant families. Before the arrival of children, young people imagine family help as indispensable: either in the form of bringing a relative, usually grandparents over, or as return to the place of origin.

Adam and his girlfriend, both studying and working, are postponing having a child for several reasons. One of the factors they mentioned is the lack of somebody to help them with the future child – and the proposed solution is to buy a flat large enough to be able to bring somebody over to help.

*In practice, we have nobody here, she has a sister, I have no-one at all, so the question of potential help, childcare, and so on, is quite difficult and of course... As I say, one of these days we may try, maybe my sister, for example, maybe somebody who is already here... maybe buying a bigger flat to have somebody to care for the child here.*

*(Adam, UK)*

Joanna, a London professional, expecting her first child, talks about her and her husband's plans for the time after the arrival of the baby in the following way:

*So we have been thinking – what next? As we look at the costs of childcare here, I mean nursery and preschool, these are very expensive. And at the same time I cannot imagine staying at home and taking over childcare, so that only my husband would work, as I would simply miss professional activity, I couldn't cope with that. And at the same time, leaving the child for so many hours, for the whole day, so that he/she would never see the parents, is unacceptable for me. Therefore we had been thinking about how to find a solution, and our idea for now is to return to Poland for my entire maternity leave.*

*(Joanna, UK)*

Joanna's ideas include remote work for her company from Poland. But she doesn't speak about arranging childcare in Poland – there it would also have to be for the whole day, only the cost would be lower, especially compared to English salary.

The idea of return after the birth of the child could also be mentioned as one of the options taken into consideration but then abandoned. Monika and Mateusz, living in Italy due to his doctoral studies considered Monika returning alone to Poland (principally for medical insurance reasons) and staying there with the baby, but they abandoned the idea as they couldn't accept living apart.

*If Monika went to Poland, she would not come back, as it would make no sense, she would give birth in November and not be able to move anywhere for half a year (...) We've come to the conclusion that it would make no sense, as we would not see each other, the child would not see both parents, it would be rather sad.*

*(Mateusz, IT)*

As the migrants were recruited only in the countries of settlement, only the ones who stayed were interviewed (apart from two interviews taking place shortly before planned return). The following sections present their strategies of arranging childcare abroad and their attitudes to spending time with children, combined with or as an alternative to economic activity.

## **5.2. Organising childcare**

Parents of small children living in both countries use nurseries often. Although some parents had expected difficulties in securing a place for their children, none had any problem getting their child accepted in a chosen nursery.

*We had been waiting for a place in a nursery close to the city centre. And we got a place, although children from the area had priority.* (Piotr, IT)

*It was hard to get a place in a nursery, but as there are some points, a child gets extra points on qualification, if a parent works outside the area of residence or on shifts, night shift... and that's how her dad works (...) So a letter came stating that she had been accepted. Now I am on the parents' committee, we will meet next week and decide which children get accepted and which can wait for their turn.* (Liliana, IT)

None of the interviewees speaks about any negative consequences of placing such a small child in institutional childcare. Instead, they tend to highlight that they found a good nursery and are satisfied with it.

*Since January she is in nursery school, she's the youngest one in her group.* (Piotr, IT)

*Maya goes to nursery, on a full-time basis. We chose a nursery that we felt would care for her well, not only guard her while I am at work. I can see she likes her carer a lot, she runs to her with her arms stretched out.* (Sandra, UK)

*She went to nursery early, when she was less than one year old, we found a great nursery.* (Cezary, IT)

As for older, preschool aged children, the immigrant parents arriving to the UK may be surprised that there is a state funded programme for them and that they are eligible for free part-time nursery school. An example of such a situation is Dorota, who turned to a local school for a place for her 7-year-old and got his younger brother, below 3, accepted to the preschool.

*I was told they would not accept applications to higher year classes (like the second year, where my eldest would go), only to the preschool – so it was my second son who was eligible. (...) With the younger son I didn't know he should already go to school, only a lady from the school informed me that I had to apply for a place for him too.*

(Dorota, UK)



When parents work as freelancers, they can try to provide care to their child by working flexible hours, taking turns with the child at home. A good example is from an artist couple living in Italy.

*My wife had no job contract, no paid maternity. We shared caring for the child, as we both work from home, we switched every two hours.* (Cezary, IT)

By the time their daughter turned one, she started to attend nursery, but only part time.

*...she only stayed there until lunchtime, while I practiced for 3-4 hours somewhere in the city.* (Cezary, IT)

Flexible working time and freelance work from home can also be found in the story of Celina, a young (under 30) Polish professional, living in London with her daughter and a husband, an old-EU-country immigrant. When the woman was depressed at home on maternity leave and longed to get back to work, her partner, older and much more experienced, found it a perfect moment to have a career break – with the daughter at home.

*He stopped working, because I am at the beginning of my career in the UK, I have a managerial position in a multinational corporation. And for him, after 14 years, he can slow down, only take some contract work to do at home, to earn for pleasure (...) I was depressed, it was hard for me to be alone with her. My mood was poor. So he took 2 months of leave to be with us at home, he was reducing his contracts and finally decided to quit. He also had enough of his company and of his boss. Now he is a freelancer. Thanks to the years of work he has contacts, he always has something to work on. He often works at night. We want to buy a home and raising a child is expensive. So to save we don't send her to the nursery. And we also avoid the trouble of illnesses and sick leave. So we care for her in turns.* (Celina, UK)

The father's decision was possible thanks to his professional position and was in favour of the mother's career. It is explained with the psychological reasons (his need to leave work, hers – to return to it) but at the same time it proved very economical, saving them the London level private nursery fees. Both of them still work (although the husband does less) using two modes of work available for professionals: he does freelance work from home, while she returned to her managerial position full time – but organising her work flexibly in order to maximise her use of time.

*I often work on weekends, I have to finish a project on time – how? They don't care. I have to be in touch with my team. When I go to work it is for 12 hours, to use it up to the maximum. I do not work at home. I have flexible working time, calculated on annual basis. That is why I don't want to change my job.* (Celina, UK)

For such an arrangement to be feasible, fathers have to be ready to take upon themselves the caring role. Celina speaks about her husband's attitude to parenting in the following way:

*Besides, my husband is very happy about the situation as he is a real family man, he really likes to spend his time with his child, rather than to put her under a stranger's care while he earns the money.* (Celina, UK)

Celina's family is not the only one among the participants in this project where the woman kept a full-time job while her partner became the principal carer. A similar arrangement is found in families of Polish men interviewed in the north of Italy.

Piotr had to get used to taking care of his daughters back in Poland, when his wife, as well as his mother worked in Italy as *live-in carers*.

*Our daughters are aged four and two – I was left alone with them. I was a dad, a mom, a grandmother, I took them to nursery school (...) I was alone in Poland - it wasn't easy, I had to learn a lot.* (Piotr, IT)

In Italy, Piotr, while employed informally, was responsible for bringing daughters to school and picking them up. For a short time he also ran a shop with baby clothes and equipment.

Gustaw (full case study in the preceding chapter) took over care for his baby son while his wife returned to work after maternity leave. He found seasonal work in local agriculture.

*When the boy was born, I stayed with him plus I did two seasons of work at vineyards. For these 4-5 months you could always find somebody for him. (...) An acquaintance of ours who had just lost her job took care of him and earlier my mother-in-law came for some time.* (Gustaw, IT)

In both couples the wives have more stable and better-paid jobs in caring professions (a social assistant, a nurse in a hospital). In the region, the demand for male workers is not as pronounced as for female carers, therefore we can hypothesise that men's

involvement in childcare is rather about filling time when faced with meagre career prospects than a free choice; nevertheless neither of the fathers complain about it.

Freelance, flexible working hours or living on one salary are not always viable solutions. For some immigrant mothers in Italy, the only jobs available are the lowest paid, unskilled jobs in shift work. Two mothers who work at night find it a very convenient arrangement from the point of view of childcare.

*I have a rather good situation, as my working hours are either 6 p.m. to 10 p.m. or 6 a.m. to 10 a.m. Considering the fact that my husband works from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., we will manage to combine it. It would be better if I worked in the afternoon, he would be back from work and I would have to leave in order to get to work on time on my bike. We hope it can all be combined. (...) I have a fantastic work arrangement that will allow us to reconcile my working hours with my husband's, so that all the time one of us can be with the little one.* (Beata, IT)

*When our son was six months old I started to look for a job as our financial situation deteriorated. (...) I started to work at night, from 9 p.m. to 1 a.m., putting products on shelves in a supermarket. For me these were very convenient hours: my husband took care of the children after his work and I went to work.* (Sylwia<sup>19</sup>, IT)

The third woman, with the same work scheme as Sylwia, talks of the negative consequences of working on the night shift.

*I worked the night shift. This work resulted in an emotional crisis, as I worked with foreigners, all criminals. So this environment, the bottom of society, gives you a headache. (...) It is bad for your health, even though it is only 4 hours.* (Ola, IT)

Depressed by her work, and most of all by the crisis in her marriage, Ola returns to Poland, where during 5 months she files for a divorce, finds a stable job and organises a new life for her daughter and herself. However, when her husband goes there and promises to change, she decides, for the sake of their daughter, to move back to Italy, provided she does not have to go back to work on the night shift. Eventually, she does go back to it, as it is the only work she can reconcile with her daughter's school.

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<sup>19</sup> The interview with Sylwia was arranged thanks to Ola's assistance. During the meeting it turned out, that Ola was wrong about Sylwia's year of arrival to Italy, which was in 2001 - therefore not meeting the recruitment criteria of the sample. However, I decided to keep Sylwia in the analysis – in a very limited form – only where she serves as a counterexample to Ola, as the two women have very similar situation yet perceive it in a contrasting way.

*I cannot stay at home, so after 2 months I returned to work at night. Since 2008 I've worked nonstop, I've only spent 1-2 months of holidays in Poland, I go there every 6 months. I got promoted to a group leader. I work at night shifts all the time, as here there are many holidays during school year.* (Ola, IT)

At the time of the interview, Ola is on maternity leave with her second baby. Again, she declares she would not go back to this work. However, she names no alternative strategy of combining childcare (now for two children) and economic activity.

None of the women explain how they recuperate their lost night's sleep and manage to care for their children afterwards. Only one (Ola) admits it has negative consequences for health. To them, the night shift seems to be the only available source of income – a low salary but not reduced by the cost of childcare.

The key to decision making about whether to go to work and use childcare services is the cost relative to the potential salary of the carer (usually – the mother).

*Summer activities for the children in the city cost EUR 800 – I would work for free for the whole month.* (Ola, IT)

This is what Ola means by 'working for free': there would be nothing left of her meagre salary after paying for summer holiday activities for her school aged daughter. The work done at nights by the mothers quoted above is in low-paid unskilled service jobs, if undertaken during the day, it would barely pay for childcare. By contrast, Iwona, whose story opened this chapter, has a manual but skilled job in manufacturing, with a relatively high salary. Even her salary is all spent on private nursery for two children. There is however one more country specific factor. In Italy, if the childcare is too costly, the women are forced to leave the labour market without compensation or to work at night at the expense of their health. In the UK, the parents who would earn only the minimum wage can remain unemployed and rely on social benefits.

*There is assistance when somebody doesn't work. On the internet there is plenty of advice, calculators of benefits. If one of us were earning the minimum wage we wouldn't be in any doubt that it is better to stay at home and switch to benefits. There are institutions where you can ask which one is more economic.* (Iwona, UK)

### **5.3. Attitudes to spending time with and caring for one's children**

In the interviews there are signals of the attitude, still very prevalent in Polish society, that small children should be raised by their parents. This is in line with the three-year-long unpaid parental leave guaranteed in the Polish labour code. Even if not many families can afford such a long period on one salary and many women see such a break as harmful to their career, this seems to be the point of reference. It is evident in the account of Helena, a mother of two, who decided in advance not to work when her children were small.

*We decided I would stay at home, take care of our children, take them to preschool. I would do the **mum's** chores, so that they would not feel lonely when they start school, new situations. He had a **permanent** job, allowing **me not** to work. (Helena, UK)*

At another point in the interview, Helena repeats what her strategy has been:

*I had no need for somebody to stay longer with us to help. Somebody visited us, but only for a week or so. I managed alone, **this is what I stayed at home for**. (Helena, UK)*

Eventually, Helena did not stay at home until both of her children started school. She got an interesting job, when her son started school (around 5 years of age), and she found a child-minder for her younger daughter. However, she was very demanding towards the candidates, and she describes the search process and the advantages of the selected child-minder in great detail.

*Our daughter started to go to an English child-minder to get used to [English], before going to school. We have found a real angel, she has 8 years of training and she is great. She offers many activities, outings, more than a nursery. I had a checklist, many questions that the candidate to be our child-minder had to satisfy. I had checked a few contacts and I was not satisfied. (...) She was our last contact, it was Henryk who called her, then he called me at the Saturday school and said 'I think you'll like her'. She lives only 5 minutes away from our home and sometimes she collects our son from school as well. Three times a week I collect him from school on my way home from work.*

*(Helena, UK)*

A strong, affirmative attitude to traditional gender roles – with respect to the topic of this chapter – of mothers staying at home with small children, is not dominant in the material gathered. Other mothers comment on the same fact of staying at home with the sense of obligation, resigned acceptance, or depression.

*He was one year old, so I assumed I should be at home. (Barbara, UK)*

*Interviewer: How do you imagine what your life is going to be like [when the baby is born]?*

*Marcin: It's going to be tough.*

*Monika: That I will have tired eyes, untidy hair, you know, that's how I see myself, out with a stroller, the baby sleeping, we don't come home as long as the baby's asleep, and me sitting on a bench, confused...*

*Marcin: Don't forget about the dog.*

*Monika: Yes, the dog will be tied to the stroller's side, so that he can bring us home, if I am asleep.* (Monika and Marcin, IT)

*When Maia was born I had a sort of postnatal depression [sighs]. It was hard for me to stay alone with her and it was hard for me to take care for her. I couldn't sleep, I gained a lot of weight during pregnancy, I felt bad.* (Celina, UK)

Another mother describes an unexpected evolution from a relaxed, unengaged vision of motherhood as doing only the necessary at minimum effort, to devoted attachment parenting:

*My plan was to breastfeed for the first half a year and then wean her off. But it turned that a year after I am still nursing and I don't mind it, at first I had thought that I'd only do the six months and be done (...) Now I am a long-breastfeeding-mother and a supporter of breastfeeding for as long as possible, which I would have never had imagined being before giving birth.* (Sandra, UK)

A topic inducing strong statements and emotional reactions is the idea of strangers taking care of the child instead of parents. An earlier quotation from Gustaw displays certain carelessness in employing anybody who is available as a carer for his baby, contrasting with the explanation of his current role:

*Since February I have worked on a farm. (...) I can take my son to the nursery and collect him, I just tell the owner when I have to leave. The salary might not be great, but elsewhere, working from 7a.m. to 5-6 p.m., I would earn 300 Euros more but spend it on additional care for my son. One would be insecure, and this way one raises one's own child by oneself, without stress.* (Gustaw, IT)

Part of Gustaw's argument is that additional income from a better job would all be spent on paying for additional childcare. So financially, the family would not be better off, instead, they would lose part of control over the care received by their child. A similar conclusion is reached by Halina and Hubert, parents of a school-aged boy, living in Italy.

*Halina: I used to work 9 a.m. to 8 p.m., I was earning EUR 500 and still had to give some of it to the friend who minded Anatol for a few hours after school, when he was waiting for his father.*

*Hubert: It made no sense. We cannot depend on somebody to take care of our child everyday from 4 to 7p.m.* (Halina and Hubert, IT)

Halina explains the negative side of not being at home after her son's school. In their case there was a financial gain from her work (net of the childcare costs), but the emotional costs for the child prevailed.

*[At work] I was nervous, because I had nothing to do, while there was somebody else collecting my child from school. In the evenings, Anatol and I were too sleepy to spend time together. (...) It had been bringing about EUR 300 per month, net of childcare cost, and we did notice the additional EUR 300 in our family budget, but it was not worth Anatol's trouble.* (Halina, IT)

From various opinions of the Polish interviewees concerning employing others to care for their children, two categories emerge. A less developed one is the child's trouble or discomfort (e.g. Halina's son). The other category, more rich with material, is the parents' feelings, combining elements of, on the one hand, insecurity and uncertainty about the carer and, on the other, remorse or regret of the foregone time together; which is the emotional cost of not being with the child. Examples of 'insecurity' are Gustaw, mentioned earlier, with his stress and insecurity, or Helena, speaking about her search for the perfect child-minder:

*I was thinking I would resign from work if I could not find an appropriate child-minder. Because I thought I could not have peace of mind at work if I didn't find the right person.* (Helena, UK)

The other aspect is illustrated by Iwona, quoted earlier in this chapter, who admits she feels remorse, as she is not seeing her own children for the whole day while they are cared for by strangers. Halina, while employed, regretted that because of coming back

from work late, she and her son were too tired to spend quality time together. Celina explains what her husband values in being a stay-at-home dad (continuation of an earlier quotation):

*...he really likes to spend his time with his child, rather than to put her under a stranger's care while he earns the money. Money is not the most important thing in the world and the time with her we would have lost, not seeing her grow, learn, it would be irretrievable, and the money you can always get from somewhere.* (Celina, UK)

Spending time together, as a family, is an important value highlighted in two interviews. Dorota, who had three children in Poland before her husband found work in the UK, gives a powerful account of their family life before migration, when the parents tried to earn extra money to make ends meet.

*At that time, there was only the eldest one, so - - I was sorry for him because we took him to the nursery school very early, at 6:30 a.m., when the nursery opened, until I finished work at a quarter to 4 - so around 4 p.m. we picked him up from the nursery school. My husband went somewhere, I had lessons, so he had to go to grandparents in turn and stay there until the evening, when I finished lessons and ran to him, to bring him home. When the small ones arrived, I didn't work until 4 anymore, but I kept giving private lessons. And in addition, at some point for two or three terms, I don't remember exactly, I taught English to students on weekend classes. So I was busy for the whole of Saturday, and Sunday until 5 p.m. if I had a good schedule, I begged for some time free left on Sunday. At that time it was easier financially, but it was harder in general, to live through that, these hours were so intertwined that we could never be together, as on weekends my husband was occupied with the kids...* (Dorota, UK)

Dorota underlines the contrast between everyday life of her family in Poland and in the country of immigration, where they can live on one salary and enjoy time together.

*What's **different** than in Poland, is that my husband works about 8.5 hours, counting the lunch break – and he is here, he comes back and he's home. While in Poland, in order to survive, pay all the bills, he went out again, to work more afterwards. He worked for one company, and then more, some small tasks - - - extra repairs, something else, always something more. Here, there is no need for him to be absent all the time - - - when he comes home from work he can do something, he can be with the children (...)*



*That's the biggest change. Our standard of living has not risen, we live – in practice – like we used to live, but we can afford to be together, to see something here, take the children somewhere...*  
(Dorota, UK)

Spending quality time together in an active and valuable way is also underlined by another Polish couple living in England.

*Henryk: I thought that in order to go away and relax it would be best to leave the children with the grandparents. But Helena convinced me it is a good idea to take them with us.*

*Helena: We think we **deserve** it, the children and us as a family, we deserve to go somewhere and relax **together**.*  
(Helena and Henryk, UK)

## 5.4. Conclusions

The interviewees use a great variety of caring arrangements and, interestingly, many of the solutions question the traditional gender roles.

Joint care by both parents is sometimes possible thanks to their work arrangements. Among unskilled immigrants this is the shift-work system. Among highly skilled workers freelance work, remote work, and flexible working hours offer a similar opportunity for coordinating work and care within the couple.

Nevertheless, for those that prefer formal childcare, the availability of places in nurseries is not a problem. Sometimes part-time care is used, for example if parents have flexible working hours, or are not working at all, and just want to let their child socialise with other children on a part-time basis. When this is state funded, even part-time employed or unemployed parents can afford it and gain some free time. This convenient provision can be an additional factor attracting families to choose between living as a transnational household and re-uniting in the country of immigration.

If care is needed for a shorter period of time, it can be provided by other people, such as grandparents or local acquaintances. From the perspective of migrants who are not yet parents, the availability of family help seems crucial, so that they even plan return, at least temporarily, upon the birth of their child. However, accounts of interviewees who

experience parenting abroad in fact show that regular help of a family member is not indispensable.

Paradoxically, starting school (usually state-funded) does not solve the organisational problems of providing care to children during parents' work. The school routine (length of the day, length of school holidays) imposes new frames on the organisation of parents' time, especially working ones. In Italy, during most of the school year somebody has to be able to collect the child from school in the early afternoon. This makes one parent, usually the mother, unable to undertake full-time employment with regular hours until her youngest child no longer needs care after school. The immigrants are aware that other families fare better, as other mothers do not work or have grandparents nearby who can help them. This is especially painful when the education system in Italy assumes that families can manage alone. In the UK, where the market is the provider of services for the family, parents can buy extra care time.

When parents have relatively well paid full-time jobs they can afford care for children before and after classes. When the parent earns very little, providing care for the time spent at work is no longer economical. In the perspectives of some interviewees it creates the situation of 'working for free': additionally earned money is spent on extra childcare, leaving none or only a small financial gain, that is not deemed worth the negative consequences of separation. In addition, employing others to care for one's child is often seen rather negatively, due to the perceived emotional harm this causes the child, lack of guarantee of good quality care and feeling of regret for not being able to see the child develop.

For those who believe spending time together with the children is very important, emigration, especially to the British system (with salaries allowing for a single breadwinner household, welfare benefits), is a way of securing the lifestyle compatible with their hierarchy of values.

## Chapter 6. Educational choices of Polish parents abroad

It has been well documented that the presence of children adds a more permanent character to the migration of the families of post-accession migrants (Ryan, Sales, Tilki, & Siara, 2009); (Moskal, 2011); (Ryan & Sales, 2013). Even if at first the adult migrants think in terms of the income they bring to the household and the emotional value of being together, in the long run they have to admit that whether migration has improved welfare of their family depends on their children's education and later labour market performance.

With respect to the children of migrant origin, the educational system is shaped by the general migration and integration policies (Ślusarczyk & Nikielska-Sekuła, 2014), which in practice operates through various procedures, guidelines and dedicated staff, such as teaching assistants - native speakers in children's mother tongue, ethnic minority achievement teams. These practical solutions impact the insertion of immigrant children to school, which is more complicated than in the home country, as it has to combine general education and socialisation with teaching the foreign language.

There is evidence that age at migration has a lot of influence on the children's future performance. While migrating before school age means they can learn the language of the new country quite quickly, if they arrive later they may never achieve fluency and as an added disadvantage have a lower understanding and grades in other subjects. Böhlmark (2009) has shown for Sweden that arriving in the first years of school (6-8) is no more disadvantageous than arriving before school starts (0-5). Instead, arrival at the age of 9 or more has negative consequences on grades and arrival at 13+ - on future earnings. School age differs between countries, and in the case of Poland, where school starts at 6 or 7<sup>20</sup>, children who were not yet in school in Poland, might arrive already to Year 3 of the British school system. At later stages, children may communicate in English but not be able to fully comprehend the curriculum (Sales, Ryan, Lopez Rodriguez, & D'Angelo, 2010). In adult life, children who migrated at a sensitive school age (9+ years), catch up with education level, but may achieve lower earnings, probably because educational attainment or even over-education hides poorer country-specific labour market skills (Böhlmark, 2009).

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<sup>20</sup> Since 2009 the Polish government has been trying to change school entry age to 6, but as of 2014 the reform has not been implemented completely due to the huge resistance from parents. Nevertheless, all the children who were in school when their parents were interviewed for this study had 7 as the obligatory age of starting school in Poland.

One of the important threads in the recent studies on the approach of immigrants to education is the social class, habitus shaped during education and social reproduction paradigm (Bourdieu, 1986), (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990). Studies by Magdalena Lopez Rodriguez (2010) and Thatcher (2014) employ this analytic approach to Polish immigrant parents. Although this project does not focus on this aspect, class differences have been expressed indirectly in parents' assessment of the schooling quality, their engagement in the process of passing cultural capital and which parents and why take into consideration private schools for their offspring.

Another important issue in migrant children's education is passing on the knowledge of the country of origin and its culture, and last but not least proficiency in the native language, to the younger generation. This poses a challenge to immigrant parents to which they react differently depending on their long-term plans. Knowledge of the mother tongue is important for the contact with grandparents and other relatives in the country of origin. It may also be treated as an advantage on the labour market (however this depends on the demand for that particular language and the market value of Polish is certainly lower than e.g. Chinese for American Born Chinese (Wong, 2007)). The importance of national or diaspora education is much higher if parents plan to return and introduce children (back) into the Polish education system.

The chapter presents the decisions of parents of small children about to start school, followed by the dilemmas of parents of teenagers who had to respond to differences between the education systems in the home and host countries. The attitudes to the teaching of the Polish language and to the Polish schools are analysed. The impact of gender and class on educational decision making is discussed in the fourth and fifth section, before the concluding remarks of the chapter.

## **6.1. Preparing to start school in the country of immigration**

As many of the interviewees living in the UK are young parents of children below 6, the crucial problem in many stories is securing a place in a good school for the child. A good example can be found in Helena's opinions and experiences with an English school.

At the time of the interview, Helena and Henryk were the parents of two children – aged 5 and 3. Henryk has secondary education and Helena has a university degree in social policy. Helena stayed at home after giving birth to their first son until he went to school and the younger daughter was cared for by a child-minder. Helena is also professionally involved in schooling as a volunteer teacher in a Polish Saturday school and recently, as her first job after parental leave, an Ethnic Minority Achievement coordinator in a local school.

*Interviewer: How did you learn about schooling here, how did you choose a school for [your son]?*

*Helena: I researched the local schools, read OFSTED<sup>21</sup> reports, I also got a lot of advice from a friend from Sure Start. I was shocked that children start school here so young, at only 3 years and 4 months<sup>22</sup> in his case. I always have a lot of questions, I need to know everything and make sure, not that everything has to be the way I want, but that I **understand** how it functions. (Helena, UK)*

The above passage shows the importance of gathering information before choosing a school. The British system offers many sources of information such as the OFSTED reports and local Sure Start advice centres for parents of small children. In the case of Helena, social capital also matters as she has an English friend specialising in education that she can trust. The agency of the parent is very important too, as she has not relied solely on publicly available data but also made an effort to contact the school and understand its way of functioning. Of course the accessibility of all these sources of information requires at least some knowledge of English language, which is very varied among Polish immigrants.

The couple quoted above do not mention thinking about the quality of local schools at the stage of buying their flat. However, from their passages on care and time organisation (previous chapter) one can learn that their son is in a school near home and is sometimes collected by the local child-minder taking care of his younger sister. However,

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<sup>21</sup> Ofsted is the Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills. It is an official body for inspecting schools, publishing reports about them and supervising schools that need to improve their performance after being identified as falling below expected teaching and care standards.

<sup>22</sup> Helena probably miscalculated slightly, children start school when they are at least 4 years old (born in August four years before the beginning of the first school year, e.g. those born in August 2007 are the youngest starting school in the year 2011/2012), still it is much earlier than in the Polish education system.

another couple that bought their home when their first child was already a pre-schooler, explicitly mention looking for a property close to the school they had chosen for him.

*The older son finishes reception year in a Catholic school. We moved here to be close to the school. [...] The market was quite stagnant, we wanted something close to our son's school so it wasn't easy.* (Igor, UK)

Another couple, who have lived in rented flats, started to look for a different home a year before their son's recruitment to primary school. They had been warned by the unsatisfactory school placement of their neighbours' child, one year older than theirs. This is how they describe the importance of the flat's location for the school placement process (the question was about place of residence, not schooling *per se*).

*Borys: [...] And the third reason was the school.*

*Barbara: Our son goes to school next year.*

*Borys: The first flat was equidistant from two schools, our next-door neighbour's son didn't get into any of these schools, so we wouldn't have had a chance either. So we made the decision at this moment with the school in mind. He is three, it is the age to make the decision.*

*Barbara: We will be applying for school in January, we had given ourselves a year to find a new place, we thought it would take longer.* (Barbara and Borys, UK)

Next, the interviewed mother adds:

*The son of our friend was not accepted in any of the six schools she had put on the preference list. Fortunately, he was placed in a good school – but it is 2.5 miles away from home and she doesn't have a car.* (Barbara and Borys, UK)

Barbara makes reference to the complex rules of recruitment to schools. The parents have to select six preferred schools and they have to choose them strategically. While there are certain categories with preference for their life circumstances (e.g. handicapped children, children in foster care) and religious affiliation<sup>23</sup> criteria in case of denominational schools, most of the children compete for a school place based on address. Schools have determined catchment areas, but when there are more candidates than places,

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<sup>23</sup> There is anecdotal evidence of the date of baptism being a decisive criterion for Roman-Catholic schools. This way the schools claim to sort out 'honest believers' who raise their children in a religious spirit from the ones who baptize their children at the age of 3 or 4 with the specific aim of sending them to a local RC school because of its quality. The Polish families, who traditionally baptise their babies as soon as they are able to organise the reception for the family, seem to fit in with the RC schools' demands.

living within the catchment area is not enough. Exact distance from the school calculated door-to-door is decisive. A family living relatively further than others, near the border of the catchment areas might have a problem getting a place in any of the neighbouring schools.

With respect to the denominational schools, residence combined with practicing one's religion locally is decisive for admission. Candidates have to submit a statement from their priest, ideally the one whose parish council supervises the school. During my fieldwork, I visited a Polish church<sup>24</sup> (i.e. a Roman Catholic church employing a Polish priest and offering service in Polish language apart from English for the general population) in Finchley, London Borough of Barnet, which has a huge advantage of having one of the borough's best-assessed primary schools<sup>25</sup> serving its parish (St. Phillip's). Attending this particular church helps the Polish families to secure a place in the school. In addition, the concentration of Polish families resulted in opening a Polish Saturday school<sup>26</sup> in strong cooperation with the Polish priest working in the parish.

The studies of Polish migrants' approach to education in Great Britain reveal that children are sent to Catholic schools almost as a "must" (Lopez Rodriguez, 2010). The parents in my sample did not confirm this tendency. An extreme case is Sandra, a young cohabiting mother of a toddler, who excluded a Catholic school on the basis of her and her partner's values and lifestyle choices.

*We probably won't send her to a Catholic school as we are neither married nor was she is baptized.* (Sandra, UK)

Below is how Helena reacts to a question on the Polish choosing Catholic schools and immediately turns to presenting the quality of the school she has chosen.

*Helena: I think it is not a matter of religion, but of a bad district, the type of people who live there. Some children are more aggressive and the schools offer different levels. Our non-denominational school gives a lot of homework, demands a lot. I thought it was sometimes too much, but my English friend told me 'You should be happy, it means that it*

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<sup>24</sup> The parish website: <http://www.finchleyparish.co.uk/kontakt.html> (accessed on 27.05.2013).

<sup>25</sup> Our Lady of Lourdes RC School, Bow Lane, London. The school consistently scores grade 1 (outstanding) from Ofsted (<http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/inspection-reports/find-inspection-report/provider/ELS/101331>) and Roman Catholic diocese authorities ([http://www.rcdow.org.uk/fileupload/school\\_inspection\\_reports/OLofLourdesBarnet0411652011461418.pdf](http://www.rcdow.org.uk/fileupload/school_inspection_reports/OLofLourdesBarnet0411652011461418.pdf)) (both online sources accessed on 27.05.2013).

<sup>26</sup> School's website: <http://www.polska-szkola.org.uk/kontakt.html>, information in the Finchley Parish website: <http://www.finchleyparish.co.uk/szkola.html> (both online sources accessed on 27.05.2013).

*is a good school'. Now I know that. I have devoted a lot of time to him, I also used my extra materials, and he has benefited from it. Recently they've streamed the children according to level and our son was put into the higher-level stream.*

*Henryk: People are saying he goes to "the class for geniuses".*

*Helena: His teacher told me it was clear someone had been working with the child at home.*

*(Helena and Henryk, UK)*

Several elements leading to what parents perceive as a good school can be identified in the passage above. The first is the social composition of the district served by the particular school. A 'bad district' would mean an area producing more aggressive children, who had not been raised properly by their parents. Another issue is the level of teaching offered by the particular school – the qualifications of its staff members and the quality of supervision and management of the school. The evidence of the good quality of teaching in their son's school as stated by Helena is the significant amount of homework, high demands, and splitting children into classes according to their level of ability. Finally, there is the investment of time and effort by the mother, something not every parent can provide.

Sandra, quoted earlier, believes her firm position in the process of the upbringing of her child is crucial for overcoming the behavioural problems and the lack of discipline of children in the British state schools, which many of the Polish complain about.

*People dramatise, talk about gangs, 'wild' children, as if they were tigers. I think it is not as bad as people describe it and it has no influence over me, as I can choose for her any school, I can choose a good school and, maybe it sounds pompous and I might not be right, but I believe that if I give her good foundations before she goes to school it won't be as easy to make her go in the wrong direction.*

*(Sandra, UK)*

In both Helena's and Sandra's statements there is an important aspect of their agency, their free choice and the necessity of parents' work at home, not relying on schools alone.

From the point of view of another mother, who has yet to make the decision, the approach to students as children needing care comes first, before the teaching results.



*I will choose a school with a good OFSTED report, one that has an 'outstanding' mark for the care for the child criterion, but also one with good teaching results.*

*(Barbara, UK)*

Sending one's child to a school so different to that which the parents remember from their own education in the home country is a challenge, requiring flexibility and trust in the methods of the local teachers. Parents may feel concerned, especially if their child seems to be left behind the others (Sales, et al., 2010, p. 14). However, the parent can also be positively surprised by the approach in the new country.

*For the time being I like this system, although I hear a lot of complaints from other Poles, that there is not enough Maths, that the children get too little homework. - - At first I also thought it would not be enough homework to get the child into a routine, so that he comes back and has to do homework. But a lot depends on us. I see people who have different approaches. Some sit with their children and only do the assigned homework. Other [mothers] teach their children alone. I know a woman who arrived here like us, in July last year, so her son speaks some, but not perfect, English. And she sits with him teaching him both English – although she doesn't know it well herself and needs a lot of supportive material – and Polish, she teaches him to write in Polish. Plus she teaches him how to multiply – this child is older than mine. She teaches him the way she thinks is right, the way she remembers from her experience with her older child in the Polish school. I don't have experience with the older children, only what I remember from my own school. But I like it here [...]*

*(Dorota, UK)*

In Dorota's observations it is evident, that the parents get involved in education in different ways. Some compare the new system with the one they know and complain about the differences. Interestingly, Dorota notices the difference between herself, with no experience with Polish schools as a parent, and another Polish mother who tries to impose her experiences of what and how her older child was taught in Poland, on her younger child attending an English primary school. In Dorota's observation there is no evident criticism of the other mother, but some reflection of a certain lack of skill and chaos in the activities of the other mother. Thus Dorota herself prefers not to insist too much on teaching Polish, especially written.

*Interviewer: You mentioned this woman who teaches her son Polish – do you?*

*Dorota: At first I pressed a lot on him to write in Polish but afterwards I decided to give him a break for a few months. It was still difficult for him to write, for example to understand that double “o” makes the “u.” sound. It is difficult to understand that pronunciation differs from spelling. But he is curious about Polish, he sometimes asks me how to write down a Polish word<sup>27</sup> [...]. He started to mix things so I decided not to push for the time being and let him learn one set of rules first. (Dorota, UK)*

Placing too much pressure on a child, as well as unskilful teaching, might have negative consequences for the child's performance and attitude to learning. It seems that Dorota chose a more realistic approach, accepting the challenges a migrant child faces and giving him plenty of time to adapt. At the same time, this approach is better on the condition that the parents exclude returning to Poland in the foreseeable future.

## 6.2. Choices regarding education of migrant teenagers

The couples discussed above have small children, so their experiences are limited to early education. The analysis of a family who migrated at a different stage of their life course presents the different set of educational choices concerning teenagers.

Lucyna, her husband, and both of their adult children live in the east of England. Lucyna is a beautician, who had a salon in Warsaw for many years. Her husband had a transport company, based at their home in the suburbs of Warsaw. Both of them were tired of running businesses in Poland, facing the numerous inspections and paying very high social contributions. Lucyna's husband's company was losing the fight with competition. Initially, Lucyna's husband went to Italy to work as an international driver, there he learnt about the opportunities in this profession in the UK. While he migrated to England in 2006, Lucyna stayed in Poland with their children: a son in secondary school and a daughter in lower secondary school (*gimnazjum*). Lucyna arrived in the UK to join her husband, when they were 37 and 42 respectively. She arrived with the children in the summer of 2007. One of the first challenges the family faced was the fact that the older child was past the obligatory schooling age in the UK.

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<sup>27</sup> Dorota gives an example of her son mixing Polish and English spelling: '*Jak się pisze fura? u, ó or oo?*' Her son tried to employ both Polish and English spelling rules to a Polish word.

*We have two children. Our son was 18; he arrived here after the second year of his secondary technical school but here he was considered an adult, without the obligation to study so there was no possibility of him continuing school. He returned to Poland, to his school. Then he graduated and came back here two years ago, he works here now.*

*(Lucyna, UK)*

The age of Lucyna's son meant he had no secondary school completed in Poland but was too old to start studying for his GCSEs in the UK. There might have been some other options for him to study with adults who had dropped out of school, however Lucyna does not mention these. He returned to Poland and migrated again after completing secondary school. Separation of teenage children, who stay to continue education in Poland, from their migrating family has been documented in other research projects (Ryan & Sales, 2013).

The younger child could enter the British education system more easily.

*Lucyna: Our daughter was 14, she went to the secondary school here, then for 2 years she attended a college. Now she is a student at a university in east London.(...)*

*Interviewer: Where did you get information about schools for the children?*

*Lucyna: Everything was through the council. They asked her what she liked and found her a school suiting her preferences. At this age one can choose subjects, she liked media and the arts.*

*(Lucyna,UK)*

Lucyna's daughter seems to have been successful in her education process and is now a student. However, the mother's next statement reveals obstacles to the girl's ambitions.

*Interviewer: What are your daughter's plans for future?*

*Lucyna: She has completed her first year and she lives in a student residence. She has taken a large loan for her studies and we are in debt. One year costs 10,000 pounds.[...] She went to study psychology and after 3 years she will have nothing. She has to do a 1-year MA, then get a year of work experience, then a PhD. In total it is 7 years and I don't know where we will find the money for it. Our accountant told me they might deny our application for a loan for the MA if we had taken a loan for BA.*

*Interviewer: Have any of your children thought about studying in Poland?*

*Lucyna: My son did, a bit. But day studies in Poland and supporting himself? For what? It is unrealistic. Here it is difficult to go to study, as a foreigner he would have to have some extra money from the EU. And to support both of them as students at the same time – there is no such option.* (Lucyna, UK)

University education is very expensive in England. And the immigrant families, by contrast to many British families, have not been saving for the fees for many years. In addition, they have no property in the UK that they could use to get another loan. Lucyna can only afford to send one child to university and even she is at risk of not being able to complete her education path in the profession she has chosen.

For comparison, a family with two children of a similar age at migration as the family above that migrated to Italy is presented. Daria is a 45-year-old woman who started to work as a badante in Italy in 2000, but in 2006 managed to bring her husband and sons to settle in Italy. Daria's older son was already an adult, therefore she thought she couldn't bring him as a dependent family member. He had graduated from secondary school in Poland, so she enrolled him at an Italian university – both to satisfy his wish of studies and to regularise his stay. Nevertheless, mostly due to the language barrier, he soon dropped out and started to work.

*The older one was enrolled at university, I even applied for a bursary. He got it, but on the condition of passing his first exams. (...) Soon he resigned, he said because he didn't speak Italian. I had also enrolled him because at that time there was still requirement for the stay permit and he was already an adult.* (Daria, IT)

Daria's younger son was a teenager when the family reunited in spring 2006. Contrary to his older brother, he had not finished his education in Poland. Initially, he was supposed to stay and finish school:

*When I was here, and my husband and older son arrived here, we had a problem because the younger son still had one year of lower secondary school ahead of him. And suddenly he had an accident, he was hit by a car, in May. Fortunately nothing serious happened to him, he only has one scar. At first we wanted to leave him in Poland for one more year to complete school. But it turned out that they opened a Polish school in this city, for Polish children, so I applied for a place there.* (Daria, IT)

Daria's son (similarly to Lucyna's) was also affected by the discrepancies between the ages of transition from one level of schooling to another in various countries.

*The younger one attended the Polish school and a vocational school, as he was too old to attend a regular Italian junior high.* (Daria, IT)

It is possible that the boy was directed to a vocational school not because of his interests or intellectual abilities but because of the lack of knowledge of Italian; as he arrived at a decisive age, he was not given a chance of continuing his education in Italy in a more demanding type of a secondary school.

Irena, upon migrating to Italy to follow her second husband, chose a different path for each of her children from her first marriage, according to their age. Initially she took only the youngest daughter with her. They moved twice internally in Italy, following the husband's working sites. At the time of the interview, Irena's son had already joined her in Italy, having completed vocational school in Poland.

Irena's eldest daughter stayed in Poland as she has been studying engineering there. Irena stresses that she would prefer her not to come to Italy.

*The older one, if she finds a job in Poland in her profession, I wouldn't want her to come. For holidays, for a short trip, to work – yes, but in her profession. Not any other job, absolutely no. Here there are plenty of girls working in services. Here you can only choose between the jobs of a waitress, cleaner or old aged person's carer. It is not with this aim in mind that people in Poland study, finish difficult studies, and then come here, you know.* (Irena, IT)

The son did not undertake education in Italy, but was only waiting to be employed in the same company as his step-father. The youngest daughter arrived in Italy with her mother and goes to secondary school in the new country. Interestingly, she also trains in a niche sporting discipline, which in Italy stands on even higher level than in Poland. The possibility of continuing her training at a top level might have been an additional factor for the mother and daughter's migration – if it hadn't been to Italy, they might have stayed in Poland.

*I lost out by moving here. In turn, my daughter profited, well at least she begins to profit from it, she trains and goes to school here.* (Irena, IT)

It seems that for each of the children Irena has chosen a different path depending on their abilities. She counts on education to give a professional career to the oldest one, talent for sport as a path for the youngest. Her son didn't get a good education, instead he can use the social capital – Irena's second husband who can have him hired by his employer, an internationally operating company with highly paid contracts even for skilled manual workers.

### 6.3. Educating Polish children abroad: language and culture

Different size and age structure of the Polish immigration in UK and Italy results in the different accessibility of Polish Saturday schools.

The increasing number of Polish children born and/or brought up in the UK creates a large demand for Polish language education. The number of so-called Saturday schools more than doubled between 1990 and 2011, reaching 130 (Lasocka, 2012). The schools differ in tradition, size and ways of financing premises and staff (Praszałowicz, et al., 2013). One of the interviewees is actually a teacher at one of the Saturday schools. Below is her account of the way this school functions.

*The city council cooperates with that school as well. We rent an English school building on Saturdays. My work there is voluntary, there is only GBP 20 reimbursement of costs. I have a dozen students, the objective of this teaching is preparing them to pass a GCSE in Polish.*  
*(Helena, UK)*

Helena states the aim of the Polish Saturday school is to prepare the students of Polish origin to take a GCSE in Polish as a modern foreign language. The aims of parents who want to maintain their children's knowledge of Polish can also be incorporated in the requirements of the British education system. Knowing Polish well enables the children to pass it in the GCSE exam and get a good mark. However, according to the teachers of the Polish schools who presented their work at a 2012 conference about the situation of the Polish children and youth in Great Britain after 2004, the cooperation with the British schools is not smooth. The schools welcome the fact that their Polish students get good grades in one of the subjects in the final exams (and contribute to the schools' performance statistics), but are not helpful to the diaspora organisations in the process of teaching. The

cost of renting classes is also presented as one of the key problems affecting Saturday schools (Olliffe, 2012). In addition, many children are not sent to Saturday school due to the lack of places, being overloaded with the regular school curriculum or parents' choice to assimilate (Lasocka, 2012).

*In September he will start the Polish school and there will be a conflict with his [Saturday] football training. At first, I didn't want him to resign from football, I thought I could teach him myself. But the last visit of my mother-in-law convinced me to send him [to Polish Saturday school]. She could not understand them, especially when they [the sibling] were playing together. It is easy for them to speak English, the children speak English to each other. In Polish – he speaks more slowly, making pauses when he misses a word.*

*(Helena, UK)*

Another mother confirmed the difficulty of maintaining Polish language at home, when siblings are educated in English-speaking playgroups or nurseries. She also shows how big the demand for Saturday school place is.

*It makes me angry. It is easier for him to speak English. It used to irritate me when I heard my niece speak English or mix languages with my sister. Now I see that English is the language of fun for them. There is a Polish Saturday school, my son is 34<sup>th</sup> on the reserve list, maybe he'll get a place one day. There are two schools, one with the tradition of the old Polish diaspora and a recently established new one, but with a lower reputation.*

*(Iwona, UK)*

Because of the high demand and uneven distribution in the UK, as well as cost and time which not all parents can invest, only around 25% of Polish children (around 16,000) attend Polish Saturday schools (Lasocka, 2012)..

In Italy the number of Polish origin children is much lower – and so is the number of schools. According to the data published by the Polish school in Rome<sup>28</sup> and the database of the governmental Centre for the Development of Polish Education Abroad<sup>29</sup> there are eight Polish schools in Italy. Some offer teaching above primary level (as in Daria's case quoted earlier), although it is quite rare. However, parents interviewed in Italy

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<sup>28</sup> The site presenting the school organised by the Polish Embassy in Rome and its branches: <http://www.szkolapolskawrzymie.org/oszkole.php> (accessed on 27.05.2013).

<sup>29</sup> The website created by the Centre for the Development of Polish Education Abroad (Ośrodek Rozwoju Polskiej Edukacji za Granicą – ORPEG). Although ORPEG is a governmental body, this website welcomes bottom up input – as a result, one can find schools set up by various associations, but not the state run ones that have been organised by the embassies. <http://www.polska-szkola.pl/mod/data/view.php?id=16&mode=asearch> (accessed on 27.05.2013).

rarely mention it; they either do not know about or are not interested in Polish language education organised by the diaspora.

Norbert and Natalia are a couple in their thirties who migrated to Italy in 2007. Norbert is a highly skilled specialist and was employed by a company in Northern Italy. Natalia was on parental leave with their son. She stayed at home and had a second baby in Italy. At the time of the interview they were about to return to Poland. Norbert gives education as one of the reasons for their decision and its timing.

*Why are we going back? My son is going to start school education and my daughter is about to start scuola materna [preschool]. They could go here, there is nothing wrong. Our son has learnt Italian in nursery this year. But what next? My Italian is 'fluent' [sarcastically], my wife's is better, but we would not be able to help our child, he would be educated by the school and we would be just orbiting alongside. Let him have excellent grades, but there is also cinema, theatre – in Poland I can advise him where to go, recommend a book – here I live in a bubble.* (Norbert, IT)

*Interviewer: What are your long-term plans?*

*Natalia: To educate the children.*

*Norbert: If a child got engaged here, it would tear us apart as a family.*

*(Natalia and Norbert, IT)*

There are other reasons for return stated elsewhere in this interview (Norbert's professional development, paying off a mortgage in Poland), so the children's education should not be treated as the decisive factor. However, the idea of foreign education being a threat to the position of the parent as an authority is expressed very strongly: "*he would be educated by the school and we would be just orbiting alongside*". Norbert is aware that school education should not be understood in a narrow way (studying particular subjects and getting grades) but as forming the child's set of cultural values and points of reference, which would be different from those of the parents.

Neither Norbert nor his wife Natalia have mentioned the possibility of educating their children in Polish language and culture in the Saturday school – although they definitely know about it (Natalia has been recruited for this study through an internet forum of Polish mothers in Italy, where the activities of the Polish Saturday preschool and



school were discussed). It is possible that diaspora education was not enough in their opinion, that they preferred their children to have the same educational and cultural background as their parents. An alternative explanation might be due to Norbert's own difficulties in learning Italian and his wish to regain control over the children. The timing of family return migration coordinated with the child's reaching of school age has been reported earlier in migration studies (Wong, 2007).

Returning to Poland once the child has started school seems more problematic. As one of the interviewed mothers observes, arriving at a British school at any age is easy but Polish schools are not prepared to accept children at different ages, with backgrounds in other education systems.

*I have been thinking [that moving] in this direction was easy. The school here is used to children arriving at different ages, not speaking English, or having a lot of drawbacks. And the children overcome that, with the help of teachers and parents in co-operation. In Poland I don't know what it would look like, I haven't heard of a child suddenly arriving in the Polish education system.* (Dorota, UK)

It thus seems that while having children at school doesn't necessarily discourage emigration, it is a barrier against return to Poland.

#### **6.4. Class and attitudes to education**

Among the interviewees there are noticeably different attitudes to school, depending on their own educational background and economic status. Only some of them spoke about education as a system with some general ideas or assumptions. A highly educated couple compare what seems to them to be the overall ideology of the British education with other nations' ways of educating children.

*Barbara: Public secondary schools are not great, I think. Primary schools are better than in Poland, the approach to children is better.*

*Borys: There is an individualistic approach, the stress is put on individual development. I have read about France, that there the schools are massive and they make children*

*uniform. Paradoxically, here the children are made to **look the same**, put in uniforms, but as **people** they are treated as individuals.*

*Barbara: It is important for us. Maybe for some the schools here are too liberal. There are documentaries about the Chinese children, trained to excel. We don't have such ambitions. We want him to attend a public school.[...] (Barbara and Borys, UK)*

In the above passage the British education is placed by the parents in the middle, between the 'uniformising' French national education, which is seen as the state's tool of creating citizens with similar values, and the tendency, exemplified by the Chinese, to put children under enormous pressure to become the best and achieve the parents' aims. The interviewed parents express their wish for a school that would care for their son and provide a good environment for him to develop at his own pace.

Emilia, who doesn't have children yet, has an English partner and they both live and work as expats in Italy. For her, education seemed like a worldwide market, where nations competed by offering products (diplomas) of different value.

*I don't know what the level of schools is, maybe in the UK it is higher. In Poland [the level of schools, teaching] is higher, but Polish diplomas do not open the doors for you, only an American or a British one. Italian schools are probably the same as the Polish ones. My partner is English – so our children could go elsewhere for studies.*

*(Emilia, IT)*

In Emilia's opinion (of course formed by her own experience of working in a few countries, not by being a parent) there are no national sentiments – only the perceived market value of the diploma. This is different to Norbert (see section 6.3.) for whom education is more than subjects and grades, but also getting to know the works of culture and creating tastes. Although as a highly skilled specialist Norbert could get a contract in a country where his children could get the world's best education, he prefers to return to Poland and mentions the beginning of schooling as an important factor for the decision.

In Norbert's statement there is an interesting ambiguity in his attitude to higher education.

*We have higher education so the children should as well. But with time my attitude has changed. [...] The more I think about it, the more I think academic work is like a*

*monastery. If you don't have time to create something new, you don't need a university. [...] There is a university in [their city in Poland]. The access to education in Poland is probably easier.*

*(Norbert, IT)*

On the one hand achieving the same level of education as the parents is something obvious („we have it - so they should as well, there is a university in our city”). On the other hand, he questions the need for university for somebody without academic ambition. It is an interesting opinion from a person who has two diplomas: one from a university, in natural science, another in applied science, from an institute of technology. Regarding the value of a Polish diploma, Norbert may also value it more than Emilia or Barbara, because he can observe the demand for his Polish colleagues from the leading world companies. However, it is a specificity of his field of studies, which may not hold for graduates in other domains, especially social and human sciences.

Regarding the ownership of the school, in the UK in general the expensive private schools are valued very highly and often chosen by wealthier parents. In such a context, private schools are taken into account also by some of the interviewed parents, the ones with higher socio-economic status (Borys works in the finance sector in London).

*Borys: Choosing a school is a big stress, my colleagues go through it as well, they move, they try to find a solution, they figure out which would be better: public or private school.*

*Barbara: If they place the child in some mediocre school, we will maybe think of a private one – but they have long reserve lists too, there is uncertainty there too. (...) Private schools are a way for the state to evade responsibility for the level of teaching.*

*(Barbara and Borys, UK)*

Celina is an economist and works as a manager in a multinational company. She has already started to save money for the future education of her two-year-old daughter.

*For the time being she has a fund for school, we will use it when she goes to school, not the primary one but later, in her further education (sighs) so we save money for that. Because the best schools are the private ones – in this country – but we don't have any defined plans, we don't know what's going to happen. I don't want to label my child and choose a school for her now, we'll see what happens later. Maybe we'll move to Australia*

*within the next 5 years. One thing is sure – I have already started saving money for it, to have the means to guarantee a good education for her.* (Celina, UK)

Another young mother, who had studied in the UK herself, is similarly considering a private school on one of the next stages of education.

*To a private school – we also probably won't send her, especially in the beginning mostly because of the finances. I think we will simply find a **good** state school and maybe afterwards a grammar school or if we can afford it a private school starting at 11 to prepare her for the exams and later to the studies. The statistics are as they are, it comes out of them that it is better to go to a private school, but the truth is they are only statistics and if one takes care of it, one can educate the child in a state school as well.*

(Sandra, UK)

While Borys and Barbara are prepared to turn to private schooling should their son be enrolled in a low level state funded school, Celina and Sandra leave that option for the further stages of schooling. Their attitude is confirmed by the evaluation reports quoted by Dorota.

*I don't know what it will be like with school here afterwards. From OFSTED reports I learn that the early years are excellent in practically every school, children's achievements each year. But afterwards in year 4 or 5 it may be poor. I don't know if it is like that only in our neighbourhood, I haven't checked further away. We don't exclude changing school in future, maybe we'll move somewhere further...* (Dorota, UK)

Faced with the choice between state funded low level schools and good private schools one cannot afford, the parents, like Joanna, might choose return to Poland as a way of securing a good level of education without paying large fees.

*I have always attended public schools, not private ones, and I never complained. It is also a reason, we agreed, me and my husband, that it is one of the reasons for moving to Poland. (...) they say here that to get to a good university, that the percentage of students from state funded schools is lower and that they don't fare well in getting to good universities. It doesn't look good. And when you look at Poland, many students who graduate from public secondary schools do very well at university or a technical university.* (Joanna, UK)

Joanna herself was admitted to a university in London, and graduated from it, after attending public schools in Poland. She tries to compare the two systems: England where students from elite private schools dominate the admissions to good universities, and Poland where the best students come from state funded schools and most private schools are perceived as places where the rich “pay for the grades” for their children and the level of teaching is not so good. As an outcome of her reasoning, she would prefer to send her child to school in the country, where a good level of education is available for free. However, if the assumptions based on her own educational history no longer turn out to be valid, Joanna will have plenty of time to revise her decision, as she was interviewed when pregnant with her first child, and education was not an issue demanding an immediate decision.

Most Polish parents interviewed in Italy had secondary education themselves and little experience or plans of sending their children to university there. Piotr, a 40-year-old father of three speaks about secondary education of two of his daughters – educated in Italy since the early years of primary school.

*The older one finished hairdressing school. She had to finish some school – but her passion is photography. The younger one also started hairdressing school, she wants to become a beautician. She would like to go to Milan and become a TV make up artist. Speaking about the oldest one – I persuaded her to stay in school, that she should because she’s smart.* (Piotr, IT)

Neither Piotr nor his wife have higher education, they work as social service assistants. When he talks about his daughters’ ambitions, education is seen rather as a necessity than as a way of personal development. Vocational secondary school was chosen by both daughters, higher studies are not mentioned. Daria enrolled her son at a university, but he dropped out even before the first exams.

*Soon he resigned, he said it was because he didn’t speak Italian.* (Daria, IT)

It seems that from the perspective of parents without a higher education diploma, not going to university is not a problem. On the other hand, Irena left her daughter – a student of engineering – in Poland and is convinced that she should not come to Italy to waste her human capital.

*Here you can only choose between the jobs of a waitress, cleaner or old aged person's carer. It is not with this aim in mind that people in Poland study, finish difficult studies, and then come here, you know.* (Irena, IT)

Lucyna, a self-employed beautician without higher education, has a positive opinion about the education offered to young people in the UK.

*You don't have to finish studies. They direct you to a course and you become a hairdresser or a beautician after it. There are many opportunities.* (Lucyna, UK)

She appreciates the fact that a short course is enough to get professional qualifications and that there are many opportunities for young people without a degree. Such opportunities may be a relief for a parent after leaving Poland, where recently the majority of employers require a Master's degree and at the same time, due to the emergence of many low quality private higher education institutions, almost all young people study and the value of the diploma is decreasing.

## **6.5. Gendered division of responsibility for schooling**

Previous research has shown that it is the mother who is responsible for the decisions concerning school placement, no matter which of the parents arrived first in the new country (Ryan & Sales, 2013, p. 12) Visiting local schools may also be a part of the women's "reconnaissance" before moving to the UK, in these initial contacts often other, English speaking women, are of help to the newcomer (White, 2010b).

In the case of Henryk and Helena, it was Helena who put the effort into getting information. Partly, it was because she was at home with the children until the older one went to school. In addition, she has higher education, did extra courses in the UK and is herself a volunteer teacher at a Polish Saturday school. In this couple there are plenty of objective reasons as to why the decision was her task. However, in other couples the mothers' responsibility was not so straightforward.

Patrycja arrived in England a year after her husband. Although she spoke no English at the beginning, she tried to cope with the school application process with the help of Polish acquaintances.

*Somebody told me she could already go to school, which surprised me a lot. I had a neighbour whose daughter was 4 and attended school. So I asked her to take me with her and show me where the school was, help me get some information. I got the application form. Another person arrived, helped me to translate it. Somebody helped me to fill in the questionnaire, I just wrote down what they told me. With another person I went to the office to submit the application (...) I always had to take somebody with me who spoke English. Sometimes it was a person who didn't speak well and didn't understand everything and because of that there were sometimes misunderstandings.*

*(Patrycja, UK)*

Patrycja's husband had prepared nothing for the arrival of his family, and schooling was just one of the problems she dealt with on her own. Due to lack of knowledge of English she had to rely completely on other immigrants. The neighbour was a woman, the other persons are unknown (Patrycja used the word "person" which even in Polish doesn't allow to determine gender), it can only be assumed these were other mothers, with more free time than men.

Dorota's husband arrived in the UK a few months earlier than his family. He arrived in May, while the school recruitment procedure had started in January, with the deadline for application in mid February. Yet he has done nothing to find a school for his children. When Dorota arrived, she had to contact the local education authorities.

*When I arrived in July, the first thing I did was go to the school. We happen to have a school very close, in the next street. I went there straight away. I was told they would not accept applications for the higher grades (like the second one where my eldest would go), only to the preschool – so my second son was eligible. They gave me a form and told to proceed through the council. I went to the council the very same day, took more forms from them and filled them in counting on a place to appear somewhere. Sometimes you have to wait many months for a place. We succeeded very quickly, only afterwards I learnt that somebody had moved out and had taken their child from this school before the summer holidays, around the time when I applied in the council. [...] So we were lucky with this school. It is a small local school, there are bigger ones near us, with two or three times more students. This one had been my number one choice where I had wanted him to be accepted, and with the younger son I didn't know he should already go to school, only a*

*lady from the school informed me that I had to apply for a place for him too.*

*(Dorota, UK)*

Dorota admits she was lucky to actually find a place available in a nearby school she liked the most, simply because another family moved away. Her incomplete knowledge of the system and late application did not result in her son being put in an unsatisfactory or remote school. As a newcomer, she was less concerned with the school placement procedure than, for example, Barbara and Borys, who for many months could observe their neighbours' and colleagues' preoccupation and problems. In the interview Borys tries to present a lot of concern about the school. Interestingly, his wife partly confirmed his role, using the plural forms (we, us), but partly reveals that she feels that the task had been left to her:

*Barbara: It is important for us. [...] We want him to attend a public school. I will choose a school with a good OFSTED report, one that has an “outstanding” mark for the care for the child criterion, but also one with good teaching results. According to my choice-*

*Borys: Our choice*

*Barbara: So far, you haven't got engaged in the process.[...]*

*(Barbara and Borys, UK)*

## 6.6. Conclusions

Due to differences in the age structure between the Polish citizens residing in Italy and in the UK, the interviewees in Great Britain had more experience with early education and primary school placement, while those who settled in Italy had either very small children or teenagers in or past secondary schools. The parents were not fully aware of the British school system, which resulted in learning only upon arrival that a teenager cannot be easily placed in a British secondary school or that a preschooler should already be subject to school placement procedure. However, as in my sample most children were born in England rather than brought from Poland, the problem was less pronounced than in earlier research by (Ryan & Sales, 2013; Sales, et al., 2010).

Choosing a school for one's offspring is an important decision to be made, usually several months before the actual starting of the school by the child. The quality of the



school has an impact on the residence of the families, either by encouraging them to move to a better-served area or by stopping them from moving to another region with an unknown school. On the other hand, families with children often wait for the end of the school year at home and arrive in the UK in the summer, past the official deadlines of the school application process, potentially undermining the child's chances of getting into a good institution.

Once started, school is an important link to the host society, deterring family's return migration. As it is commonly believed in Western cultures that children need stability, parents decide they should not move anymore during their education; with this respect the findings correspond to those of White (2011).

The problems connected to school are much less pronounced among the immigrants in Italy, as if less information and choice was put in their hands in this host country. On the other hand, in the UK the stake seems higher, as in Great Britain a successful student can eventually graduate from one of the world famous institutions, while the Italian diploma is regarded as little more valuable than the Polish one. Only in the UK is expensive private schooling discussed by the more affluent of the parents as one of the options. However, the interviewees with the moderate level of income or in couples where only one of the spouses had higher education, accept the local state funded schools and send their children there. The preference for Roman Catholic schools reported by other researchers (Lopez Rodriguez, 2010) has not been confirmed in this study.

Teenage migrant children are affected by the different ages of transition from one level of schooling to the next. Sometimes it means staying in Poland alone in order to complete school; in another case the child has to choose a new school (vocational) before completing lower secondary school – the middle level of the Polish system. Among the interviewees' children who migrated at a sensitive age (past early school years) there are a few who completed secondary vocational school or dropped out of university quickly, one high school student and a university student with plans of going to graduate school. It is difficult to judge if they would have attained a higher educational level by staying in Poland. They are very young adults and it is impossible to assess if they face any of the disadvantages in the labour market that have been observed among adults who migrated as children (Böhlmark, 2009).

Sending children to Polish Saturday school is not a prominent phenomenon among the parents interviewed. However in one case in Italy, the availability of such Polish diaspora education has been crucial for the decision about bringing a child abroad, and not leaving him with relatives to complete school in Poland. Some parents talk about teaching children to write in Polish at home. One father was very concerned about losing a common cultural background with his son if he started schooling in the host country, and this was stated as an important reason for return migration. Otherwise, schools are assessed more from the perspective of the level of teaching, not national identity or the values passed on to the students. A belief in the high level of teaching in Poland could also lead to return migration. However, once children start school in the host country, the parents insist on continuity and avoid further moves.

Finally, it has to be underscored that school choice is predominantly the mothers' responsibility. Only three of the interviewed fathers (all of them with higher education) expressed any opinions about schools. This can be explained partly by the fact that economically inactive mothers have more time to devote to gathering information, following the application procedure and contacting the school staff and local education administration.

## Chapter 7: Housing arrangements and plans of post-accession migrants

Housing has been an important theme in this research project as it is connected to many other analysed problems, above all decisions on settlement versus return to Poland, changing family size and needs and availability of various forms of tenure in different welfare regimes. Housing is a well established push factor for economic migration. Accumulating capital for independent housing for the family is among the main aims of the migration projects of Poles (Kaczmarczyk, 2008, p. 221). Maintaining a home in the country of origin or saving for it is an important link to the country of origin, which prevents migrants from concentrating on their living conditions in the country of residence. Budyta-Budzyńska (2011), employing Jończy's (2008) terms, highlighted the importance of the transformation of Polish migration to Iceland from "saving abroad" (in Polish "migracja dorobkowa": accumulating in order to improve one's living standard in the home country) into "earning abroad" (in Polish "migracja zarobkowa": earning in order to spend it on living in the country of immigration).

During temporary work abroad migrants rent flats from private individuals, often overcrowding them (Anghel, 2008, p. 794) or live in accommodation provided by their employer (or in the employer's house). Both of these solutions have proved functional in the context of irregular migration or irregular employment of migrants. The rental was often not registered with local or tax authorities (as immigrant tenants with irregular status would not inform the authorities). Providing accommodation on employer's premises is one of the means of controlling the immigrant worker also beyond working hours or of reducing the cost of migrant work by deducting arbitrarily set cost from the salary.

Freedom of movement within the EU has given intra-EU migrants the right to rent legally, to have legal protection based on rental contract or even under country specific conditions, to apply for housing provided by the authorities. In more popular areas migrants compete for council housing with native and extra-EU residents dependent on housing assistance. However, McGhee, Heath and Trevena (2013) have documented the phenomenon of Polish immigrants as a new group of clients ready to rent social housing of poor standard or in unpopular districts thus generating demand and income for otherwise empty flats, sometimes even renovating them. The flats which are unpopular among the

locals, according to the researchers, for the Polish immigrants constitute an improvement from their living conditions in the home country, especially if they had lived in multigenerational households.

In the same text, McGhee, Heath and Trevena (2013, p. 332) identify three dimensions of improvement of housing conditions among the Polish tenants:

- living quarters independent from relatives beyond the nuclear household;
- affordability of better quality housing, in terms of age of technical condition of the building;
- availability of more spacious housing.

On a more general level, if different welfare regimes have different mechanisms (market and financial sector, state support, family cooperation) of provision of housing (Allen, 2006), it is reasonable to expect that some of these mechanism are more or less favourable to immigrants wishing to establish themselves in the new country. It is therefore interesting if the migrants are aware of the options available for them.

The aim of this chapter is to answer the following questions:

- Of the variety of the forms of housing provision, which are used and why? Which forms lead to settlement and which, in turn, facilitate staying unattached and ready for further migration?
- Is state assistance for housing needs significant for households of immigrants residing in the UK and Italy? What is the role of extended family?
- In what ways does starting a family or the birth of children affect residential needs and choices?
- What are the motivations for buying property abroad?
- What arguments are used to explain keeping property abroad and investing in it, even at the expense of the standard of living in the country of settlement?

The chapter starts with a detailed analysis of one couple living in the UK, who have discussed most of these questions in their interview. It is followed by the analysis of each

of these issues taking into account differences between countries of residence, socio-economic status and stage of the lifecourse.

Henryk and Helena are a couple in their thirties with two children living in southern England. Upon migration they left their own flat in their hometown in Eastern Poland. This had been bought with Henryk's savings from his occasional labour migration to Germany. The couple speak of their first flat with much positive sentiment:

*The building was all new. We got it unfurnished and equipped it according to our needs: washing machine, fridge, furniture – everything was brand new. We left after 1-2 years of living there. But the flat was meant for us and we wanted to go back there.*

*(Helena, UK)*

Starting their life together in their own flat is unusual compared to many young families in Poland, who live with their parents due to a lack of savings for buying and the underdeveloped rental market. Henryk highlighted how difficult it was for them to earn for subsistence, even though they lived in their own flat and had no children at that time.

*Henryk: Our financial conditions were so so...*

*Helena: Despite having our own apartment, no children, and him working abroad once a year, to make ends meet.*

*Henryk: [...] I sat down and calculated our income and spendings and figured out that despite having our own flat and my mother's help we only had PLN 50 left at the end of the month.*

*(Helena and Henryk, UK)*

When they decided to migrate to the UK, one of the facilitating factors was the fact that Henryk's brother had moved there before, hence there was a place for temporary accommodation.

*My brother had been here for half a year, working in construction, so there was a place to stay.*

*(Henryk, UK)*

Their first dwellings in the UK were houseshares: rooms in houses rented with other immigrants. Living in a houseshare is very uncomfortable as many adult people are crowded in a living space originally designed for a family, the common space (especially

bathrooms and kitchen) is shared with strangers who often come and go by chance, and the aesthetic and technical standards of the accommodation is usually not high. Houseshares are characterised by a large turnover of tenants.

*Interviewer: Tell me please about the places you lived.*

*Helena: First a room in the house where his brother lived, a tiny room. Second, after a month, a **larger** room, away from his brother. Both were houseshares of 5 people. After one year we got an independent flat, to live alone, just like we had in Poland, without queues to the bathroom or to the kitchen.*

*Henryk: With just one colleague.*

*(Helena and Henryk, UK)*

As Helena explains, they moved twice in their first year of staying in the UK. It took them a year to regain (according to Henryk, not completely) the level of independence and comfort they had enjoyed in Poland. Climbing up the ladder of residential quality is very characteristic of almost all the interviewees in the UK, only some of the highly skilled specialists lived immediately in better quality dwelling.

Helena and Henryk were in the minority of my interviewees, who had experience of buying a home in the country of immigration. The decision to buy was supported with a set of pros and cons. Owning a flat and close family waiting in the country of origin were outweighed by the easy life in the UK, with less stress and fewer reasons to complain.

*Then we decided to buy a flat, when I was pregnant with our son. There was no point to lie to oneself that we would return soon, despite the flat in Poland. Money is not everything, there is longing for family, but living here is easier, better, with less pressure and complaints.*

*(Helena, UK)*

Elsewhere in their interview it is stated that their son was born in 2007, which proves that they had bought the property before the crisis in real estate and financial sectors erupted. Henryk sketches the financial frame of the transaction, which seems to have been rather liberal. It is worth noting that at that time it was possible to buy even without a large sum of savings.

*When you have to pay GBP 600-700 in rent, you can pay the same or less for your own. It was good to have some 10% plus money for lawyers etc. and the interest rate was lower then, but it [the savings for the upfront payment] was not obligatory. (Henryk, UK)*

The couple decided to take such a loan that they would be able to repay with just one salary, as Helena was going to stay at home with the child after giving birth. This limited them to buying a two-bedroom flat, instead of a larger property.

*The idea of buying a flat, not a house, resulted from our calculations. We assumed from the start that I would not return to work after maternity leave. We wanted to be sure, that Henryk could earn enough for it all and I would be with the children. (Helena, UK)*

## **7.1. Houseshares**

The experience of a houseshare is very common among the interviewees living in the UK. Other research has shown that also in Italy during temporary work abroad groups of migrants rent flats from private persons, often overcrowding them (Anghel, 2008, p. 794). The idea of a houseshare is very popular among Polish immigrants, as the newly arrived ones don't have capital and references required to rent a place in their own name. The houseshare is either owned by a landlord and rented as rooms or rented by the main tenant, who then decides to take a risk of renting out the remaining rooms to people without references or a deposit. When speaking about it the interviewees usually talked about very poor standard of the shared flats.

Sometimes the housesharing arrangements violate British regulations, for example when the principal tenant receives housing benefit and also sublets part of the house illegally. This was Oskar's experience in one of his accommodations.

*In a house next door there was a couple with a child and one guy. They asked me if I wanted to move in with them, as I 'seemed like a calm person'. This couple were getting a lot of benefits, she was 'a single mother'. When there was a visit from the council, our room had to be transformed into a child's room in 5 minutes. She got so many benefits, she decided not to risk it anymore [so we had to move out]. (Oskar, UK)*

Uncomfortable as it might be, sharing accommodation is economical. Therefore, upon starting a relationship with Eva, Oskar shared a house again. His friend stayed as a housemate, even when Oskar and Eva's child (Molly) was born.

*So we rented a house for us three: me, Eva and my friend. He lived with us until Molly was one, then he returned to Poland. Then we lived alone for some time. There was a room for Molly, but she slept with us, the room was empty so we could let it out.*

*(Oskar, UK)*

Eventually, Oskar's relationship broke apart and Eva moved out with their daughter. Oskar has found a new housemate and this time he referred not only to the economical factor but also expressed an emotional preference not to live alone.

*I don't know if I would like to live alone, I would feel wild.* *(Oskar, UK)*

One could argue that living in a houseshare is an institutionalised lifestyle among single migrants that has both economic and psychological roots or that it pertains, filling the void caused by lack of own family to live with. In contrast - all interviewees in long-term relationships who went through this stage speak of gaining, gradually, an independent accommodation.

It has to be underlined that housesharing is not limited to the poorest of the immigrants. It is also a common strategy among young professionals coming to big cities, such as London. The following passage is from Celina, who was brought to London by the company that used to employ her in Poland. Celina found her first accommodation through the colleague from the company she worked for.

*At first I moved in with my acquaintances, I simply rented a room and lived there for 8 months. A work colleague lived there too, with whom I later started a relationship – that's how it started. (...)I knew he was renting a room, in a flatshare – the topic simply came up in a conversation, and he offered: “We have a free room, as some couple broke up, there is a room, you can move in with us, no problem.* *(Celina, UK)*

Departing from the topic of finding a room with her colleague, Celina starts to list practical problems Poles usually encounter in the UK and at the same time presents herself as a person in a privileged situation, thanks to the support of her employer and of her flatmates. This passage is rich with terms associated with high social capital, especially



with trust: support, help, confirming, trustworthy. These guaranteed Celina an easy start of life in London - in contrast to other Poles, she had everything ready and provided in advance. Celina points out another important element pushing newly arrived immigrants into housesharing.

*You know, in the beginning of a stay in Great Britain, Poles have difficulties with opening a bank account, with renting a flat, with all the administrative issues related to the fact that they have no credit record or proof of address. Yet I had no such problem thanks to the fact that it turned out so naturally, and the company and colleagues helped me. One of the utility bills was written in my name, water or something, I don't remember, so I got the proof of address, and the company referred me to the bank, confirming that I am trustworthy, employed since the given date and that I am eligible for a bank account, so I had **absolutely no problem** with any of that, mostly because when I arrived here everything was ready, I had everything provided for at the moment of my move. (Celina, UK)*

## 7.2. Accommodation tied to employment

Covering the costs of renting a flat is one of common benefits enjoyed by internationally mobile professionals. Such is the situation of a few of the interviewees: Norbert's family in Italy and Gabriela's in the UK; Emilia lived in a hotel paid for by her employer for a few months after her arrival to Italy.

Norbert's residential history is exceptionally closely linked to his employers. To undertake his first job in the north of Poland, he moved to a new town, into a hotel for employees. When he and Natalia got married, they bought a flat using a preferential loan for employees of his company, not a bank loan. They furnished their flat with money earned during temporary labour migration: Norbert's company foreign contracts, Natalia's seasonal work in Germany, where she resided with her relatives. Subsequently, Norbert got a job in Italy, where they moved to a flat paid for by his employer.

*We took this flat here – the company paid for it, I only covered the utility bills. I would not have been able to pay for it myself as the costs of flats here are really high.*

*(Norbert, IT)*

One of the aims of taking a work contract abroad was to earn money to pay off the loan for the flat in Poland. The fulfilment of this aim depended on the exchange rate of the Euro to the Polish zloty and in some months Norbert was in doubt about the economic side of this plan.

*I depend here on the exchange rate between the Euro and Polish zloty. At times when the Euro was really low in Poland I was wondering whether the financial factor, which had been decisive for my migration, was still there.* (Norbert, IT)

And further in the interview, when his wife joined in:

*Norbert: First everything seemed cheap.*

*Natalia: Then we were hit by the reality. Regular bills to pay here. We paid off the loan in Poland.*

*Norbert: But I don't earn little and **without any problem** I can support the family and in addition there is the 10,000 Euro [annually] housing grant.*

*Natalia: The salary was also good, 5 years ago.*

*Norbert: At first it was 3-4 times the Polish salary. The level was fixed, with a contract for an unlimited time.* (Natalia and Norbert, IT)

At the time of the interview, Norbert and Natalia were packing to return to Poland, for a variety of reasons, starting with Norbert's need of a new professional challenge, good prospects in his business in Poland, and the school age of their elder son. They were to return to their own flat in the town of Norbert's previous employer, but did not exclude the possibility of further migration in Poland, if necessary for job-related reasons.

Gabriela, a single professional who had a two-year-long contract at a London division of her multinational company, received complex assistance with her accommodation, from real estate agent's and moving services to covering her rent. Her account of moving to London repeats Celina's (previous section), in mentioning company's support and situating oneself in opposition to other immigrants who have problems; it didn't involve any co-residence or help from colleagues. She speaks of her housing situation in the language of a business deal between her employer and herself.

*Interviewer: Is the company going to pay for your flat in the future?*

*Gabriela: It depends on how good I am at negotiating, it depends on the competing candidates, whether the company will be ready to bear this extra cost [of choosing a candidate that wants to have the flat paid on the top of the salary] I do not think I would be willing to stay in London without this package.* (Gabriela, UK)

Although Gabriela's work contract with the company is for an unlimited time, the particular position within the company is assigned for a maximum of two years. This fixed period and the uncertainty about the future terms of her employment discourage her from making long-term plans about living in London.

A phenomenon that has a similar function as a company-paid flat for professionals, is accommodation on an employer's premises for less qualified staff. This arrangement was experienced by some of my interviewees in both of the studied host countries. An obvious example is that of live-in care workers – *badante*. Living and working in the same space is an interesting phenomenon in itself found in literature (e.g.(Lutz, 2008)). One of my interviewees describes the moment when she knew she could no longer live like that in words as if taken straight from Goffman's works ((1956 (1998)), cf. (Rosińska-Kordasiewicz (2005)):

*I had had enough of it: separation, living in somebody else's home, like an actress.* (Daria, IT)

Daria arrived in Italy as a *badante*, she has changed employers a few times until she was able to bring in her husband and sons. During some of the visits to Italy, Daria's family was allowed to stay with her in the employer's home. During others – they lived in a camping site. The family reunited when Daria's last employer, an elderly woman suffering from Alzheimer's disease, had to be transferred to a specialist institution due to the worsening of her condition. Daria took over the woman's flat, and rents it<sup>30</sup> and lives there with her family, an arrangement confirmed as well by another interviewee, husband of a former *badante* Daria draws interesting parallels between this flat and their family property – one floor in their family house in Poland.

*The elderly lady was alone here. We have adjusted it to 4 people by closing one of the doors, moving the furniture. (...) The flat is even similar to ours. In Poland I have*

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<sup>30</sup> The employer who had no descendants eventually died. It was not explained whether Daria rents the flat from some remote relatives of the person or from the administration of the building.

*similar renovated old furniture – only here I don't have a garden. I have a cat here – as there.*

*(Daria, IT)*

Symbolically, Daria has taken over her former workplace and transformed into her home, decorated according to her preferences, suiting the needs of her family and reminding her of her home back in the country of origin. Living in a workplace is not an arrangement limited to domestic workers, but is also found in trade and services. Gustaw and his wife rented a flat above the workshop where he was employed in Northern Italy. Roman, who worked in the British hospitality industry for a few years, lived in the hotel for much of the time he was employed by the hotel chain. There was little separation between work and private life; after his workday was over, he would often join his colleagues in the hotel bar. Each change of work meant a move for him. Hence, in six years he has lived in four different regions and at even more addresses.

### **7.3. Attitudes to the quality of housing**

The attitudes to the quality of housing expressed by the interviewees were differentiated along socio-economic status and family status. The criteria ran from style and furniture, through to the size of the flat and garden, ending with the assessment of the district in which it was located.

Highly skilled professionals talk about the quality of the district, pointing on the one hand to the time needed to get to work, and on the other to the calmness of the district, in terms of noise, criminality or even openly - the absence of other, low status immigrants.

*My criteria for finding a home were the following: First the budget (...). Second – the distance, not to spend my free time commuting. Third – the district had to make me feel good. So that means no tourists or 24/7 buses. I have a one bedroom flat. The building is Victorian, or something like that, with white columns at the front. It is a detached house transformed into three flats. It is great that I can walk. In the morning I always walk to work. It is a 40 minutes walk through a park, I get fresh air and some movement. The British perceive it as a heroic deed or some alien behaviour. In addition, it is a British*

*district, without a dozen different languages on each corner, so I really feel I live in London, in Great Britain.* (Gabriela, UK)

A district that makes Gabriela feel good is not only quiet (without tourists and night buses), but also selective in terms of race and ethnicity. “Britishness”, combined with a short distance from the office means in fact an upper class environment inhabited by the privileged members of the bourgeoisie. This does not necessarily mean that Gabriela’s accommodation is luxurious, but that her neighbours are not below her own socio-economic status.

For dual earner childless couples a modern apartment, sometimes a loft (type of a flat explicitly mentioned also by another interviewee in a dual earner professional couple living in London), seems to be a desirable home.

*It was something amazing. A **tiny, but beautiful** apartment, on the sixth floor, in the New York style I would say, in [another district], - - we had a beautiful view, enormous windows. Everything was brand new and so cool. We spent the first month buying furniture. It was like making our nest [smiling]* (Celina, UK)

When the child was born, the “nest” turned out to be too small. Celina and her family rented a house with a garden, which is a “typical” choice as another couple described it.

*It was very typical, a ground floor flat in a terraced house, 2 bedrooms, a small garden.* (Borys, UK)

Families with small children naturally paid attention to the proximity of the school (the chosen school to apply to in the future or the current one to avoid transferring the child (see chapter 6) and safety of the environment.

*The [area] is clean, safe, there are many playgrounds. I often see mothers taking their children to school on bicycle, going through the city centre. In [my home town] it would have been impossible.* Ola (IT)

Migration does not always bring the improvement of housing conditions, especially as the standard and style of residential buildings differs between countries. One example might be Irena, interviewed in Italy, who criticised the apartments they rented in Italy, for

being damp and poorly isolated from weather conditions. Lucyna, in the UK, saw both positive and negative sides to her new home in a small English town, compared to the house they owned in Poland:

*Our friends come here and say we live like MrBean [laughing] In Poland we have 7 rooms, 3 bathrooms, some 320 square meters. Here the house is well below 100 square metres, 3 bedrooms, one bathroom and a garden, a big one as for England. In Poland it would have been called a patio, but here it is a large garden. But it is all just a matter of getting used to. And I have less cleaning here [laughing] (Lucyna, UK)*

In contrast to the dimensions identified by McGhee, et al. (2013, p. 332), these women have not perceived their new homes as improvement, which might have been due to their rather good status in Poland and their age: being around 40 at migration they had already accumulated property in Poland.

#### **7.4. Women's approaches to housing quality and welfare support for housing**

When men are the first from a household to migrate, wife and children arrive to the accommodation arranged by the pioneer. According to White (2010b), women often pay visits to their husbands in order to assess the living conditions, the area and what it offered. These visits influence decision making regarding re-unification of the household abroad. Some women were positively surprised, other - shocked upon seeing the accommodation chosen by their husbands while they were alone in the UK. Sometimes, only the arrival of a spouse and children can push the lead migrant to move out of shared accommodation. It is quite understandable that women who spend more time at home, especially with small children, have different expectations towards their home than men. Female migrants are also more active as regards turning to social assistance, thus providing income to the household even if they don't earn any salary from work. Such active role of women, their transformation into "home managers" has been observed before by Pustulka (2010).

Among my interviewees such a process of a woman taking over the control over housing and arranging ways of its improvement could be observed in the case of Patrycja. When her and her husband found themselves in a difficult situation in Poland, unemployed, in debt, living with her parents-in-law, their way of escaping the problems

was going to work to the UK. First, Patrycja's husband migrated together with her uncle, she joined in with the children after giving birth in Poland.

When asked for details of their first accommodation in the UK, she states:

*At first they [husband and uncle] lived together. He was supposed to find a room for us [the family].* (Patrycja, UK)

She does not criticise her husband in an open, angry or detailed way. She summed up the situation of the male part of her family by simply referring to a stereotype:

*They lead the life of single men.* (Patrycja, UK)

From her statements, it can be inferred that he failed to find a suitable place for a family, to prepare the ground for the reunification. Immediately upon arrival, Patrycja took care of it herself and found a room for the family (without the relative). It is also her, unsatisfied with the conditions, who initiates another moves.

*We moved there on our first day of staying here. It was so fast, just for one week. I asked the landlord, Polish, for help. We moved to a new room for 11 months. (...) After Christmas the savings for the deposit were ready, and in February we moved again. We could have moved in the autumn, but it made no sense as we planned to go for Christmas for 6 weeks. [Coming back to the earlier stage] The expectations about the new room were the following: not on an upper floor, close to the kitchen, quiet floors – these were the disadvantages of our first room. He [the landlord] moved us to a large room in a bungalow. I was consistently looking for a place where we could live **alone**. I looked on the Internet for a one bedroom flat, as we wanted to pay as little rent as possible. The council tax, the bills – it was unknown. We live close to the school, we have a garden – it's fantastic! You go through the living room to enter the kitchen, but we are alone, with no strangers.* (Patrycja, UK)

Although it was her first stay abroad and she initially spoke no English, she was more active towards providing satisfactory accommodation for her family than her husband – who had arrived over a year earlier. Similar to the issue of school choice described in chapter 6, housing seems to be another female responsibility in married couples. Patrycja describes home as the sphere in which she wants to feel on her own and which she wants to shape herself.

*This is our first flat, it is tiny, but...when one moves from a room [in a shared flat] I am head over heels anyway.*

*I wanted an unfurnished one, to arrange it my way.*

*There was a strategy of home making, at first we slept on the floor, planning to furnish it once we got housing benefit. But we arranged it earlier.* (Patrycja, UK)

The pace of moves of this family was partly thanks to the welfare benefits from the British state. The crucial moments mentioned were: first, the arrival of the child benefit, second, the housing benefit. On the other hand, Patrycja also hints that they actually saved enough money for the deposit or furnishing the flat earlier than expected, which may be evidence of their resourcefulness. The moves are sometimes delayed by prolonged visits to Poland: they keep a cheaper home when they are away and move after coming back. The benefits, combined with the husband's earnings, allow the family to live more comfortably than they could have imagined in Poland.

*In Poland even renting a flat was unrealistic. (...) Here you can think of good living conditions, in Poland we couldn't afford to have only him work and me stay with the children.* (Patrycja, UK)

The financial security her family enjoys allows Patrycja to make plans for the future.

*We will be moving. The plan is to get a three-bedroom house. If pressed we could move now, but we want to go to Poland for a month in the summer, arrange a baptism there. So [we will move] instead when the situation becomes more stable. But the pace of change and perspectives are great.* (Patrycja, UK)

In comparison to the UK, living on one salary and renting a flat in Italy is a much less comfortable situation. A good example of this is Hubert and Halina, who live in the centre of one of the Italian cities with their only child. Just like Patrycja's family in England, they rent a one-bedroom flat, with the living room partly combined with the kitchen. However, their flat is very uncomfortable and dark. A ridiculously long corridor occupies a large part of the flat. The furniture is old and space is scarce. In my subjective opinion, their home was the least comfortable and most depressing among all the homes



I was invited into during the course of my fieldwork. The following is the section of the interview devoted to housing.

*One day, our son played on the balcony and he started to talk to a girl from the upper floor, also playing on the balcony. They made friends, now he can visit her every day, and our families have met. Her family, Italians, said they couldn't imagine that a family with a child lives in our flat. On the same space [sq m] as they have for themselves, on our floor there are 4 flats, all owned and rented out by one landlord. Initially I was ashamed to invite guests here, but first my friends told me "It is not your own flat, so you don't need to care". Second, it turned out that among the Italians there are also simple people, like us, who for example live in a one bedroom flat, 4 people sleep in one bedroom, they say it is hard for them, they pay the rent and there is nobody to help them buy one.*

*(Halina, IT)*

There are different reasons for assessing the flat as uncomfortable. Objectively, the comparison with the neighbours makes it evident that the flat is so badly planned and uncomfortable because it used to be a section of a larger apartment occupying a whole floor in an old *palazzo*<sup>31</sup>. The landlord divided the space into small apartments in order to maximise the profit from renting the space to four different tenants. On the other hand, finding a cheap flat in this central location is only possible because of such a second-rate offer. Halina's subjective assessment of her family's housing conditions improved when she learnt that in the host society there are also poor families who live in similar conditions. There is also the moment of distancing herself from the flat she occupies: by treating it as somebody else's property she is released from responsibility for the negative impression it makes. Indeed Halina has little place for the development of her family, even for improving the flat and adapting it to the family's needs:

*We cannot buy furniture here, first there is no place to put it, then if we find another furnished flat we won't be able to move these belongings.* *(Halina, IT)*

As it seems to them that they cannot improve this particular flat, an alternative is obvious: moving out. The following passage followed Halina's complaints quoted above.

*Hubert: We will keep looking for another flat.*

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<sup>31</sup> *Palazzo* is an Italian word for a large residential building in the historical centre of the city, once built for and occupied by aristocrats or rich bourgeoisie.

*Interviewer: And is there a chance of a communal one, like that of your friend with 3 children [a reference to someone they mentioned earlier]?*

*Hubert: You have to have more children to apply for a communal flat.*

*Halina: Our son's school is here in the centre, this is a limitation for looking for another flat. He has already been there for 2 years, it is hard to change his friends, although others do change, there are new children in the class.*

*Interviewer: Is there any social assistance for a family like you?*

*Hubert: I don't think there is. I work, I have an income every month. Whatever we ask for, for example when we had to pay more for school lunches, they say that we have an income, as I work.*

*(Halina and Hubert, IT)*

Hubert had found this flat after a few years of working in Italy, to prepare for family reunification. It is difficult to say why he chose to live in the city centre. However the family perceive themselves to be stuck there, as they don't want their son to have to change school. With their one salary and no social assistance they have little chance of finding anything more suitable in the historical city centre. In comparison to Patrycja who turned into a homemaker like the mothers described by Pustułka (2010), Halina and Hubert seem passive, unable to make the effort to improve their family's living conditions. Instead of a "great pace of change" there is stagnation. However it has to be underlined they have to rely upon themselves alone, as the Italian state does not support families like theirs.

## **7.5. Alternatives to private rental**

Among migrants living in the UK, private rental seems the most accessible strategy of housing provision. None of my interviewees had any experience of council housing – although it is mentioned in the Internet fora or when referring to a particular district of their towns. In turn, in Italy more varied forms of housing provision were described. One of the families had lived in a flat provided by a charity organisation, and later in one built by a local cooperative.

*My wife applied for a temporary flat – from a local charity organisation for people in need – for around EUR 100 per month. This flat was 35 sqm, one room, but it was fine, I don't complain. In the meantime she applied for a flat from a well-known local cooperative. Three years after our application (which was only for my wife and children – as without documents, I couldn't be listed there) we moved to a brand new block of flats, as first tenants. The flat is very comfortable, around 85 sqm with a terrace. (Piotr, IT)*

Another Polish migrant woman who married an Italian single father, occupied a council flat, where the rent is moderate and adjusted to the level of income in the household. She was comfortable with the cost of housing.

*He [husband] got the flat from a building society, it is paid according to family income: the ones who earn a lot pay EUR 1000 per month, us with my salary, his old age pension and two children, we pay EUR 300. Tenants can buy it from the society. It is new, quite large – now we are short of one room, but it is possible to switch to another flat within the society. (Sylwia, IT)*

In contrast, another Polish woman living in the very same city complained a lot about high rents and the limited availability of family-size flats for rent on the local real estate market.

*A flat consisting of a living room, kitchen, and one bedroom costs EUR 850 per month here, and for example my Italian friend – with higher education and 4 foreign languages – was earning EUR 1600 per month. (...) The problem lies in prices and availability. The city is also quite closed, not everyone will let to anyone<sup>32</sup>. The flats are small, it is difficult to find something for a family, the prices are too high compared to earnings. We are not eligible for a council flat – because our income is too high. (Ola, IT)*

Ola did not state her own or her husband's earnings, she used a figure of "a friend" to show how easily rented accommodation exceeds 50% of earnings in this city. The description of the flat – and probably its price – are likely to be Ola's own situation. In this one bedroom flat with a living room and open kitchen she lives with her husband, a school-

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<sup>32</sup> She's referring to unfriendly attitude of the locals towards newcomers. As she stated elsewhere "Here even somebody from Verona is like an *estracommunitario* [non-EU] and has to fight for his position."

aged child and an infant. It is possible that after paying the rent, this household is left with less income than Sylwia's family, living in a flat from a non-commercial building society.

In line with the perception of Italy as a state where family is important in providing for its members, another interesting example is Krystyna and her Italian husband – a couple who live in a part of the husband's parents' property. The couple moved there from another small house, also owned by the husband's parents. This former house is now rented out to a tenant from outside of the family, which shows how blurred the boundaries are between commercial rental and co-residence of extended family members.

## 7.6. Attitudes to homebuying

Home ownership is a desired state discussed in many interviews in the UK (less so in Italy, as it is costly and alternative forms of tenancy are available). The decision to buy a home is based on two conditions, or is preceded by making two arguments:

1. Resigning from the plans of quick return to the country of origin.
2. Calculating that buying is no more expensive than renting.

The moment they stop perceiving their stay in the UK as temporary, the interviewees prefer to pay the monthly rate of a mortgage loan than pay out rent of a comparable value, ownership is perceived as a more desirable situation than tenancy.

Sometimes the decision to buy a property is postponed because of other more urgent events (like the arrival of a child) or plans (e.g. a change of job, studies). For example, Celina speaks of how she and her husband had planned to buy a house but had to postpone it due to unexpected pregnancy and limited income, as her husband gave up his position to take care of their daughter.

*We want to buy a house, so we have to save a certain amount for the deposit. Now there are some changes in this field and I've heard you only have to have 5% deposit, but I would need to find out more, there are some new regulations [sighs] and we plan to buy a house within the next two years, more or less, here in the UK. And then we can think*

*about having a second child, but not earlier. We had wanted to buy a flat earlier, but as we happened to become parents, we had to give up something, he gave up his job – so we had to postpone buying a flat...* (Celina, UK)

Adam is thirty years old and cohabits with his partner, a non-EU national. He left Poland with unfinished studies but is now studying for his engineer's diploma. His partner has an undergraduate degree. Both of them would like to complete graduate studies with the assistance of their employers. Interestingly, their first shared flat was at the same time the premises of a company Adam started up with a colleague. They will postpone having children until after they have completed their studies and bought a flat.

Adam's approach to residential security draws upon his experience from his parental home. His parents unexpectedly had to move out from the council flat they had rented for decades. This experience influenced his perception of the importance of owning a home:

*After my parents' experience, with the termination of tenancy, I don't want to start a family without the feeling of residential security.* (Adam, UK)

He gives examples of his acquaintances and peers who have bought flats or got them from parents, and this gives them the independence he finds necessary before having children.

Another important issue is the size of Adam and his girlfriend's future flat, which according to him would have to be big enough to allow them to have a relative living with them to help with the baby. Anybody willing to help would have to live with them, as Adam doesn't have relatives in the UK.

Once an individual or couple decides to buy a property, they have to make a decision affecting their long-term finances. Situations like Sandra's, whose parents were successful entrepreneurs in Poland and simply bought a flat for her in the UK in cash, are truly exceptional. In the case of the couple from the case study that opened this chapter, Henryk and Helena's decision can be contrasted with another couple, Iwona and Igor, both in their 30s, who have remained a dual-earner household in order to afford a house.

*Igor had been getting information about buying some time earlier, and he said that with two full-time salaries we can easily get a mortgage. (...) If only one of us was*

*working, we wouldn't have got the mortgage, that's why we have kept two full time jobs, even with children.* (Iwona, UK)

In addition, Iwona gives an account of how the financial crisis affected the availability of mortgage loans to those who made the decision of buying after 2008.

*[In 2007] When I was pregnant for the first time he [husband] said it would be nice to buy but he was also thinking about return to Poland. Then he read a lot on the Internet, asked in banks. The rules have changed in the meantime, 5 years ago our friends bought a flat with no deposit, then the bank started to ask for 5-6%. When we had to pay for the nursery [for two children] it was difficult to set anything aside. So when our son started school we thought we had to buy now.* (Iwona, UK)

Ownership allows the interviewees to make statements about the future plans concerning their property.

*We thought about buying a small home needing renovation then selling it to make a profit.* (Iwona, UK)

*Interviewer: Tell me about your plans for the future.*

*Henryk: Maybe a second flat, to leave one to each child?*

*Helena: We don't want to change our flat, only to get rid of the mortgage and buy another one to leave something for the children. We have a flat in Poland, in our old age we could live there for a few months and come here for some of the time, maybe one of them will let us stay?* (Helena and Henryk, UK)

It can be seen that real estate is treated as an investment in the middle- (Iwona) or long-term perspective (Helena): the former assumes resale, while the latter envisages keeping the flat for the next generation.

## **7.7. Decisions concerning homes left in Poland**

Some migrants maintain homes; thus they have to make twice the number of decisions and investment concerning places to live and/or real estate properties. Housing needs can be factor for labour migration, as investment in independent housing for the

family (buying, building, adapting a section of an existing house, renovating) has been named among the main aims of the migration projects of Poles (Kaczmarczyk, 2008, p. 221). Migrants differ in their attitudes towards properties left in the country of origin, some still invest in them, some keep them for sentimental reasons, others count on selling them in order to get capital towards buying in the country of current residence. When income from temporary labour migration is used for housing investment in the country of origin, the investment is not used when the migrants eventually remain abroad. Piotr and his wife participated in seasonal migration for harvesting fruit, at some point the wife started to work as a badante and after a few years the family reunited in Italy. The house built or renovated thanks to temporary migration is now a problem that has to be taken care of by a non-migrant relative.

*The house had been ready but it was left unattended. Now my father-in-law cares for it (...) My father-in-law got divorced and moved in, so we can be sure the house won't be looted.*

*(Piotr IT)*

Highly skilled professionals, who earned good incomes both in Poland and after earlier periods of migration, keep real estates in Poland. still thinking about moving back in there or treating it as long-term investment.

*Interviewer: Do you think about getting your own home?*

*Gabriela: I have one, on mortgage, in Poland. I bought it thinking I will live there with my husband, my fiancé at that time. I let it out now.*

*(Gabriela, UK)*

A striking example of the financial and emotional costs of maintaining property in Poland comes from Ola, who is renovating a property transferred to her by her grandmother, the family home. Despite complaining about the high costs of renting a flat in Italy, Ola and her husband have taken a loan to invest in the house in Poland.

*I was raised by my grandmother in a detached house (my mother lives with her second husband). It was my home, now it is ours – because we got involved in renovating it. Last summer we were there, renovating it – the bank, the construction workers, it was too much for me. (...) I am going [to Poland] for the next phase of renovation. My husband is not aware of what these construction workers have done there. It hit me really hard,*

*discouraging me from returning to Poland. The loan is not high in relation to our wages and it is only for 15 years. I hope we will pay it off in 2 years.* (Ola, IT)

Sometimes, the migrants don't plan to keep the property in Poland, but simply cannot sell it in the current condition of the real estate market.

*Lucyna: We want to buy a house, we keep waiting for the Polish one to sell, but it is hard to sell. We have to have a deposit.*

*Interviewer: For how long have you been trying to sell the Polish house?*

*Lucyna: Since the beginning. For 7 years.* (Lucyna, UK)

In Lucyna and her husband's situation, time is running fast. They are over 40, and they will only get a mortgage loan for the number of years left to retirement, which would mean much higher monthly payments than a younger couple would get. Selling the house in Poland is their only way of getting a large amount of money for the deposit.

## **7.8. Conclusions**

The institutional context of finding accommodation and financing it is different in the two case countries. Some of these mechanisms are more and some are less friendly to immigrants wishing to establish themselves in the new country. In the UK, housing is provided mostly by the market: rented out from private landlords and bought on the real estate market. Council housing is an option for the poorest, but the competition for it is high. However, the families with limited income can count on quite generous housing benefits and reduction in council tax through which the state reduces the cost of private rental. This came up frequently in the interviews, especially regarding the way the immigrants progressed into higher quality and better-furnished accommodation. The financing of buying through bank loans is well developed, and until the economic crisis was quite easy to obtain. In recent years, the large deposit required has been a barrier for potential buyers. This is reflected in the analysed interviews. The immigrants living in the UK often talked about home buying. Some of them have achieved it, others are planning it – analysing how much they can save for the deposit and what monthly payment they could manage.



In Italy, there is much less state assistance reducing the costs of the rent. The availability of cheaper housing, provided by non-profit organisations or building societies varies between regions. Where it is not developed, it is assumed that the support comes from families. Also buying or building is in principle assisted by extended family (Allen, 2006). This puts immigrant households in a more difficult position; immigrants married to an Italian might fare better. The examples of housing provided by the non-profit organisations all come from Northern Italy, while in the centre immigrants experienced only private rental and saw no source of assistance available to them. Interestingly, some immigrants were assisted by the families of the persons they had taken care of as domestic workers.

The accommodation tied to employment does not encourage thinking of settlement. In the short-term perspective it makes arrival to a new country easier, helping to pass the barriers to entry such as lack of references or credit history. For the migrants who received such assistance it made their move significantly different from the other immigrants who have problems in the beginning. However in the long term, company assistance insulates immigrants from the real costs of living, making staying in the host country unimaginable without the housing grant from the employer. In poorly paid jobs, the accommodation provided by the employer is changed with the job, again providing no long-term stability. In contrast, housing chosen with the family's welfare in mind gives longer perspectives and encourages settlement.

The stories of migration often involve a series of improvements in housing standard. This improvement is achieved with time (probably - accumulation of savings), and also tightly connected to the birth of children. Women who managed to improve their homes speak of it with pride, giving examples of resourcefulness in acquiring furniture and decorating the interiors. Some migrants highlight that living independently was not affordable to them in Poland or at least would have required more years of saving. Others have a more ambiguous situation, as they have property in Poland, invest in it, but live abroad in more modest flats or paying high rents due to marriage or better work conditions.



## **Chapter 8. Experiences and future plans of Polish migrants in the EU in an intergenerational perspective**

Migrants are not rootless individuals moving freely in space. On the contrary, they often leave close relatives, especially aging parents, in their country of origin. The emotional bonds and cultural norms regarding relations between close relatives separated by migration have been subject to in-depth research (Loretta Baldassar, 2008a, 2008b; Evergeti & Ryan, 2011; Zontini, 2006). These studies have documented such practices as visits, staying in touch via modern means of communication, sending gifts, sustaining affection helped by objects bringing in memories. The emotional side of caring at a distance is the feeling of obligation and guilt if one does not satisfy internalised or others expectations and “emotional blackmail” used against the migrant (Zontini, 2006, p. 340).

Migration of adult offspring can have a negative impact on the lives of their parents if it results in depriving them of assistance in everyday life, especially if personal assistance is required. have shown that the migrant’s sense of obligation to care for the elderly parents is affected by the level of care provided by the state and by the expectations from family members. When the persons in need are under reliable care, the feeling of guilt for not-being-there is lower (Loretha Baldassar, et al., 2007); however, the non-mobile relatives, particularly sibling can exert much pressure on the migrant to actually come and provide care in person, at least for some time (Zontini, 2006). Yet, migration also has the potential of producing innovative behaviours (ways of assisting and maintaining family ties) with positive impacts on the lives of non-mobile family members, for example giving them incentive to learn to use new communication technology.

Migrants in reproductive age also move with their offspring or give birth to new generations in the host country. This aspect is very important in the long-term perspective of ageing European societies. Whereas labour migration responds to the problems of aging and lacking labour force in a short perspective, in the longer term it can produce even more pensioners. However, the settlement of migrants with children and the birth of the second generation of migrant origin, is a rejuvenating factor for the receiving society.

Legal norms, social policy instruments, and socially institutionalised behaviours characteristic for nation states provide a context for the decisions of families affected by migration. Saraceno & Keck (2010) propose a conceptual framework for the analysis of

intergenerational obligations and the degree of state's intervention in this domain. These include:

1. Familialism by default, with no public support or alternative to family care.
2. Supported familialism, where state transfers such as paid leaves and tax credits support specific family members in their caring obligations.
3. De-familialisation, where through individual social rights the dependence on and responsibility of family members is reduced.

Basing on the examination of legal frameworks and social policies the authors tried to detect groups of countries with similar solutions. Although there were no clearly identifiable regimes, the analysis has shown, with respect to the countries included in this dissertation, that Poland and Italy both present a high level of unsupported familialism, while the UK has a high degree of de-familialisation (Saraceno & Keck, 2010, pp. 692-693).

The analysis of intergenerational transfers within families based on SHARE<sup>33</sup> data (Albertini, et al., 2007) shows that the patterns of providing material and social assistance to family members from different generations follow the geography of welfare regimes (Nordic, Continental, Southern): in Nordic countries the likelihood of providing support is high, but amounts of money or time given are low, while in the opposite Southern European group the likelihood is lower, while the intensity of support, once it occurs, is higher.

In the Polish society helping the elderly and looking after small children is, according to the prevailing social expectations, a duty of family members. According to the SHARE survey, Poland (with the score of 75%) was among the countries where the largest share of respondents agreed with the statement that helping to look after small grandchildren is a grandparents' duty (Krzyżowski, 2011, p. 61). Regarding the provision of personal care for the elderly, almost half (47%) of SHARE respondents in Poland pointed to the members of the family as mainly or totally responsible (Krzyżowski, 2011, p. 63). Such normative expectations of the sending society create a lot of tension for migrants and their non-mobile family members. If grandchildren are born and/or raised abroad, grandparents can feel deprived of the opportunity to spend time with the

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<sup>33</sup> Survey of Health Ageing and Retirement in Europe, financed by the European Commission, conducted regularly since 2004. Albertini, Kohli and Vogel (2007) analyse the first wave of 2004, while Krzyżowski (2011) summarized below - data collected in 2004 and 2007.

grandchildren, willing to help their adult children but at the same time not ready or willing to leave their homes and join their relatives in an unknown country. Sometimes a person to look after grandchildren is needed only occasionally and while it would be easy for the grandparents to provide such help in Poland, it makes no sense for them to travel internationally on such occasions. If the migrant parents and small grandchildren reside in a country where the social expectation (and state's assumption) is that the parents can count on grandparents providing childcare, their situation is extremely difficult as the grandparents are far in the country of origin. On the other hand if elderly parents require personal assistance in Poland, their adult children violate the social norm if they stay abroad and don't provide assistance by themselves.

Of course the needs of the migrants and their family members differ with age. This results in the changing directions of flow of time and money or other forms of intergenerational assistance. In the study of Polish migrants in Iceland and their non-mobile parents Krzyżowski and Mucha (2012, pp. 203-204) have identified six models of families affected by migration:

1. A migrant without own family, no obligation towards own children, there might be reverse remittances: transfers from the non-mobile family of origin to the migrant adapting to the new country.
2. Lack of own family or obligations towards own children, sending remittances in cash or presents to the aging parents in the country of origin.
3. Migrants' obligations towards own children and at the same time assisting non-mobile parents through remittances. At the same time the grandparents help the migrant by providing care to the grandchildren in the country of origin or of residence (child-shifting across borders).
4. Caring both for own children and for aging parents, resulting in tensions; a typical sandwich generation<sup>34</sup>.
5. Caring and assisting own aging parents and own adult children through caring for the grandchildren in any of the countries (again child-shifting across borders).

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<sup>34</sup> The term 'sandwich generation' used after Grundy & Henretta (2006).

6. Lack of family obligations, strategy of dealing with one's own status as a person dependent on assistance.

These models identified in a snapshot of the population of migration-affected families can be also seen as stages changing along with the life course of the family members.

However, migration can result in an emergence of innovative ways of combining residence abroad with the cultural and social norms at home. According to the study on Polish immigrants in Iceland and their parents in Poland, the adult children invent other ways of participating in the assistance to their aging parents. Krzyżowski and Mucha (2012, p. 205), (Krzyżowski, 2013, p. 152) report first of all the sending of remittances directly to their parents or to the migrant's siblings who provide personal assistance. Other strategies include buying appliances that facilitate everyday life for the seniors, paying for medication and specialist medical care, financing more costly purchases for the grandparents' household, arranging seasonal work in Iceland for adult children of the caring sibling, inviting the carer for holidays. From the point of view of the sending society, such assistance serves as the fulfilment of the moral duty of taking care of the parents, apart from being evidence of migrant's financial success. Such financial assistance is available thanks to high wages in Iceland but also thanks to generous unemployment benefits. The workers who had worked for over a year can receive the benefit for a few years, the condition is not leaving the island, which prevents the migrants from travelling to Poland and assisting their parents personally (Krzyżowski & Mucha, 2012, p. 208). This strategy has emerged as a clash between the Polish society, with its norm of assisting family members, and the Icelandic welfare state, with its generous state transfers to the needy. It is interesting to look at how Polish migrants respond to similar situations in different countries – in this study Italy and the UK.

Regarding family assistance, Italians share a similar set of beliefs with the Poles. 79% of Italians aged over 50 felt assisting parents in looking after grandchildren is a grandparent's duty; 32% of respondents believed responsibility for assisting the elderly belonged mainly or totally to the family (Krzyżowski, 2011). Therefore in the combination of Poland and Italy one can expect that there is no conflict of values and behaviours and the only barrier to overcome in maintaining the intergenerational ties within the family are the cost of travel and the physical distance.

The United Kingdom did not participate in the SHARE study, so no data can be presented on the UK attitude to the role of grandparents in providing childcare to grandchildren. In more general terms, the International Social Survey 2012 (ISSP Research Group, 2014) allows to compare the attitudes to providing care to family members in Poland and in the UK (unfortunately, this project was not conducted in Italy). For the Polish respondents, the principal provider of care to children under school age should be family members (77%), followed by governmental institutions (14%). By comparison, among the British respondents family members were given as the principal source of childcare by 56% of interviewees and private (commercial) childcare providers ranked second (19%). As regards helping the elderly, 77% of Poles agreed or agreed strongly that adult children are an important source of help to elderly parents, only 58% of British respondents were in favour of that statement. When asked who should primarily provide everyday help to elderly persons 83% of the Poles answered that it should be the responsibility of family members, compared to 54% of the British. Interestingly, in the field of provision of help to the elderly the British respondents were much more in favour of the government taking this responsibility (37%), than when an analogous question concerned childcare (only 18%). Therefore the Polish immigrants settling in the UK, when deprived of family assistance, can find alternatives that are accepted and institutionalised in the British society and welfare system. Also, when they are far from their elderly parents, they can see in the UK that there are other ways of helping the elderly, not necessarily by their own physical presence. There may be a clash of the Polish values, especially of the expectations of the aging parents living in Poland, with the attitudes of the Poles modified by their residence among the British.

Asking the interviewees to produce narrative accounts was aimed at getting an account of changes over time. On the other hand, the interviews were concluded with open questions concerning the interviewees' plans for the future. This way the interviews provided – sometimes very rich – material on how the migrants situate themselves in their families of origin, in their current households, and in relation to their children's future adult lives.

The first part of the chapter is devoted to the assistance the migrants received (or the lack of it) from their parents in the initial period of their migration. It also situates the motivations for migration in the intergenerational context. The next section is devoted to the attitude and forms of support given by migrants to their aging parents. It is followed by

a discussion of how migrants' decisions concerning the present and future depend on their children. Finally, the ideas of the interviewed migrants for their own retirement are analysed.

### 8.1. Assistance to the young adults

In the initial phase of migration, family members from the sending country often help the migrants to turn their plans into action. Usually this takes the form of the non-mobile members giving or lending the migrants money for the high initial costs. However, if the migrant is very young, the parents may feel personally responsible for the safety and quality of life in the new location. Such was the case of Joanna, who at the time of the interview was 26 and employed in an advertising agency. She had been married for three years to a Polish national and was expecting her first baby. Joanna is the only child of an affluent family from Warsaw. She has always been interested in the visual arts and wanted to study at art school. Disappointed by what she saw at the open day of the Warsaw art academy, she turned to a famous London school, visited it, and realised it offered exactly what she expected from an art academy.

*I shared the idea with my parents. And my mother – she is a very open person – said “As you want to go there and I am afraid to let you go, I will go alone for a year or two to prepare the ground for you, so that you don’t arrive in unknown conditions. And once I am sure that everything is ok, I will return” And that’s what she has done.*

*(Joanna, UK)*

Joanna's mother, at around 50, left her job in Poland and moved to London. In total, the woman invested three years in preparing the ground and looking after her daughter in London.

*She was alone in the UK for a year. It was in 2004. She came to be here for a year alone. Then, despite the fact I lived with her only for a year, she also lived here alone for another year. She left only after she was sure that she didn't need to worry about me anymore, that she didn't need to stay here and felt she wanted to go back. So she was here for three years in total, starting in 2004 until 2007.*

*(Joanna, UK)*



In the interview with Joanna one can identify what criteria were decisive for her mother to feel confident about her daughter.

*During the first year, not even for the whole year, I lived with my mother, and then I met my future husband. My mother knows him as well. She had noticed we were coping very well. I also started to work part time each weekend and during the holidays, so I could support myself. So when I decided to move in with my future husband, my mum said “I can see you can take good care of yourself”.* (Joanna, UK)

Aspects that can be identified here are:

- starting a stable cohabiting relationship,
- supporting oneself through paid employment,
- moving to residence independent from parents.

These are the typical transitions on the path from youth to adulthood, the other two, which were not fulfilled in the case of Joanna at that time, are completing education and becoming a parent (Schizzerotto & Lucchini, 2004, p. 46).

If Joanna had seen her migration to the UK as an escape from the parental home or an adventure, she might have felt uneasy about or even rejected her mother’s supervision. Yet, her aim was education – in her view, a better education than she would have received in Poland – and her mother’s help secured achieving this aim. She evidently appreciates her mother’s involvement and points to it as an important factor in her success in the UK.

*So mum has prepared this whole base for me, to let me start [a new life] here. Not every parent would have made such a sacrifice. I don’t know how it would have turned out for me without her...* (Joanna, UK)

According to Joanna’s story, her mother was occupied not only with her daughter.

*She saw an advertisement from a school that was looking for an administrator, she got the job and stayed there for two years. She was very happy about this job and actually returning to Poland was painful for her, she was only returning because of a longing for home and her husband, but all the time she remembers her time in London and she likes to come back here. She stays in touch with many friends she had made here. In the meantime, she joined a Buddhist group here, got interested in it, attended special meetings – I also went with her twice, out of curiosity – and she is still in touch with these friends, members of this community: English, people from India, Japan, a mix. Somebody even visited her in*

Warsaw. Generally, she was satisfied with her job and then she decided it was time to go back, it was enough for her, she can always visit. I can see she liked it here.

(Joanna, UK)

Joanna's mother found new interests and friends during her stay abroad and a satisfying job quite different from the one she had in Poland. This period was not a painful sacrifice but a valuable new experience in her life.

*She has always told me that if she had known what she knows now, when she was 20, she wouldn't have thought twice, she would have got a passport and run away to England, as she sees herself more at home here than in Poland. Although from my perspective we lived on a good level. On the other hand I don't remember the 70s or 80s enough to say if it was good or bad then. She says that for the young people it is, not necessarily for the whole life, but to live an adventure, experience something else, something new. Maybe it is because she had no chance of going abroad at that time, now she appreciates it more, that you can go where you want, without limits.*

(Joanna, UK)

From this account it is evident that going to London to help her daughter in 2004 was at the same time grabbing an opportunity (created by the EU accession and opening of the British labour market for the new EU member states' citizens) she didn't have as a young person. There is a huge difference in the chances history has created for these two generations, however with her innovative decision, Joanna's mother managed in a way to turn back time and have her 'gap year' at an unusual stage in life.

While Joanna and her mother constituted a very singular case, more common strategies were observed among the interviewees. One of the common ways of assisting the migration of adult children can be lending money for the journey and renting a flat. This was the experience of Dorota's family. In Poland they had three children and since the birth of the second one Dorota was no longer working full time, so the family was struggling to survive on the husband's salary and his and Dorota's petty jobs. They decided to migrate very suddenly, in response to a proposal of a job. Due to the lack of a long-term preparatory period, the costs of travel for 5 persons and, in general, the family budget not allowing to set aside much savings, meant they didn't have money for renting a flat in UK.

*[My husband] arrived first, it was May 2011 – We wanted to reunite as soon as possible, not to live separately. The first savings weren't very big, we had to borrow some*

*money from the family to rent a flat here to be together as soon as possible. We came here on the 11th of July 2011, so two months after my husband.* (Dorota, UK)

Although Dorota's husband went to the UK to start a stable job immediately, in his profession (which later on, together with child benefit and child tax credit would allow him to support his family), he wasn't able to put aside money quickly enough to rent an independent flat and pay the deposit. Money borrowed from Dorota's relatives allowed the family to reunite very quickly, as soon as he found a suitable flat and the eldest child finished the school year in Poland.

Another way of helping young adults to emigrate is through access to the migratory network. Especially in the case of migrants settled in Italy it was quite a popular pattern to have a mother, or another female relative, who had worked in the same country earlier as a badante.

*My mother had been working here for 4-5 years, she arranged a job for me picking fruit. After a year, my wife and I went to do this fruit picking. We had two small girls: aged three and one. It was hard, especially for my wife, as she left the small one, so far only breastfed, with her own mother. After a year [...] my mother brought my wife here, first to work with her for an introductory period, then to work on her own [as a badante].*

(Piotr, IT)

*I have a cousin who has lived in Italy for over 20 years, maybe less, but a long time. We had little contact, as she lived here and such contact sometimes breaks down. At some point she came to Poland and visited us. My mom asked her how her life was, she asked about me [...] And my mother said 'It would be nice, if it was possible for Kryisia to go abroad', as this was the moment when everyone went either to England or to Ireland. I never even thought about it, we never talked about it – and yet my mother said that. Auntie heard that and said 'We'll see'. And at some point she calls me and says that there is work in the city where she is, a live-in job with some family, only, she said, I had to come here in two weeks.*

(Krystyna, IT)

In the last quotation, the mother's behaviour which surprised Krystyna ('*I never even thought about it, we never talked about it - and yet my mother said that.*') can be seen as grasping this opportunity (access to the Italian domestic labour market) and sending her only child abroad, as their town in Poland offered little prospects for the future.

## 8.2. Moving abroad to reduce intergenerational dependence

One of the causes of the emigration of young adults might actually be a wish to help parents by leaving, by becoming independent. An example of such a migrant was Adam, who left his parents' household in Poland because they were forced to leave their home and buy a new flat.

*My parents had to move out, because the council flat where our family had lived for decades, the building [where it was located] was restored to the pre-war owners. They had to buy a new flat fast, so when I emigrated, it allowed them to look for a smaller flat.*

*(Adam, UK)*

This was not the only reason; it can easily be imagined, that if Adam had been engaged and satisfied in other spheres of life he wouldn't have left Poland. Yet, he was disappointed with his faculty, he found out about a school in London in a domain that was his hobby, so he also wanted to have a break in his studies and try a different education path, potentially leading to a different career. However, when he sums up the reasons why he left at that particular moment, he gives lack of career prospects from his current education and his parents' situation as two equal causes.

*That was my motivation: lack of any special professional prospects after my university and the wish to ease the situation of my parents.*

*(Adam, UK)*

Sometimes close ties with relatives may be disadvantageous, and result in the wish to loosen the ties and create a safe distance. One of stereotypically difficult relations is the one with spouse's parents, especially living with the in-laws. Migration may be a way out of such a problematic arrangement.

Patrycja and her husband had very close ties with his parents before migration to the UK. Initially, they moved in with them because the father-in-law was seriously ill. Patrycja's husband decided to migrate only once his father had died.

Secondly, an important point of the story is the visit of a debt collector, when Patrycja learned about many short-term loans her husband had taken. One of the aims for which he had used the money, according to Patrycja, had been assistance to his parents.

*In these debts, there was a large share of his parents, his wish to assist them, and him being naïve enough to lend money to colleagues. He has not used the money for himself, but the burden of debt is on him.* (Patrycja, UK)

Last but not least, from the way Patrycja underlines her independence in UK one can see a contrast with the pre-migration period, when she had felt her relatives interfered in her motherhood.

*Another issue is that finally **nobody interfered** [smiling], which was very important, to be far from all those who were very keen to express their opinion. (...) One has to admit it was about distant relatives, because it is usually the family who like to interfere in the affairs of a young [nuclear] family or upbringing of the children. And now we enjoy peace, we do everything our way.* (Patrycja, UK)

### 8.3. Grandparents' assistance in caring for grandchildren living abroad

The most obvious way of assisting young adults after their migration is caring for small grandchildren, also by moving temporarily or permanently to the country of their residence. This was often observed by other researchers, not only in intra-European (Ryan, et al., 2009); (Moskal, 2011) but also in overseas migration (Nedelcu, 2007).

The interviewees in this study have not relied on such long-term childcare provided by grandparents, but their views add another perspective on that topic.

Oskar, although only 26 years old, has a four-year-old daughter. He had abandoned his studies and job in Poland and moved to the West of England to work in an unskilled job. There he met a Polish woman, slightly older than him, and very quickly they faced an unplanned pregnancy. Although initially the life of the young family went quite smoothly, after some time they quarrelled more and more and realised they hadn't known each other well enough before becoming parents. In addition, because one of them always had to stay with the baby, each of them started to go out alone and meet new people at parties. Eventually, Oskar's girlfriend found a new partner and moved out with her daughter, but Oskar remained involved in the upbringing of his child on a daily basis.

When he compares his own experience of early parenthood with other immigrant families in his milieu, he points to the presence of grandparents as a potentially positive factor for the young families.

*I know for example a Bulgarian couple who have a mother living with them on a permanent basis. Such [grand]parents not only take care of the grandchildren, but they also work. So first, there is care, second, when somebody has a stupid idea, they soothe conflicts, they can help. Although, some of them interfere and think they know better.*

*(Oskar, UK)*

In the light of his own past experience of a relationship falling apart due to a new relationship of one of the parents, grandparents can be helpful as they can take care of the baby and thus allow the young parents to invest some time and effort in their romantic relationship. In this way they can even help to save the couple, not only their finances.

Other parents, when prompted to speak about grandparents' help, give various reasons for why it is not used in their case. A complex situation is reported by Iwona, a 36-year-old mother of two.

*My parents have already used up their caring capacity. They had four of us, they are now retired. My dad says he likes to work in the garden. My mother says she hasn't got enough patience or imagination anymore. My mother-in-law is keen to come and live with us, but she has her partner and her own mother to take care for. We cannot be selfish when she has other family obligations. I know a family who live with their mother-in-law and she takes care of the child – but there is only one child.*

*(Iwona, UK)*

Iwona refers to the social norm of assistance between generations but underlines that it is not absolute. In the case of retired grandparents there are barriers such as old age and lack of strength. In comparison, a younger grandparent can experience conflicting obligations, a phenomenon referred to as a “sandwich generation” (Grundy & Henretta, 2006). Iwona states that her need for additional care for her children cannot outweigh the need to provide care for an elderly person in Poland. She claims to use grandparents' care only for short periods of time during school breaks. However, elsewhere Iwona mentions that her sister, a single mother of one school aged girl, used to leave her child in Poland for the whole summer. This proves that the same grandparents whom Iwona excuses from providing care to her offspring, devoted a lot of time to the child of their other daughter living in a more difficult situation (lone parent). This example shows that provision of care

to migrants' children by the grandparents is not an obvious solution, but an outcome of a set of obligations towards various relatives with different needs.

#### 8.4. Attitudes and assistance of the migrants towards their ageing parents

Geographical distance and rare face-to-face contact do not necessarily erode the emotional ties between adult offspring and their parents. In recent decades, contact using modern communication technologies (phone, and, increasingly, Skype and other Internet applications), has become very important for maintaining emotional ties between family members physically separated by migration (Loretta Baldassar, 2008b).

Patrycja, whose migration was presented above as an escape from negative family ties (mostly her husband's), as a migrant maintains a different type of relationship with her relatives in Poland; she talks to her mother over the Internet on a regular basis.

*I often have my morning coffee, chatting with my mother over Skype. One doesn't feel the distance. One of the children sometimes asks to "turn grandma on".*

*(Patrycja, UK)*

She travels to Poland when she has to (e.g. she mentions settling inheritance matters with her siblings), for seasonal or family holidays (e.g. the baptism of her youngest child) or when she feels she needs to.

*First of all, we want to go to Poland, in general now I feel I miss my family, which I haven't felt before, I guess I have become more sensitive after having this baby, so I feel this longing, this is why we are going to Poland for a month.*

*(Patrycja, UK)*

Evidence for maintaining emotional closeness can also be found in the account of Krystyna (introduced through her story of facing infertility in chapter 4) who was living in Italy with her Italian husband, in his parents' mansion. Krystyna's mother is divorced and the two women "only have each other". The strength of this bond is stressed by Krystyna.

*If I have a child one day, he will go there, to visit grandma, she will be here, she will be a part, she is a part of my life, I am the only child so it is normal.*

*(Krystyna IT)*

However, Krystyna due to being married to an Italian, treats Italy as her second home. She locates her future plans in Italy, which is very pronounced when she talks about potential naturalisation.

*I would like it a lot... as I have lived here for a long time, for many years. And this will be my future, I live here and I will live here. Therefore it would be the right thing to do.*  
(Krystyna IT)

Whereas Krystyna's attachment to her mother remains strong, visiting each other is not easy for practical reasons. She is employed in a shop owned by her Italian in-laws and she does not have a lot of free time. She only goes to Poland once a year, although she admits that it is rather her who should travel and not her mother.

*My mom visited me not long ago. She doesn't fly because she is afraid. By bus it is so long and uncomfortable, 24 hours, it is very tiring for her, so it's rather me who should... I miss her a lot.*  
(Krystyna, IT)

Also regarding the more distant future, Krystyna would prefer her mother to come to live with her in Italy once she retires. At the same time, in the light of her own migratory experience, she is very much aware of the difficulties and emotional costs her elderly mother would have to bear.

*There's a flat where my mom lives. I don't know what she will do with this flat in the future. I insisted a lot – my mom still works, I don't know if later she would like to. Me, I would very much like her to come to stay in Italy for ever, once she finishes work. It all depends... it is not so easy for a person who already has certain habits and is of a certain age, it is hard to change suddenly; it is a different matter when one is young. It doesn't depend on her, I would like it very much as I have only her, I wouldn't like her to be there alone, that's for sure. But I cannot force her. We'll see. I would like her to come very much. Later we'll look for a way, we'll find a small place for her, organise something. But it is a different climate, different environment, when she comes to me, she feels very uneasy, she doesn't speak the language, she feels as I felt in the beginning: misplaced.*

(Krystyna, IT)

The high emotional cost of separation is one side of the coin, the other is the practical advantages migration may bring to the non-mobile parents of migrants. One of the spheres affected, very important for the wellbeing of ageing parents, is healthcare. The above-mentioned study of Polish migrants in Iceland and their assistance to elderly parents



(Krzyżowski & Mucha, 2012) has shown that one of the ways of helping is paying for medicines or specialist treatment. The interviewees in Italy speak of another way of helping their elderly parents with their health problems: using free treatment provided by the Italian healthcare system. The below examples are provided by the Poles, over 40, living in Central Italy.

*I even took medicines for my mother, who was still in Poland then. Medicines for osteoporosis. I asked the doctor, saying that medicines in Poland are so expensive. And he prescribed the medicines for me and I sent them to Poland.* (Janina, IT)

*Daria: We brought my father-in-law for medical treatment here, for his eyes; he has to have injections into the eye, which in Poland cost PLN 1000 each. I transferred his health insurance to Italy, I registered him as a resident here, and he comes to have these injections. He has already received seven of them.*

*Daniel: And he can see, while he had a degenerative disease in one eye for years, then it started in another eye. Here the treatment is for free.*

*Daria: And he has been coming for the treatment for two years now. Recently they opened cheap flights between [a city near their home town in Poland] and [their city in Italy]. So it is cheap and convenient. And he doesn't want to be here with us, there is still my mother-in-law there. He comes, has an injection on the first day, a check-up on the second, and on the third day he goes back.* (Daria and Daniel, IT)

This means of abusing the Italian budget is facilitated by the European regulations on health insurance and by the relatively short distance and convenient travel between the countries. Even if the migrants do not want to sponsor expensive treatment in Poland, they use their migration capital (in the form of an address in Italy and the knowledge of the local health care system) to improve the wellbeing of their relatives.

When the parents become frail or seriously ill they may require everyday assistance. In the case of the non-mobile population, when a large share of elderly people and their adult children live very close to each other (Kohli, 1999, p. 84), (Krzyżowski, 2011, p. 67), such assistance can be provided relatively easily. However, when the children who have the filial duty of caring move abroad, the geographical distance creates additional difficulty. Fulfilling such caring obligations may require migration of the person needing care or return of the offspring. Convincing an elderly person to migrate is not an

easy task. One issue is the difficulty of adaptation of an elderly person to a new environment, described with a great deal of empathy by Krystyna. Another barrier is the ties to other family members remaining in the sending country. For example, Daria pointed out that her father-in-law did not agree to move permanently to Italy, as he still had his wife in Poland.

However, there are examples of the elderly people moving to join their adult offspring. Janina's mother, who has both of her daughters in Italy, eventually agreed to migrate to live close to them.

*Mom is here, she lives at my sister's. I am arranging the transfer of her social insurance from Poland to Italy. At first she wanted to go back to Poland but now she sees that here it is better for her regarding care. In Poland we had a flat on the third floor and she says she can no longer climb the stairs and here she has a lift. She feels well here, physically, she doesn't get ill. Here, without the low temperatures, the climate is milder for health, generally. There is a Polish church [where] she has found friends. She attends the church twice a week, on Fridays and on Sundays. She has found a rosary circle<sup>35</sup>, things of interest to her. She has Polish TV channels, Polsat, Trwam [laughing]. (Janina, IT)*

Janina presents a rich description of the elements that constitute a better life for her elderly mother. It is a combination of the advantages of living in Italy (healthcare, mild climate, a building with a lift) and the most important for her elements of the Polish culture that are available in Italy thanks to the well developed Polish Catholic missions for the diaspora and the modern communication technology (Polish church, fellow churchgoers, Polish television – one providing entertainment, the other – a religious channel).

Another way of assisting non-mobile family members, which was already introduced in the preceding chapter, is participating in the costs of maintenance or renovation of real estate in Poland. Daria and Daniel, a couple in their forties, after listing what they have managed to buy for their household in Italy, add:

*Daniel: And apart from that, we still help at home. The house has to be heated, it cannot stand without heating.*

*Daria: My dad is an old age pensioner. I gave him EUR 1,000 last winter to pay for it.*

*(Daria and Daniel, IT)*

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<sup>35</sup> A type of a praying group, very popular among elderly Polish women, for whom, especially in widowhood, Roman Catholic church and their parish are the locus of social contacts, regular activity and as a result – self-identity.

It has to be added that Daria and Daniel own one floor of this house; in this passage they frame their financial assistance as both taking care of the condition of their and helping the elderly father who has limited income. Another situation is investing in future (expected, promised) inheritance currently owned by an elderly relative (e.g. Ola, chapter 7.). Such transfers have a double function of assisting family members and investing in property, which the migrants may want to move back to or sell in future.

Assistance to ageing parents can also be a reason for planning return to the country of origin. A Polish couple living in the UK very quickly switched from the topic of friends and parents they visit in Poland during holidays, to their responsibility towards the parents when they require assistance in future.

*Borys: Each of us is the only child.*

*Barbara: If we had siblings, we could plan staying here forever. But as it is, in the back of our heads we have the necessity to come back one day and take care of our parents, to live with them or very close to them to assist them. We stick together and help them. Whenever somebody here asks us how long we will stay, we answer that we don't know.*

*(Barbara and Borys, UK)*

As the couple were attached to the norm of family members helping each other ('we stick together'), and they had no sibling to take up that role, they declared they were certain ('in the back of our heads we have the necessity') that one day they would return to Poland for this reason. Just like Krystyna, they were the only children and hence the only ones responsible for help. In contrast to her, they had formed no strong ties to the country of immigration, which made them feel more able to return in future. However, they have not discussed how their son, who was about to start school education in the UK, might in future be a barrier against their return to Poland.

## **8.5. Impact of linked lives on future plans of migrants**

Previous research shows that young children, even as young as six, are sometimes asked for their opinion about family re-unification abroad (Moskal, 2011, p. 40). With the passing time since the move to the new country or since being born there, the children may become so attached to the new environment that the parents have limited freedom of return

migration even if their initial aims have been fulfilled (Ackers & Stalford, 2008). The life projects of the parents are not necessarily in line with those of their offspring.

A good example of differing interests of members of different generations is Piotr's family. Piotr and his wife come from a small town in Eastern Poland. They both completed secondary vocational education and married relatively young. In the late 1990s, Piotr's small retail business stopped being profitable and in his own words they had so little money that his wife denied herself food to leave more for her small children and working husband. Their housing situation was also difficult, which they decided to change.

*We used to live in a small room at my mother's place, on 8 sqm and with my mother. We have decided to save money and buy a house for renovation in the suburbs, to move out and lead a peaceful life.* (Piotr, IT)

Piotr and his wife undertook temporary migration to Italy in order to save money for housing. After two seasons of work in Italian agriculture and then a few years of the wife's work as a live-in carer, their aim was fulfilled. However, lack of economic prospects in their region led to their re-unification in Italy, not in Poland.

*The house was ready, it was left initially unattended, now my father-in-law looks after it.* (Piotr, IT)

According to Piotr, he and his wife were keen to return to Poland permanently, although this seemed to be based primarily on emotions experienced during the visits in their hometown. However, Piotr would like to run his own business (he had unsuccessful attempts before), but a lack of savings and prospects in his town prevent him from returning.

*Each summer, when we are in Poland, we make the decision to return, and then nothing happens. The reason is money. If I won 200-300,000 I would return and start something on my own in Poland.* (Piotr, IT)

Apart from personal ambitions, Piotr is aware that during the time he and his wife were earning money in Italy, their daughters born in Poland have become attached to living in Italy.

*Another reason is that our daughters have friends here and we are stuck here because of them for another 5-6 years as they cannot be alone when they enter adult life.(...) For the time being we have to be here to keep an eye on them.* (Piotr, IT)

He defines this attachment by having friends, having an Italian mentality and professional plans located in Italy. As a parent he feels responsible for assisting his children in the transition to adult life. He notices the level of independence of the Italian youth is lower than that of his own generation. Therefore he feels the daughters require their parents' supervision.

The composition of Piotr's family is specific: he has two teenage daughters and a third, much younger daughter, born in Italy.

*If we only had the youngest one – we would return to Poland.* (Piotr, IT)

The age of the daughters means the period of intense parenting is prolonged for Piotr and his wife. By the time the older two leave the nest, the youngest one will also have become attached to Italy and may prevent the parents from returning for a few more years.

*I had moments of regretting departure. I thought it would have been better to come here for a short time, earn a lot before the introduction of the Euro, invest it in [home town]. Now we are so far into it, there are schools, it is harder to return.* (Piotr, IT)

The above passage illustrates well the dilemmas created by the linked lives of family members. From an individual perspective, Piotr realises that the best moment for return has already passed. The present perspective and the ties keeping him in Italy are at the individual level, which can be seen in him switching to the plural form ('we are so far into it').

Lucyna, a 42-year-old beautician living in a town in the east of England is another example of a parent who is torn between the attachments in Poland and her young adult children living in the UK, who one day will be her only family – and so she might prefer to stay close to them.

*I always say I will go back in my old age. But then my daughter says 'Mum, would you leave me? One day your grandchildren will appear here, and their grandma would be far away?' I wouldn't like to spend my old age here. But when my mother dies, I will have nobody close in Poland – and would I leave my children here? We'll see.* (Lucyna, UK)

The above examples show that the positions of leading migrant and tied movers/stayers can switch with the passing of time. The children who, like Lucyna's daughter, used to be against migration, in future become an anchor preventing return to the country of origin.

## 8.6. Retirement plans

International migrants who had started work in one country before migration to another, in future will have a complex situation regarding their old age pension entitlement.

*Interviewer: Have you got any plans for retirement here?*

*Lucyna: Yes. We have set up saving accounts with our bank. You know what an old age pension is like here, 80-90 pounds per week. We pay private contributions to our bank.*

*Interviewer: And the Polish pension?*

*Lucyna: I had worked for 23 years so I think I have some entitlement. But once you reach retirement age you have to declare which country you want to receive it from. I have been told I cannot take it from both places.* (Lucyna, UK)

With her profession in services, Lucyna started working early, as a trainee and vocational school student. Therefore she already had numerous years of contribution to the Polish social insurance system. However, she believed that as a migrant she would have to decide one day from which system she wanted to be paid. In addition to the Polish and British state provision, after moving to Great Britain she and her husband added a commercial pillar to their retirement plan by saving private means in a bank towards their support in old age.

In comparison to Lucyna, Piotr feels less secure about his old age pension in Poland. He had a less stable working life in Poland (due to unemployment and earning from irregular trade) before migration and he is afraid that even if he returned, he wouldn't acquire enough years of work with social contributions.

*I don't feel old, but I turn 40 soon. I am afraid there is no chance for me to work long enough to get old age benefit in Poland. Italian old age pension – if I worked enough here to obtain it, then I could return to Poland and relax and maybe do something extra if health allows. Italian pensions are not high, EUR 800-900, for foreigners from the EU there should be no problem with getting it.* (Piotr, IT)

With the old age pension in mind, Piotr plans to work until retirement in Italy and then move and transfer the benefit to Poland. The core of his old age pension would be paid from the Italian welfare system. However, his plan of returning and spending his Italian pension in Poland may not be fulfilled, as one can imagine that by that time his

daughters might have their own children and expect their grandparents to participate in childcare in Italy.

Interestingly, apart from state provision and private savings, a company specific old pension plan was mentioned in one of the interviews conducted in the UK. Gabriela, a single woman under 30, was one of the few interviewees, and the youngest one who spoke about her future old age pension. She declares that she saves and invests on her own. It is relatively easy for her, as she is single, as an expat she has her rent in London paid for by the employer, and – judging by her fast progress within the company – she earns a lot. However, her future retirement would not be as good as it could be, compared to her current co-workers:

*I am not covered by the company's internal retirement fund, because I had originally been employed by the Polish branch. It's a form of discrimination.*

*(Gabriela, UK)*

It is an interesting observation, and worth a separate study to verify if large multinationals discriminate their workers not only in wages but also in social security on the basis of geographic origin.

Apart from the financial provision, the migrants talk about their plans regarding their place of residence or even lifestyle in old age.

*I am at such an age, that if we become entitled to retirement here, already... I have got used to the climate, which is mild and favourable... Italy is such a narrow state that it is close to the sea everywhere, the temperatures are moderate. Our peers will already be dead or at the same age as us, not leaving home – so what would we be doing in such a small town? Here at least we can go to the seaside, by train or by car if we are able to drive. Or we could buy something small by the sea or in the mountains, we have thought about it. When we get our old age pension, if we are able to buy a flat, we would leave the city, move 60km from here, buy some wine and enjoy life [laughing].*

*(Janina, IT)*

In the above statement of a migrant living in Italy one can identify points where the negative elements of the experience of the elderly people in Poland (staying at home, friends passing away at relatively early age) are questioned and replaced by elements drawn from the receiving society (moving to a holiday home, enjoying life).

Janina has multiple ways of guaranteeing support for the later years of her life. On the one hand she considers acquiring Italian citizenship to guarantee she will receive the Italian old age pension.

*In case they didn't want to give us old age pensions or change the regulations – the Italian citizen has the **right** to old age pension. Otherwise, I don't know if I need this citizenship.* (Janina, IT)

On the other hand, she keeps her property in Poland in good shape in order to be able to sell it and use the money towards buying cheap accommodation out of the city, for her retirement years.

*It is all my assets, but I do it all with the thought of staying in Italy. Because if my daughter decides to stay here, I will have something to sell in order to buy a flat or a house here in Italy and not pay the rent. As old age pensioners, I don't know how we would live, what is ahead of us. So I will have something to sell and hence buy here, maybe for a loan that will be gradually paid off, not with EUR 600 of rent.* (Janina, IT)

However, Janina is not sure if she will stay in Italy. Like the parents quoted in the previous section, she feels her future is partly determined by her daughter.

*When [the daughter] says that she will go back – what's the sense of us staying here? Who would take care of us?* (Janina, IT)

In Janina's plans for future it is evident that she keeps both options open. She wouldn't sell the Polish flat until she was sure that she and her adult daughter would stay in Italy.

## 8.7. Settlement, return or further migration

Age at migration makes a big difference for the interviewees' plans for the future. The ones who migrated in their 30s usually spoke about returning in old age. However, they made it conditional on their offspring's choices and needs. A transnational lifestyle could also be a solution, as proposed by Helena, living in the UK.

*We have a flat in Poland, in our old age we could live there for a few months and come here for some of the time, maybe one of them [children] will let us stay?* (Helena, UK)



The ones who migrated at around 20, usually as students, looked at moving to Poland from the perspective of practical advantages (professional opportunity, lower costs of home buying), while on the emotional side they expressed fears of potential problems with adaptation. The repeated line of argument is that they have not experienced adulthood in Poland – only abroad.

*When I think about moving to Poland... it is probably called re-emigration, that one in fact emigrates to one's own country. I have lived in Great Britain for almost 9 years, given that I celebrated my 18th birthday here and I have lived here all my adult life, there are certain things to which I am used to and I know no alternatives.* (Sandra, UK)

It is interesting that, at the same time, Sandra saw Poland as a very promising market for her professional activity. Another young migrant, Joanna, plans to move to Poland within a few months from the time of the interview, upon the birth of her baby, to live with her parents. Yet she also perceives it in the categories of migration to a new country.

*From what I see, many people think about returning to the home country and that's the end of their planning. They pack up their things – just like my mom, she packed and returned home. In our situation, we try not to close any doors behind us (...) going back to Poland is a big unknown, as I have never lived in Poland as a fully adult person. I left straight after high school so I don't know this reality, of work, administration, paying bills, everyday life, to be honest. This is something new for me. So for me, even if I am from Poland, it will be starting from scratch and I don't see a big difference between returning to Poland and departing to a completely new country and starting life there. The only advantage is the language, but apart from that it feels like a new beginning.*

(Joanna, UK)

Roman, who left for the UK at 26, after seven years of working in the UK is reluctant to return to Poland.

*I don't see myself back in Poland, here I know the standards [of the business], there I would have to learn from scratch. Maybe for retirement?* (Roman, UK)

He says he will probably stay in England. He had also thought about further migration to Australia but he learnt that over the age of 30 he has no chance for a visa allowing him to settle there. Some doors close for the potential migrants at a very young age.

## 8.8. Conclusions

The life stories collected in the course of this study show numerous examples of investment or even sacrifice of parents for the sake of the younger generation. The cases of reverse remittances (flow of assistance from parents to migrant offspring) were more pronounced than the classical remittances sent to the non-mobile relatives, documented in the migration literature.

As there was a maximum age criterion in the recruitment of respondents, they are a relatively young group and for most of them the potentially demanding phase of caring for the elderly, or the even more difficult position of the “sandwich generation” are still ahead of them. The ones that are the only children of their parents (Krystyna, Borys and Barbara) expressed concern about their parents’ future, as there was nobody with whom they could share the care responsibility. Some of the interviewees spoke of the death of one or both parents after they had migrated, but none of them had travelled to provide care. This may be explained by them having non-mobile sibling in Poland.

Some differences between the interviews conducted in the UK and in Italy can be pointed out. Bringing elderly parents to the receiving country, to live close to the migrant adult children, or assisting them by abusing the public healthcare system are examples of familial strategies of support identified in the Italian sample. The interviewees living in the less familial and more market-based British welfare regime mentioned saving money in a bank or in investment instruments – individualistic strategies of providing for one’s old age.

Some of the interviewees, especially, but not only, the ones who started a family back in Poland, were very dependent on their parents before migration. The crucial part of this dependence was co-residence, sometimes in small and crowded flats. For them migration was a way out of such a situation, to improve their financial independence. In such a case, bringing parents to live with them and care for their children, would cancel what has been achieved through migration. Therefore, I would argue that when escaping the parental household was a cause of migration, the propensity to live together again is low and migrants find many arguments against it. In such cases, migration is not an intergenerational family strategy, but a way for young adults and their nuclear households

to escape the stress of familialism and to become independent. Not remitting to Poland could be another argument in favour of this hypothesis.

On the contrary, the younger migrants who left their parents at a young age, for example for education, who had not experienced the inconvenience of co-residence of three generations, are more open to accept their parent's assistance. In their situation, the most valued asset the parents could give them was housing, either in the form of a flat in the country of immigration, or a part of a house (or swapping flats) when they return to Poland.

Putting finances, healthcare and real estate investment aside, intergenerational ties are first of all emotional ties. The middle generation experiences being torn between their own attachment to Poland and their children's attachment to the country of settlement. Krystyna's example shows what high emotional costs migration incurs and that there are no easy solutions, even if for EU citizens there are no legal barriers for family members to reside close to each other.



## **Chapter 9. Construction of the trajectories of Polish intra-EU migrants in a biographical perspective**

The previous five chapters presented important selected aspects of family living affected and affecting the migration project over time. This final analytical chapter aims to present the narrated life stories on a more general level, by pointing to the main mechanisms of action prevailing in some of the stories, and extracting certain logics of organisation of the self-presentation and argumentation with which the interviewees support their decisions about settlement or return.

In the presented attempt of combining the biographical narrative method with the life course approach (presented in more detail in Chapter 2.), a narrative is treated as an autobiographical perspective on one's own life course: especially sequences of positions and turning points, from the perception of the interviewees themselves. Biographical analysis of interviews with migrants allows to analyse “how they narrate their previous lives in Poland, and how these recollections are employed to contrast with their current lives in the UK which in turn both impact on their narratives with regards to decisions to settle in the UK or return to Poland in the future.” (McGhee, et al., 2012, p. 714).

A systematic analysis, based on building hypotheses along the chronologically ordered events extracted from the narrative, allows the researcher to identify what the speakers are often not aware of or not willing to admit.

### **9.1. Struggle for survival, followed by search for stability**

The accounts of the interviewees aged over 40, whose settlement and family reunification was preceded by circular migration contained long accounts not only of the phase of temporary labour migration, but also of the economic struggle in Poland that preceded it.

Daria graduated from technical secondary school but had never worked in the industry for which she had been trained. She got work in a public retail company, but lost her job immediately after the transformation. Her husband, Daniel tried to solve their problems through labour migration, but returned to Poland optimistic about the democratic

changes. They already had one son, another was born when Daria was already unemployed. The family lived in a small town, from which commuting to a low paid job was uneconomic. Daniel worked in a factory next to their home, which had been privatised and closed, he also ran a small repair shop in the afternoons.

*11 years ago in Poland there was no work. First I had a kiosk, but I lost it, as it was not profitable, I had it for a short time.* (Daria, IT)

Daria's revenue from the kiosk fell significantly due to competition from larger shops and economic hardship of the local population. At that time, she was also recruited by a financial pyramid scheme, another characteristic feature of the Polish early capitalism. However, she didn't like the idea of luring people, so she left during the training.

By 'pure chance', through a friend of her sister she learnt about a woman working as a live-in carer in Italy, looking for somebody to replace her for 3 months. She had to borrow money to pay for the job offer and tickets.

*From my first salary, I sent to my husband, as we borrowed money for this trip, first I sent 800,000 liras, (...) I brought two salaries, with which we filled in holes, you know, as he did not work at that time, you know, that's the way life is.* (Daria, IT)

For around five years Daria worked in Italy regularly, yet she could no longer bear certain aspects of her work: separation from her husband and sons, irregular work and lack of freedom or privacy in the live-in work situation. Referring to her younger son crying at each separation she spoke of the emotional cost of leaving her sons, which emerged with time, not during her first migration. In 2003 she started to regularise her status and work towards family re-unification. Daniel even arrived in Italy soon after Poland's EU-accession, but he could not get work yet, as work permits were still required. Eventually, they reunited in 2006.

Daniel added some more political opinions to Daria's account. For example:

*Daniel: In our country, we say Solidarity and trade unions – comparing the current trade unions in Poland and the ones here, they are as different as day and night. Our trade unions go on strike and demand something. Here, nothing like that takes place, here in workplaces there are so-called sindacalisti, trade union representatives...*

*Daria: ... who are not harassed. My sister told me that in [the factory where she works], there were some as well, but they got fired for being trade unionists. So, as regards working conditions, I have to say here it is much better, much calmer.*

*(Daria and Daniel, IT)*

Their situation will also be referred to in the next section; below I quote Daria's concluding statement, which I believe contrasts, in a powerful way, with her description of her economic struggle in Poland of the 1990s.

*I can say I was successful. I do not need to have a large amount in my bank account. I am satisfied as I have achieved stability in life, which I had never had in Poland. In Poland I was never sure how much money I had and if it would be enough to live on... Here if I don't have enough money, I can always go and earn some by working extra hours. In Poland it was impossible to think of it.*

*(Daria, IT)*

The trajectories presented by Piotr, as well as Janina and Jan, are very similar. In all of them there are attempts of running companies, if they managed to turn their business around, they could have become successful. Instead, there were breaking points they could not overcome, and their situation in Poland, despite their efforts, was not improving. In the end, through the phase of the pioneer's circular migration (women working as live-in carers) they gained knowledge of opportunities abroad and decided to emigrate. Abroad they often do poorly paid, physical jobs, but feel this guarantees them stability and employment until retirement.

The parallel function to the struggles for survival in the narrative of the 40+ migrants, in the cases of migrants in their 30s is also played by “imagining” what their life could have been if they remained in Poland.

*Letting [our flat] out also made me realise, that we had only managed to survive in Poland since it was our own flat. If we had had to rent a flat, with PLN 500-600 extra to spend we wouldn't have made ends meet with our monthly wages. (...) (Henryk, UK)*

## **9.2. Lifestyle preferences as a basis for settlement**

In some interviews there is a developed section on the current lifestyle. Some of these sections have been quoted in the section on spending time with children, mentioning

such activities as weekend outings, travelling with the aim of educational sightseeing, paid extracurricular activities, and general work/life balance; these examples concerned families with children living in the UK. Other researchers report a significant aspect of material gratification of living in the UK, expressed directly in terms of consumption (McGhee, et al., 2012; Pustulka, 2010). My interviews with mothers in the UK contain the same idea of buying stuff for children, buying according to one's needs and likes (Patrycja) or even to shopping as an enjoyed activity (Kamila).

Daria, presented in the earlier section, underlines the benefits of their lifestyle in Italy. She presents two aspects: true Italian lifestyle, especially the celebration of meals, and enjoying life in general (for example eating out, leisure time activities) thanks to a more secure financial situation, than they had in Poland.

*You know.... we, as adult people, having adult children already, we want... not only to watch TV until the end of our life, we want to go out as well, now we are attending a salsa course, for example. We go out to have a pizza (...) We had never practiced that, never, to be honest, we had never been out to have a pizza during 13 years of our marriage, before Italy started. Here it is different, one works and one can profit from it.*

*(Daria, IT)*

These are only a few examples of representatives of middle level professions who enjoy better standard of living abroad than in Poland. It is also visible in the case of Iwona (a skilled labourer who has numerous benefits in her factory) or Henryk (a truck driver). Due to the importance of the lifestyle in their perception of their life abroad these migrants seem most prone to permanent emigration or for disappointment if they choose return migration.

The time spent together as a family, on weekend outings and holiday trips (Helena, Dorota) is also an appreciated feature of life in the UK. This time is re-gained for personal and family enjoyment thanks to the British salaries allowing a decent living, which is compared to the need to find odd jobs in the evenings or weekends in order to make ends meet expressed in the memories from the life in Poland in the past. Such preferences are in line with an aspect of "normalcy" of life in Great Britain which Galasińska and Kozłowska (2009, p. 96) called 'everyday human activities'.



On the other side, there are migrants who criticise aspects of everyday life in the host country and look forward to living 'the Polish way' when they return. Mateusz and Monika, a young couple in Italy declare a plan to return to their area of origin.

*It is certain, that after finishing my PhD we want to return to Poland, to our city, to our friends, to the city we know and like, where we have families, where one can go to the cinema and the movie is not in Italian. These are the plans, this is certain. (Mateusz, IT)*

Towards the end of the interview, when asked about the ties connecting them with Poland they answer:

*Mateusz: Apart from mental and family ties, friends, cinema, such patriotism is inside us, local patriotism, an attachment to the city.*

*Monika: To the region (...) I like our mayonnaise, our songs.*

*(Monika and Mateusz, IT)*

Their response combines high tones (patriotism) and very practical preferences (mayonnaise).

Norbert, a 40-year-old professional preparing to return to Poland (the family was already packing their belongings when I interviewed him in their flat) criticises Italy and Italians, underlining the difference between them and himself or his family.

*The quality of local buildings is like the quality of FIAT cars [laughing].*

*(Norbert, IT)*

*We have a flat, two children, a car. But this is us. Italians don't live according to 'God's will'. They are a new generation: bunga bunga and travelling. They keep on travelling and they will possess nothing.*

*(Norbert, IT)*

However, he is also afraid that he might not be able to reintegrate with his society of origin.

*I have fears, because I find in me what I have read about in the Internet, that return migrants cannot find their place, because I read the Internet news sites and I feel as if I were going to the Eastern front line.*

*(Norbert, IT)*

It must be underlined, that the most criticism of the host society's lifestyle was found in the interviews with migrants who were convinced they would return or seriously considering further migration (Antoni, Robert, both from Italy). The settled (at least in the foreseeable perspective) ones rather criticised the Polish lifestyle.

### 9.3. Delayed but unavoidable migration

It is interesting that although some among the interviewees arrived in the UK much later than 2004 or 2005, their preceding trajectories in Poland opened the path to migration earlier. Upon event-by-event analysis it appeared a reasonable solution, yet was avoided by the interviewees. The factors that prevented such migration, and the changes that made them finally make this move, are worth analysing.

Franek was interviewed in the west of England, during his second stay in the UK. His first move, in 2008, had been preceded by a sequence of downward job transitions. While straight after high school he had been an accountant for a large company, after it went bankrupt he did accounting for smaller and poorer establishments (e.g. a nursery) or even worked as a security guard. At that time, however, he was a tied stayer because of his wife.

*I married a medical student. She studied, I worked to support her – her parents helped as well. In 2004, my father-in-law advised me to go abroad, but she was studying. She worked in two surgeries, improving her qualifications, while I worked. In 2006 she could go already - but didn't want to. By 2008 we were divorced. (Franek, UK)*

In 2008 he went to the UK, with a new partner. His aim was to save for a flat, yet he was not able to fulfil this because of his partner: not only did she not work or contribute financially, but also she demanded they return to Poland because she got pregnant. Franek describes the situation as completely beyond his control: first she got pregnant without consulting him on this option, then she forced him to return before he had saved as much money as planned.

*I worked until April the next year. If I had worked for 1.5 year, I would have saved enough for a furnished double bedroom flat in Poland. But my girlfriend would not look for work, she spent her days at home, bored, in front of the computer. We moved closer to London to make it easier for her to find a job - for nothing. (...) So we returned to Poland, because she was pregnant, she didn't tell me why being pregnant meant she had to return to Poland. I was acting as blind, it was my first son, my first child, in the end. This September it will be three years that I have not seen him... (Franek, UK)*

Making a timeline of his life, we can observe that his son was conceived in late 2008 or early 2009, born in second half of 2009, and Franek lost custody and contact with

him while he was still an infant (he had not seen him for almost three years, between September 2009 and June 2012 – when he was interviewed). In 2010, Franek migrated to the UK again; during the interview he speaks about his efforts to earn and save a lot, as he had another girlfriend who was about to come to him from Poland. He argues that if not for his uncooperative (to say the least) partners, he might have migrated much earlier and accumulate capital more quickly and not lose a few years of his professional life.

Patrycja, a stay-at-home mother of three, arrived with her children to the UK in the beginning of 2008, following her husband who migrated in August 2007. She starts her story by assuring that she never expected or planned to live abroad.

*For a long time I had not expected that I would **ever** live abroad. I was absolutely sure I would spend my whole life in Poland. However, the situation sometimes forces it.*

*(Patrycja, UK)*

Before the birth of their children, the life of Patrycja and her husband was – in her words – fine.

*In fact, we used to function well and life was fine and we were convinced that it would not be a problem to support children. Later, when both of us worked, he had two full-time jobs, so that we worked nonstop, all the time, but we were able to survive and we had basically everything that was important for us.*

*(Patrycja, UK)*

However, the fact that they needed more than 2 full-time jobs and worked „all the time” does not confirm that life was „fine”, it rather goes in line with her other expressions („we were able to survive”), her presentation of this initial period in bright colours increases the contrast with the series of negative turns that followed. Her husband lost his job and had problems with keeping another one, as well as periods of unemployment and petty jobs. From the family timeline it can be calculated that it was in 2005-2006, the period when 'everyone' went to the UK – so why didn't they go? Patrycja had a complicated pregnancy in 2004 and gave birth to their first child in March 2005. She could see the situation in her workplace was deteriorating. Yet, instead of looking for a job, she took parental leave (which is unpaid for most parents) and got pregnant again. In the short time perspective, this was financially reasonable, as even if her employer went bankrupt, she could secure sick leave during pregnancy and maternity pay, 100% of the last salary equivalent, from the public Social Insurance Establishment. However, she realised the impact it had on her employability:

*During my parental leave, when I was already pregnant for the second time, the company was closed and I lost my job. And having two children, or even having one and another one on the way, in the middle of pregnancy, I had practically no chance of finding a job.* (Patrycja, UK)

This statement suggests even more clearly that due to their poor situation in the Polish labour market the husband's work was crucial and migration would have been an obvious way of securing income for the family. However, due to the father's serious illness, her husband engaged in supporting his parents and the young family moved in with the in-laws (according to Patrycja, that was the original reason for moving in, loss of income came later). He also started to take cash loans, some in order to help his father, others out of naivety, for his colleagues. The family had to face debt execution. Yet, as Patrycja said, only after his father's death, her husband said nothing kept him there and was ready to migrate. The initial idea was to undertake seasonal migration to Germany and save money in order to re-arrange their life. Patrycja rejected the idea as it would have meant separation, which would be difficult considering having a small child.

The turning point came when they gained access to the UK via a migratory network; when talking about it Patrycja spontaneously uses the analogy to a chain – which is a long-established term in migration studies (MacDonald & MacDonald, 1964):

*Later it turned out that a relative of mine was about to migrate here, with the intention of staying permanently. He had nothing arranged yet, but he had somebody, who would help him here. And as this relative was a close person to me, we agreed, so that he knew, that we were also thinking about that, we agreed to move one by one, to pull each other, in a chain.* (Patrycja, UK)

When they emigrated, they were in real financial trouble. Four years afterwards they still have the burden of the debts, only partly settled through passing an inherited part of the family house to the husband's brother. It seems that they could have migrated earlier, in 2005, when they had only one child and their work situation was already deteriorating. What kept them in Poland were obligations towards parents struggling with grave illness and Patrycja's pregnancy. They needed a combination of three conditions, to undertake migration:

- death of the ill parent,
- very serious financial trouble, reaching the 'bottom',

- access to migratory network through a trusted person.

Dorota's family can be seen in a similar vein, although less dramatically. She met her husband during her studies. By 2005 Dorota had graduated in English philology and was pregnant with their first child; her husband, a car mechanic, worked for a car service company. Dorota combined many jobs based on her education (from lecturing English to students, to giving private lessons to children), none of which were full-time contracts. With her tertiary education and underemployment and his skilled trade, as a couple from a provincial town, they seemed typical candidates for migration to the newly opened British labour market. Yet they stayed and struggled. They decided to have another child, soon followed by the third. Due to childcare Dorota gradually gave up each of her sources of income, while her husband took extra jobs in the evenings. From her account, the period 2006-2011 was marked by a growing family, worsening financial situation, and less and less time together. Migration, so common among her generation of Poles at that time, was discussed in her family, but only generally, rather in the context of complaining than as a plan of action.

*Even last Easter I had not been expecting to be here shortly afterwards, it was quite unexpected, although we had sometimes talked to each other or our siblings that we had better pack and look for luck elsewhere, further from the family but for better money.*

*(Dorota, UK)*

However, only after the husband received a direct offer did they decide to move. In their case, it was not through a relative, but a job colleague who got information from a work agency that they could be easily employed near London doing the same job, for the same multinational automotive company, only paid much better. The offer made them decide to migrate within two months, without saving or preparation.

From many signals in the narrative it seems probable that Dorota could have migrated much earlier (she speaks English, she had earlier episodes of going to the UK to work over the summer, generally, she had thought of living abroad) but her husband might have been reluctant (he speaks little English, had never lived abroad, when he moved to the UK he insisted on them joining him as soon as possible, even if it meant borrowing money for travel and flat deposit instead of waiting for him to save it from his London salary). Comparing them with the other couples that migrated earlier shows how much stress could have been spared and how much they could have already achieved in the UK if they had migrated earlier.

Both Patrycja and Dorota presented themselves as active mothers, managing their households. In their stories there was evident that their husbands were not as entrepreneurial in preparing the ground for family reunification. In addition, in the case of Dorota, she had a big advantage over her husband as she spoke English. It inspires the question why the two women did not go to the UK as lead migrants, considering the fact that it has been documented by other research (Moskal, 2011). They did not even pay the “inspection visits” described by White (2010b). The explanation lies in the timing of their pregnancies and being at home with infants.

#### 9.4. 'Pace of change' - the progress reinforcing the decision for settlement

Some of the narratives present a series of transitions to a better situation, which helps to understand how the decision regarding settlement is reinforced. These accounts have a different internal logic than the ones of unpredictability and are found rather among people who have already started families.

Patrycja, whose family has been moving up from the bottom, explains how the financial improvement affected her husband and their relationship:

*With time, our financial situation started to improve. First of all my husband functioned differently. He started to feel the responsibility, that the family has to be supported and he functioned differently, didn't ignore work... Sometime later we received the benefits and our situation started to improve, we started to rebuild practically every part of our life (...) When we started to function better, we were a bit happier, more satisfied.*

*(Patrycja, UK)*

The first sphere of improvement she talks about, already in the initial narrative, is their housing situation.

*In long-term plans – as first we lived in a rented room, in a houseshare, in plans for future there was renting a flat – so this is our first flat, tiny, it is tiny (...) but I am head over heels anyway.*

*(Patrycja, UK)*

A recurring notion in her story are „perspectives“; achievement of aims encourages setting new ones, as they are not mere dreams but aims that can be attained in a set amount of time.

*Here we see these prospects, here there are prospects, you can set goals, aim for them and they are absolutely real.* (Patrycja, UK)

*So when we settle these things and financially it will be more stable, we will move. So I think **such a pace of change**, for better, these are really super prospects.*

(Patrycja, UK)

While Patrycja was positively surprised by the pace of change for the better in her family's life since arrival to the UK, another migrant to the UK, Igor, expected it in advance, as he says about the motivation for migration from Poland:

*With the salaries we were getting then it was impossible to achieve something in a relatively short time. Here we could **speed it up**, save for a flat.* (Igor, UK)

Also the stories of he and his wife (Iwona) are built on a sequence of changes for the better and achievement of goals.

*We had come here to help my sister and maybe to save some money for the wedding. We got married and financed the wedding and were left with nothing again. So we stayed to save some money again for a flat, but we planned a child in the meantime. And then it turned out we both found good jobs and it made no sense to go back.*

(Iwona, UK)

Igor was keen to return to Poland at some point, as he wanted to get a job in construction, relevant to his engineer's degree, and he observed that this industry flourished in Poland in 2006 and 2007. However, through an acquaintance he got employed by a local construction engineer, thanks to which Igor's aim of returning to his profession was fulfilled in England, without resigning from the other positive sides of living in the UK (especially his wife's job). Another change for the better they could achieve, thanks to having two good jobs, was home ownership. They planned to save for a flat in Poland through migration, yet, they managed to more than fulfil this dream in England – by buying a house.

The positive perception of life in the host country is reinforced by observations from visits in the host country. Henryk and Helena (in the UK) discuss comparing costs of living a few times over the interview.

*Helena: Comparing [UK] and Poland, the reality there is **terrible**. When we go there for two weeks, we compare.*

*Henryk: When we go there, we have friends with kids of the same age.*

*Helena: And we compare everything. (...)*

*Helena: If we are talking about life with children, we cannot compare as we had no children when we lived there. Henryk: From a normal, average job. Like my salary in the bank, it wasn't the minimum salary, it wasn't the highest, for our town it was quite all right. If we needed to buy trousers or shoes, from a monthly salary, we could buy only one such thing. Here you can buy two from a weekly pay and you still have money for bread.*

*(Helena and Henryk, UK)*

Especially Helena is very emotional in such passages, using expressions such as 'terrible', 'PLN 200 - for nothing! I was shocked'. In such a perspective, the country of immigration is presented as a refuge, soothing the nerves of the Polish people.

*(...) we could compare that it is **easier** to live here. (Helena, UK)*

*It is calmer here, there is no stress about the basic issues. (Lucyna, UK)*

Patrycja, also in the UK, comments on abandoning the thought about return:

*Especially when one goes to Poland and sees the situation there, one thinks how would we live there, **if we lived there** - and one forgets the idea immediately [laughing].*

*(Patrycja, UK)*

## **9.5. Sacrifice for love and family**

In the interviews, various 'love stories' were described by some of the women who had migrated to Italy to join a partner. Some had Italian partners – met during a holiday, or while working as a live-in carer. One woman fell in love with a third-country refugee, naturalised in Italy, whom she met while he was in Poland as a tourist. Another met a Polish man working for an Italian company. The narratives of sacrifice for a loved partner included self presentations as the one who is worse off because of migration – usually, unable to find a good job – but stays because of love for the partner or for the sake of the children. Because of such an approach, the speakers concentrate on negative aspects and do not have a vision of the future.

*My story is very short [laughs] – I followed my husband – because of great love. I left a comfortable flat in Poland. I left a job – well, one could say, for Poland, quite a good*



*job – and I abandoned my studies, I came here following my husband. Of which I am really not very satisfied (...) I am not **fulfilled** because I stay at home, for the time being I am a so-called housewife. It annoys me a bit, but what next? I can return to Poland, I can rebuild the life I had, I can rebuild it any time - but what then - a break-up? My husband here and me in Poland? It makes no sense. So we'll see, we'll see. (Irena, IT)*

Irena's husband (her second marriage, she has three adolescent children from an earlier relationship) is Polish, working on foreign contracts. They met online and, for Irena, he moved to Poland for some time, but the loss of his foreign salary was difficult to accept. Therefore they moved to Italy, and Irena, a working lone mother who had even started studies as a mature student, turned into a housewife. They can afford for her to stay at home, which leaves her the freedom to complain about the poor quality of jobs available to immigrant women like her. She also complains a lot about Italians' attitudes to foreigners, using such strong words as racism or second-class humans. As a result of not having her individual connections to Italy, Irena is not very attached to the country, and declares the future to be unpredictable:

*I don't make such long-term plans. As I told you: I am fine - I am here, if I feel bad - I will return to Poland. (Irena, IT)*

However, Irena's youngest daughter has lived in Italy for a few years, and in this country she has her school, friends, and sports training. Irena admits what her daughter, in contrast to herself, has gained from migration to Italy. Yet she does not imagine a situation where she would like to return to Poland but would be forced to stay because of her daughter.

Another Polish woman, Ola, was so unhappy in Italy ('depressed' in her own words) that she travelled a lot during the early years of her marriage. In 2007 she packed her bags and together with her small daughter moved to Poland. She started to rebuild her life there: she filed for divorce, and found work in a public institution. Yet, after a couple of months, when her husband arrived, she realised how much her daughter missed her father and changed her mind. Her story is full of contradictory decisions, for example she complained about the high cost of renting a flat in their town in Italy but had taken a loan for the renovation of her grandmother's home in Poland. She makes her return to Italy conditional upon not having to work night shifts anymore - but then returns to the same job, stating that it is the only one she can combine with childcare.

Both women could quite easily rebuild their lives in Poland. Irena says so openly and with confidence. Ola does not, perhaps due to her past attempts of returning to Poland (finding a job quickly, having her grandmother's home where she can live). Despite using isolated positive expressions about their relationships (Irena's '*great love*' or Ola in the quotation below), these women do not elaborate on what they personally gain from their love, as if it was imposed upon them, not desired or chosen.

*I had to analyse, what is the most important – to have what you should have, a husband and a father for my daughter. So I went there, giving myself six months. We had to get used to each other. And everything is great between us.*

*(Ola, IT, author's underlining)*

It has to be highlighted that not all marriage migrants or economically inactive Polish women in Italy present their life in this way. Beata (see also Chapter 4.) concentrates on her family, for example on having a baby and an egalitarian, well functioning relationship. She treats her cleaning job, which would be criticised by Irena, as an instrument guaranteeing her income around giving birth and caring for her baby. Liliana, who has been extremely active since she was a teenager, and adapted to many different conditions, is also very much involved with her local community (helping neighbours), Polish diaspora activities (teaching in a Saturday school, being a member of an association); she does not present herself as a helpless victim of having chosen a partner who lives in Italy. Therefore, there must be an additional factor contributing to the pessimistic interpretation of the personal narratives of marriage migrants. In Irena's case it seems to be the contrast with her earlier fulfilling life in Poland. For Ola, it is the lack of satisfaction with her job, her regret at having chosen social science studies instead of learning a useful trade, as well as the perceived comparative deprivation with respect to her peers who stayed and built careers in Poland. The “love migrants” differed significantly from the “romantic” type identified by Małek (2011). As in Małek’s findings this type combined a romantic relationship with an Italian man with admiration of Italy as a place to live and of the Italian lifestyle. The narratives of my interviewees were full of criticism of the Italian society and highlighted that life there was very difficult in many spheres, such as work, housing, administration, way of upbringing children.

## 9.6. The relation between settlement and the original migration project

Looking back at the lifestories of the migrants allows to see to what extent their situation at the time of the interview had been intended or foreseen at the time of undertaking migration. Interviewees often start their account with some sort of surprise or paradox, such as *'It was pure coincidence'* or *'I had never thought I would live abroad, but...'*, while for the researcher what happened in their lives was explicable, for example, in terms of migratory networks or migration selectivity.

Among the interviewees there are young people who used the opening of the British labour market or a job offer from Italy as an opportunity to for temporary work, in order to save money for their needs in Poland, for example while studying. Subsequently they decided to migrate again to work and this time their stay became open ended. Yet their perception of their stay changed with starting up a family or at least a relationship. Examples of such paths include Oskar and Adam in the UK, and Beata and Krystyna among the younger women interviewed in Italy.

In other cases a trip to Italy, even if undertaken as labour migration, was the occasion to meet a partner and subsequent migration was already a movement for the sake of the relationship, with the plan of marriage. However the path to a settlement and a stable family may not be a straight line, as proved by the case of Ola, who returned to Poland many times, until, following a deep crisis and starting the divorce procedure, she made a choice to reunite with her husband for the sake of her daughter's happiness.

Education related migration projects had diverse outcomes. They lead to a longer stay in order to undertake further studies (Sandra, Mateusz) or work (Joanna), yet settlement followed only in when the migrant started a relationship with a person of another nationality (Sandra), while the others planned return. It was similar in the stories of highly skilled professionals undertaking work abroad: meeting a partner transformed it into settlement (as seen from the perspective of the time of the interview, but further migration was not excluded) in the cases of Celina and Emilia.

Family migration projects were more clearly defined in those cases when the family (or at least a couple) had already been formed in Poland. This clear definition does not equal settlement. For Norbert and Natalia a contract for a few years was the means of fulfilling their aims, especially regarding a housing loan, and they have kept to their

original plan. Borys and Barbara have not set the length of residence abroad in advance, their initial perspective was two years, after which Borys has registered his company in the UK; also Barbara has made her own professional plans of returning to academic work. Yet they are both convinced they will return in future due to their obligation, as the only children, towards the older relatives. In contrast, other families moved with the intention of transferring their households to the country of settlement and organising their lives there (e.g. Patrycja, Dorota, Henryk and Helena in the UK). In the Italian cases such a decision was an outcome of a long period of separation when one of the spouses performed temporary labour migration and the other stayed in Poland (Janina's husband Jan) or migrated for short periods either to seasonal work (Piotr) or in order to look for work (Daria's husband Daniel). Finally, there are couples who first migrated temporarily, as target earners, but eventually decided to stay thanks to an opportunity to work in their professions (Gustaw's wife as a nurse, Igor as an engineer).

The couples for whom the configuration of a migrant working abroad and the rest of the family in the home country was the accepted (although reluctantly, underlining the emotional costs) situation are Janina and Jan, Daria and Daniel, Halina and Hubert, Piotr's and Lucyna's families. The latter, made the decision about reunification in the UK within around a year (according to Lucyna: between 2005 or 2006 and 2007). This contrasts with more years of separation in the case of migrants to Italy, some of whom had been working there already before Poland's accession to the EU. In these families the reunification and regularisation of the rest of family members was facilitated by the rights granted based on the EU membership.

## 9.7. Conclusions

Migration, even if undertaken for financial reasons and planned as a temporary target earning project, results in being exposed to another way of living, which may become a tie to the country of residence, discouraging return. Although in the original situation and motivation for migration the interviewees are not lifestyle migrants in the fixed sense of this term (Benson & O'Reilly, 2009), having adapted to the chosen country of immigration, they develop clear lifestyle preferences. Interestingly, in comparison with e.g. Pakistanis in the UK (Bolognani, 2014), interviewed Poles concentrate on the positive

sides of life abroad and criticise Poland. More instances of criticising the host country occur when there are firm plans of return, as if temporary migrants have developed some form of immunity to the attractions of the host country. Alternatively, as these are highly skilled professionals confident of their labour market values, they believe they are also able to have a satisfying lifestyle in Poland, without the inconveniences of living abroad. Migrants with lower socio-economic status, who had been unemployed in Poland, equate basic financial security (e.g. being able to afford new shoes and clothes when needed, going out sometimes) with an attractive lifestyle.

An interesting group of interviewees presented long accounts of their lives before migration as successions of job losses and cumulating problems. Such presentation is analogous to the narratives underlining the struggle and instability of life back in Poland identified by McGhee, et al. (2012). As these downward mobilities occurred in the years of intense migration from Poland, it is puzzling as to why they had not decided to make the move earlier. The explanation usually lies in the family ties, which had to be broken (by death or divorce), or the lack of access to a migration network. I refer to these cases as 'delayed migration'.

Two different mechanisms contribute to reinforcing settlement in the two countries for different types of migrants. In the UK, families, as well as a lone mother, speak of their situation improving at quite a fast pace, more than fulfilling their plans and needs in the country of settlement. In Italy, long-term stay is often a result of family ties: marriage migration and/or becoming a tied stayer with a child growing up in the host country and no interest in return. Some marriage migrants are very critical of their situation, especially if their residence abroad has made them economically inactive or employed in low quality jobs, compared to their previous professional status (Irena) or ambitions and peer group of reference in Poland (Ola). Other migrants who settled in Italy because of a relationship, present their situation in more positive terms, probably thanks to employment and fulfilment in family life (Beata, Krystyna, see Chapter 4.).



## Conclusions

The concluding chapter is an attempt to integrate the results of the empirical chapters with the existing literature on post-accession migration. It also provides some general considerations about the limitations of this research, its generalizability, and possible new directions of enquiry that can be built on the results obtained.

### **Fertility and parenting decisions in the context of migration**

The UK is presented as more welcoming for having children and the fertility behaviour of interviewed migrants shows adaptation to the British fertility level. Even if their pregnancies are unplanned, the young Polish women feel they can adapt their life plans to this new situation. Thanks to the social benefits, even an additional baby in a family that already has two or three children seems not to generate a high additional cost. It is in the UK that some interviewees declare a wish to have as many as four children; two of them had started childbearing in Poland, moved and got pregnant again in the UK – which may suggest a self-selection mechanism in action.

In Italy, the interviewees would rather wait for a good moment, and stable employment for woman is an especially important criterion. In Italy three of the interviewed women were childless and over the age of 30 and, perhaps thanks to their adaptation to the Italian delayed childbearing, they declare they still have time to become mothers or even find a partner. On the other hand, a few women there had children early, before 30, and did not adopt the dominant mentality. For some this can be explained by the older age of their Italian male partners. Another interesting case is a Polish man and his Italian wife, who decided to have their first child in Poland, while living with his parents, and moved to Italy during the pregnancy and had another child quite soon afterwards, with the intention of raising the sibling together. This sequence clearly reflects the pattern of childbearing of the husband socialised in Poland, including the ‘moral obligation’ of providing siblings to their first child, overcoming the Italian model in which his wife had been brought up.

In both countries a range of caring arrangements for small children is used. In unskilled jobs, working part time or night shifts allows mothers to return to work. Otherwise the mothers in Italy cannot find a way of coordinating employment and caring

for children – even school aged ones. They observe that local Italians rely on grandparents in such situations. The immigrants themselves are deprived of such assistance; the situation is even worse when the Italian husband is an internal migrant and his family lives in another region.

In contrast, in the UK a range of paid caring arrangements is available, but, even the interviewees in well-paid professions underline the high cost of childcare. However, choosing between a return to work and staying at home with the child, relying on benefits, is not only an economic calculation, but also a result of an analysis of the child's and parent's wellbeing – thus a category of parental concern has been identified.

In both countries and in families with different socio-economic statuses there are examples of non-traditional gender role divisions, with the father being the principal carer. Some of the fathers had been principal caregivers during their wives' earlier migration, which is not a usual outcome (Parrenas, 2005). The families in which the father cares for a toddler have placed priority on the woman's early career or adjusted to the better professional situation of women than of men on the local labour market. Nevertheless, in both countries it is usually the mothers who subject their work life to the requirements of childcare. Those who have three or four children postpone coming back to paid work to some future point in time; they do not talk about putting themselves at risk of not getting back on their professional trajectory and experiencing poverty at old age as a result.

The way of spending time with children, including such issues as choosing to stay at home, work and life balance and leisure time activities is an important aspect of satisfaction with life in the country of residence, a criterion for comparison with the earlier life in Poland or with the situation of non-mobile friends and relatives. The way it is described, as a desired family lifestyle, corresponds to the category of 'a normal life' developed by Galasińska and Kozłowska (2009). Along with this lifestyle, the satisfaction from life in the country of immigration is also derived from consumption, which resonates with the findings of McGhee, et al. (2012). The consumption is not lavish but satisfying all the needs and preferences, especially the ones justified by relating them to children, not to oneself, in line with Pustułka (2010).

Among the interviewees for the project, the migration of grandparents in order to take care of children on an everyday basis in the host country has not taken place, which is explained by their lack of strength and other family obligations back in the home country.



Relying on arguments employed by interviewed migrant parents who could not or had chosen not to rely on it, the study finetunes the picture created by earlier migration research (Ryan, et al., 2009); (Moskal, 2011); (Krzyżowski & Mucha, 2012), which documented this example of intergenerational assistance. The limitations to grandparents' care, showing it cannot be treated as a default arrangement, are in line with the patterns observed among the European population in general (Janta, 2014).

Those who had become parents back in Poland, do not present having children as not an obstacle to migration. Children are not used as a reason for justifying initiating migration. Instead the parents explain the decision concerning migration by lack of satisfaction with their conditions of employment and salary or even by debts and material deprivation. Only once the decision on migration has been made, the children become tied movers with their parents and their emotional needs are part of the reasoning in favour of family reunification (Ryan & Sales, 2013). This mechanism concerning children is in line with the picture of family migration as a norm and strategy presented by White (2010b),(2010a). I have not encountered accounts of letting older children decide whether they wanted to live abroad (as mentioned by Moskal (2011, p. 41), on the contrary two mothers admitted having faced their teenage daughter's anger and crisis following migration.

Once the children settle in the new country, especially at a new school, the parents become less mobile – wishing to offer their children stability rather than further disruptions. On the one hand, it seems paradoxical in the light of the earlier move, which may have resulted in emotional difficulties for the children, and the protests of the teenage children. On the other hand, perhaps it is because of the observed impact of migration on the child that the parents start to attach so much value to stability, as pointed by Ryan and Sales (2013).

A child below school age can move, therefore the return has to take place before they reach that age, which was indicated as the crucial moment for decision making e.g. by Wong (2007) and Ackers & Stalford (2008). Having teenage children brought up and educated in the country of immigration in the eyes of the parents obliges them to stay and help the children enter adulthood. The linked lives of children of various ages in one family makes such decisions even harder.

Education is an important factor linking the immigrant family to the new country of residence. Taking children, especially the very young ones, from the Polish school does not pose a problem, but the potential return with children seems more difficult, not only because the parents wish to spare them further instability, but sometimes also because the Polish school is seen as less friendly to newcomers, less able to accommodate children with different educational backgrounds.

Age at migration has enormous consequences for the situation of the child, including the country of residence or type of education followed. Different ages of transition from one level of schooling to the next within the national education systems, for migrant teenagers can result in not being able to continue the chosen type of school in the country of immigration. As a result, they postpone migration or return to Poland quickly, without the parents, to complete school, or start a less demanding vocational school. It seems that such unplanned outcomes could be avoided if parents were more aware of the education systems in the countries of immigration, instead they admitted ignorance in that matter and being surprised or shocked by the rules, confirming conclusions reached by Ryan and Sales (2013). No parent complained about their adult offspring's unemployment, but there are too few cases and too little time has passed since migration to talk about the effects of migration at adolescence for their performance on the labour market.

In the UK the migrants have to face a very complex education system, requiring active search for information, analysis and decision making, which is reflected in the amount of attention devoted to this topic in the interviews. The ones with a higher socio-economic status are concerned by the level of teaching and are considering paying for better schools, especially above primary level. The less wealthy ones choose among the schools available for free, they are satisfied with the quality of teaching they can observe, but do not discuss further education plans for their children.

Education in the Polish language and culture is seen in a variety of ways. Some parents of children born in the UK are concerned about their knowledge of Polish and plan to send them to Polish Saturday schools, as speaking Polish at home is not enough to guarantee the knowledge of Polish among the young generation, especially when there are two children and communication in English starts to predominate.

School choice, homework, and care outside school hours are all usually women's concerns. Mothers take care of school placement on their own or with the help of other

immigrant women met in their new locality. Responsibility for that matter may be interpreted as an aspect of migrant mothers' 'managerial role' described by Pustułka (2010). As a side effect, for the economically inactive mothers school serves as an important institution for gaining information, starting to speak the language of the country of residence or even getting to know native families as a reference point for assessing their own socio-economic position relative to the host society.

### **Adaptation, settlement and...? Long-term plans of the migrants and their families**

In the logic and main rules of the welfare system, Italy proved to be similar to Poland in so far as it allowed migrants to function similarly to in the home country. "Due to the very low efficiency of the family-oriented sector and inefficiencies of the state institutions, a Polish family has to cope on its own, relying on informal (family) networks rather than on institutions" (Giza-Poleszczuk & Stec, 2008, pp. 237-238). This general statement about the Polish society applies equally to the migrant Polish families in Italy. As they cannot count on generous benefits or state-funded care services, they fare poorly if they need family assistance but cannot get it because of their newly arrived immigrant status. As some of the interviewees admitted, one response to this were displays of Polish 'resourcefulness', established during the communist times, such as exploiting, sometimes abusing, the system in order to provide healthcare to relatives or get a longer paid maternity leave and hence a better start for one's baby.

What then has been decisive for the settlement of migrants in Italy? For one group it has been simply establishing a relationship (not necessarily marriage) with an Italian or an immigrant resident in Italy. Another group has chosen settlement in Italy as it offered jobs allowing for comfortable living while such job prospects were not available in the locality of origin in Poland. In addition, the working conditions in Italy seem better, including more responsible roles, strong labour unions and more bargaining power of employees against employers, appealing especially to the ones disappointed with the Polish transformation. They are not particularly successful in Italy, but they are able to live a decent life and even failures (a failed business, a stolen car for which they had to continue repaying the loan) do not undermine the security of their everyday life.

In the UK, social benefits have proved to be an important factor in immigrants' welfare. The single breadwinner families with small children observe how their situation

has improved with the arrival of benefits. The amount of accrued benefits for the period between the beginning of entitlement (often when the children were still in Poland) and the transfer, once received, makes a big difference, especially for the housing conditions. A single mother admits that thanks to the benefits for lone parents she would never be forced to undertake full-time employment just for the sake of supporting her family and literally expresses gratitude to the British government for that assistance. On the other hand, the interviewees with higher education and higher socio-professional positions are aware that securing the same status for their children will be very costly in the UK.

A separate issue is ownership of real estate in Poland. In some cases, this has been bought or renovated with the income from labour migration with the intention of moving there. In the long-term perspective such property might be a factor in favour of return migration, especially as the Polish tend to return to their localities of origin, where they have emotional and family ties, not to other locations in Poland (White, 2011, pp. 26-27). The affluent ones treat it as an investment or housing for old age, but for the poorer ones, from their current perspective, it seems to be a burden, which the interviewees nevertheless do not admit, even if at the same time they complain about the high costs of living in Italy.

As elderly relatives usually inhabit the houses in Poland, investing in and the maintenance of property in Poland is also one aspect of intergenerational assistance. However, some migrants (in the group of thirty-year-olds) seem to have migrated in order to escape financial dependence or co-residence with their parents (or in-laws). On the other hand, among the youngest migrants there are interesting examples of assistance in migration and financial support that the young adults receive after moving abroad. These two groups may display different attitudes to the normative obligation to care for their elderly parents, and may not necessarily be willing to return to help them or to bring them over to their country of residence. The issue is complicated further if, through marriage, the migrant has more family ties and obligations in the country of immigration.

### **Impact of the historical and economic context**

The institutional and economic context of the studied phenomenon was not constant over the covered period, quite the contrary: these moves took place in a rapidly changing economic context. Poland's EU accession and the job market opening of the UK had been preceded by economic stagnation and very high unemployment, but took place during the

period of prosperity. Italy, which initially had immigration quotas for nationals of the New Member States, could not fill (at least in registered employment) their demand for such foreign labour force. By contrast, around the time when the interviews were conducted in the UK, the British government has proposed and started implementing a large reform of the welfare transfers. Some principal changes, such as limiting the right to the previously universal child benefit for the highest earning parents, seemed not to affect the majority of Polish immigrants. However others, such as cutting housing benefits or the plans to reform the benefits system in such a way that they would not be made available straight away to immigrants and would thus not provide an attractive alternative to employment even in low paid jobs, can be a real challenge to those Polish families that to date have enjoyed comfortable living in households composed of a single bread winner, an economically inactive mother and small children.

Interestingly, the interviewed migrants display little concern for the economic crisis. The ones in Italy either complain about the structural lack of attractive (in terms of earnings and family-friendly working hours) jobs or are not worried about their jobs, regardless of their profession. The interviewees living in England, either employees themselves or economically inactive women dependent on their husbands' salaries are also confident about their financial security.

The study documented various paths to settlement migration, originating in circular migration, target earning through less skilled jobs, student migration or looking for professional opportunities. The transformation of temporary labour migration into settlement through family reunification had its roots in the perceived better work opportunities in the new country than in the locality of origin. For many these opportunities are not for professional careers, but for a modest life with a good prospect of stable employment until retirement.

The life courses of the interviewees participating in intra-EU migration have taken various patterns. A sequence of moves between places, jobs and relationships without a plan, analogous to the 'intentional unpredictability' (Eade, et al., 2007), has been identified, however it was not very common. As this trajectory may be transformed into a more target-oriented one by a stabilising factor, such as a long-term, demanding partner, the rareness of this pattern among the interviewees may be a result of concentrating on people who have started a family (people whose relationships had dissolved during migration were a minority among the interviewees).

The biographical analysis also allows us to identify a group of interviewees that, despite the first EU labour markets opening for Polish citizens already in 2004, had postponed migration for a few years due to family obligations or lack of access to a migration network. Eventually they migrated as their situation was steadily deteriorating and they could not find (well paid) employment in their area of origin. I refer to these cases as 'delayed migration'. Although they sometimes occurred as late as 2011 (and it is not the date of family reunification with the pioneer migrant, but of the beginning of migration in a given household), they confirm the hypothesis stating that in the process of completing modernisation Poland has to send the surplus population abroad – people, especially from provincial areas, who cannot find employment in their local labour markets (Kaczmarczyk & Okólski, 2008),(Grabowska-Lusińska & Okólski, 2009),(Okólski, 2012). While in Poland they could not stop the downward spiral into labour market marginalisation and poverty, they quickly recover in the UK, thanks to better relation of wages to living costs and generous welfare benefits. This pattern is crucial for families with multiple children, who in Poland are at high risk of poverty.

### **Critique and points for further research**

The main problem encountered during the fieldwork for the project was achieving comparability between the sample in the UK (the case selected originally) and in Italy (the case chosen as the comparison). While in the British case the year 2004 was a fairly clear cut-off date, perceived as offering really new perspectives, in Italy the migratory processes were rather a continuum. The migrants either had prior experience of circular migration for irregular work, or were relatives of earlier migrants who had invited them. A recurring phenomenon was family reunification after Poland's accession; in such cases, some family members moved only once it had become easy to do so within the EU, but the main decision-making actor was the earlier pioneer migrant. While this might be challenged as not truly „post-accession” migration, without studying this phenomenon it is not possible to understand fully the continued inflow of the Polish to Italy after 2004. However, it can be stated that Germany, another EU country with a massive stock of earlier migrants from Poland, by opening its labour market fully has become a better comparison case for Italy.

One area for improvement of the study would be in presenting more detailed statistical information that is more coherent between countries. In such a cross-national

project, even the fact that one national statistical institute presents data by citizenship and the other by country of birth, results in a certain loss of comparability. Detailed statistical data by nationality, for example on the characteristics of immigrant parents of the children born in the countries of residence, or the data on the structure of households with immigrant members, would allow us to evaluate the proportion of various types of family arrangements.

The interviews were conducted with migrants who had lived in the country of residence for between 8 months and 8 years (cases of pioneers joined by the rest of family after 2004). Only two interviewees had firm plans to return within a few weeks or months from the date of the interview, and therefore could talk about the decisive reasons for moving back. The group that could provide more insight into return, or even treating migration as a temporary project and not as settlement, are the actual returnees. Their experiences in supporting their families, the education of children, or general social and professional adaptation, could shed light on the factors that were valued or, conversely, devalued while living abroad. Thus the ideas formed in the presented analysis could be potentially falsified or complemented with new ideas by conducting a study of return migrants in Poland.

### **Contribution of the thesis to knowledge, possibility of generalising the results**

My research contributes to a rich literature on migrant families, which up to date consists of many important works on migration as a family strategy (White, 2010b), and role of children and education in decisions of migrant parents (Moskal, 2011; Ryan & Sales, 2013; Ryan, et al., 2009). My qualitative analysis of migrants' perceptions of their childbearing abroad is a new contribution to the published results mentioned before and, together with studies undertaken by (Janta, 2013; Marczak, 2012), has the potential to form a framework for interpretation of the Polish mother's fertility in the UK.

The concept of delayed but unavoidable migration can be seen as a part of the phenomenon of modernization of the Polish society through crowding out emigration (Anacka & Okólski, 2010; Okólski, 2012).

My project is one of few post-accession studies undertaking a comparative perspective on migrants of one nationality in different countries of settlement (among them are Krzyżowski (2013) and Pustułka (2014). The attempt to compare migrants in Italy with

the ones in the UK, a much better researched area, opens a new perspective on the so far narrowly seen Polish migration in Italy. Potentially, my approach could speak to the research on Romanians as the dominant NMS nationality in Italy.

The mechanisms observed in the narratives allow us to better understand, from the migrants' own perspectives, the conditions that made them decide to settle in another EU country. It contributes to the understanding of phenomena such as the wave of births to Polish mothers in the UK or the continued outflow from Poland after 2008, even though the Polish economy seemed to resist the economic crisis exceptionally well by comparison to the other EU member states. The factors that are considered by families deciding to have children abroad, should be taken into account in designing measures to be introduced in the Polish family policy to counteract the lowest low fertility.

The study was originally designed in the context of post-2004 enlargement migration from Central and Eastern Europe to the old EU member states. However, since 2008, economic developments within the EU have been very challenging for some Southern European societies, resulting in the increase of emigration of their citizens. In 2012, over 106,000 Italians emigrated (Istat, 2014), which is more than emigration from Poland in the same period (70,000, (Central Statistical Office, 2013a)). For example, 10,000 Italians arrived in the UK declaring intended long-term migration, placing Italy among the top ten countries of previous residence of immigrants to the UK ((ONS, 2013a). Taking into consideration the labour market position of the young and the demographic situation in Italy, the results of emigration for this country may be as significant as the post-accession wave has been for Poland. In the context of delayed transition to adulthood, as well as postponed and low fertility of Italians – aspects in which Italians differ from the British or Nordic societies – it is interesting to observe if and when such immigrants will establish families in the countries of residence. Will they bear more children and earlier than their peers in the home country? It remains to be seen but the conclusions drawn from the study of Polish intra-EU migrants can contribute to understanding these phenomena.



## Annex 1: Profiles of the interviewees

To protect the anonymity of my interviewees, the interviews referred to in the analysis and in the short descriptions below have been altered with respect to names, exact profession, important events (e.g. earlier migratory paths), and place of residence. Ages given are at the time of the interview.

### **Interviewees in Italy (24 people, including 5 couples)**

**Antoni**, 32, is a single man from southern Poland. In 2003, after completing his undergraduate studies in Poland, he went for a business oriented Masters programme in Belgium, however he failed to secure employment there. In 2004 he applied for an international recruitment programme of a company from northern Italy. He has been employed by the same company ever since. He has experienced slow professional progress within the company, but declined the opportunity of a new job because it was based in the south of the country. He rents a flat on his own. Most of his friends are single, and are mainly from his work or met through other activities such as theatre or alpine club.

**Beata**, 32, comes from the south of Poland. She dreamt of becoming a tourist guide and for that reason she had chose tourism-related studies. In 2002 when a relative offered her a job as a badante, she came to Italy, initially only for the summer holidays. When the elderly person she was caring for broke her arm, Beata was asked to come and care for her again. Hence she abandoned her studies and started to come to work in Italy regularly, for 3 months at a time. She has stayed in one city in Italy since then, gradually improving her position from a badante to a live-out house cleaner, and then a cleaner in public premises employed by a cooperative. In 2010 she married an immigrant from North Africa, they have one baby and live in a rented flat – still in the same city.

**Cezary** was born in 1978 in Cracow. He is an opera singer. Cezary's wife is Italian, they met at a students' conference. Between 2006 and 2007 they spent some time in two non-EU countries, where they did postgraduate studies or scholarships. In 2008, already married, they moved in with Cezary's parents in Cracow, where he worked as a singing teacher and his wife taught Italian and learnt Polish. Disappointed with the meagre

earnings in Poland they moved to the wife's parents' house in the Italian countryside, where they faced a lot of hostility from Lega Nord supporters. Finally they got scholarships with residencies in the more open and artistic Venice. They have two young children, rent a flat and work as freelancers in the field of classical music.

**Daria and Daniel** are a Polish couple in their forties, both with secondary education, living in Emilia-Romana. Before migration they worked in their hometown in south-western Poland, but experienced financial troubles due to employment instability or poor profits from their small shop. Daria first came to Italy in 2000 to replace somebody as a carer for an elderly woman in northern Italy. Since then she had many periods of work as a badante in Italy, for various employers. Around 2003 she started to make arrangements (registering her work, getting a long-term residence) to bring her husband and two teenage sons to Italy. Finally in 2006 the family reunited. Daria works as a social assistant, employed by a cooperative. Daniel works as a technician. They rent the flat left empty after Daria's last employer died. They left parents and their section in Daria's father's house in Poland.

**Emilia** was born in 1974. She graduated in Economics and worked in an international manufacturing company, reaching a high managerial position. Her international experience included a summer job in Italy and two years' long contract in Germany with her employer. In 2010 she decided to leave not only her job (in the context of the crisis) but even the country (after a traumatic divorce). She found a similar level job in Italy, where she now lives with her new partner, also a highly skilled EU migrant. She has a flat and a house in Poland, but in Italy she rents a flat with her partner. Neither of them has children.

**Florentyna** is a 37-year-old nurse. She has always loved Italian culture and once got an opportunity to spend a holiday in Tuscany. One elderly lady, whom she met there, invited her to come and live with her some time later. After this experience Florentyna decided to live in Italy and work as a nurse. Her first job was in the countryside, where she felt isolated and decided to return. Yet, not being able to find satisfying employment in Poland she migrated again, this time to a large North Italian city. She enjoys the salary and

the character of a nurse's job in Italy, compared to the Polish conditions. Florentyna rents a flat together with a colleague, a non-EU health professional. After breaking up with her partner in Poland, she is single with no children.

**Gustaw** was born in 1978 in a village in south-eastern Poland. He is a carpenter by profession. In 1999 he first worked for some time in the south of Italy irregularly, in the textile industry. In 2003 he was recruited for another physical job in Italy, thanks to his communicative Italian. In the same period his wife, who is a nurse, worked in another region of Italy as a badante. Finally, in 2005 they came to work legally in northern Italy. For some time they lived in a flat above the workshop where Gustaw worked, but once they had a baby (in 2008) they decided the accommodation was unsuitable – as the workshop was full of sawdust. They moved to the suburbs of the city, where after maternity leave his wife returned to work in a hospital. Gustaw found an unskilled flexible job in a nearby agriturismo, allowing him to take and collect his son from the nursery. They wished to have a second child 2 years after the first one, but the wife miscarried. Since then the couple appears to be in crisis and Gustaw is unsure of the length and aims of their further stay in Italy.

**Hubert and Halina** are both 37 and live in central Italy. They met in Poland, where Halina, originally a teacher from Ukraine, had come as a domestic worker. When they got married they decided that Halina would stay with her elderly mother in Ukraine, while Hubert, through Halina's friend, was offered an irregular job in the construction sector in Italy. For some time he worked in Italy for about 2 months and then spent time with his family in Ukraine and Poland. However in 2007 their small son had an accident and required long and complicated treatment. The family tried to live in a city in Poland where the child was treated and often hospitalised, but it was difficult to live on one salary. Hubert's Italian boss persuaded him to return to work in Italy. After the necessary arrangements have been made, Halina and their son reunited with him. Hubert still works as a construction worker, but legally. Halina has long-term residence and apart from a short period as a carer, has been unemployed. Their only son's therapy was successfully completed in Italy, and he attends an Italian primary school and Ukrainian Saturday

school. They would like to move to a more comfortable flat, but cannot find anything better without having to move the child to another school.

**Irena** is in her forties, she has a second husband and three adolescent children from her first marriage. She used to be a single mother, with quite a satisfying job, an apartment and even began studies in her thirties. However, through an online chatroom she met and fell in love with a Polish man working abroad as a specialist in the shipyard industry. They tried to live together in Poland, but his Polish salary was highly unsatisfying. The couple and the youngest daughter moved to Italy, where the company that employed Irena's husband is based. She left her eldest daughter, a young student, and a son, in vocational school, in Poland. After completing his school, the son joined the mother and sister in Italy and waits to be employed in the same company as his stepfather. Irena enjoys Italian living, as long as she has a comfortable apartment, but she is very negative about the Italians' attitude to foreigners and poor employment opportunities for non-nationals. She says she gave up her own job and flat for the sake of being with the man she loves.

**Janina and Jan** are a couple in their late forties. They have secondary education and come from a small town. With economic transformation they lost stable employment and undertook a business that they have not managed to make profitable. In 1998 Janina's first labour migration to Italy turned to be organised by traffickers. Janina managed to escape the camp, paid for a job offer and became a cleaner in a hostel for foreign prostitutes, then a child minder and a live-in carer. Between 2000 and 2004 she was back in Poland, running a shop, again unsuccessfully. She migrated to Italy again, but this time decided to bring her husband over, which she succeeded in doing in November 2005. Their daughter (19) stayed in the family house in Poland and was supposed to study. However, she and her boyfriend came to visit for Christmas and stayed in Italy. For some time they lived together in a rented flat, then they separated households. At the time of the interview, Janina's only job was a few hours of cleaning per week and she longed for a full-time child-minding job. Since his arrival, Jan has had a few different jobs, arranged by his wife. Janina's sister and their elderly mother also moved to the same city in central Italy.

**Krystyna** is 28. She is the only child of a divorced mother from a small town in southeastern Poland. When she was 20 and had just finished technical secondary school, a relative offered her work in Italy as a live-in domestic servant. Krystyna was convinced it was once in a lifetime opportunity to leave her small town, so she left her job and a boyfriend and moved. She was employed by a rich family to do housework and help with their school aged children, while her employers worked full time. For one of her free evenings, Krystyna's employer arranged for her to meet her work colleague, a single Italian man in his thirties. They started to date and when the family fired Krystyna for refusing to take on more chores, the young woman moved in with her partner. Since then she worked as a day carer for a disabled man. She did a beautician training course and recently started to work as a shop assistant in a shop established by her parents-in-law. Krystyna and her partner had decided early on to have a child, but they have faced infertility. They have gone through 3 unsuccessful IVF attempts. They are also thinking about adoption and got married some time ago in order to satisfy the conditions for adoptive parents. They live in a separate section of a large residence owned by the husband's parents.

**Liliana** is 31. She comes from the south of Poland but she moved for studies to the north-east of the country. Then, still as a student, she moved to Lithuania, where she cooperated professionally with a local university. During a train journey she met an African immigrant living in Italy, and after graduating from university moved to join him in northern Italy. Liliana's partner is older than her, after being granted refugee status and re-taking his studies, he is naturalised in Italy and works as a highly skilled professional. Liliana has not worked in Italy, apart from some teaching in a Polish Saturday school. They have a small child who attends a nursery. They would like to get married, but lack of access to documents in the partner's country of origin is a barrier.

**Mateusz and Monika** are a young Polish couple, both aged 26. They first came to Italy as undergraduate students, on Erasmus programmes, to two different universities. During this period Mateusz learnt about a doctoral grant available in his host university, applied and was accepted. Having done their Masters, they moved back to Italy, to a city close to his university. Monika worked in a cafe for a few months of the tourist season, yet she could not find a permanent job. When interviewed, they were expecting their first child and preparing to get married.

**Norbert and Natalia** are a married couple. Norbert is 40, his wife is slightly younger. Norbert is a mining specialist. He used to work for a Polish state owned company, which also sent him for two short contracts in developing countries. At 35, he got a job opportunity in Italy, his wife followed with their baby. Natalia has a diploma in management, she was a manager in a state owned company when she got pregnant. In Italy she didn't work, instead, she had a second child. They lived in a town on the outskirts of Milan, in a rented apartment paid for by Norbert's employer. They were interviewed soon before their return to Poland, as Norbert found the Polish market offered him more of a professional challenge. Another reason for return was the fact their older child was about to start school education. They have an apartment in Poland, the money earned in Italy was used partly to repay the mortgage loan.

**Ola** is 32 and lives in northern Italy. She has an Italian husband and 2 children. Ola was brought up by her grandmother. When she got a BA in political science, she decided to go abroad to earn money. In 2003 she arrived in southern Italy for the first time, to work as a badante, but both her and the employing family realised the job was not for her. Instead, the elderly man's son fell in love with her. With some reluctance, after a few months Ola joined him in northern Italy, where he worked and lived. They got married and soon had their first child. Ola worked in the hospitality sector, but had to stop when she got pregnant. In 2007 she returned with her daughter to Poland, filed for a divorce, found a job and started a new life. However, after half a year she agreed to return to Italy because her child longed for her father. Since 2008 their relationship has improved, Ola returned to work and they had a second child. Ola's husband runs two shops. They live in a rented apartment, quite expensive, but too small for their family. At the same time, they are repaying a loan taken for improving her grandmother's house in Poland, which Ola will inherit one day.

**Piotr** lives in a city in northern Italy with his wife and three daughters. He and his wife are around 40, they come from eastern Poland. Piotr used to live from petty trade which he started back in vocational school. Their involvement with Italy began with seasonal work in agriculture. Then Piotr's wife started to work as a badante, while he stayed in Poland with their two small children. After the years 1997-2001 were spent

separated, they decided to reunite in Italy. While the children were registered together with their mother, Piotr's stay and work was irregular until 2005. He used to work in construction and manufacturing. He also started up a shop, but the business went bankrupt leaving the family with a loan to repay. The wife's professional situation is more stable, as she became a visiting social assistant, employed by a cooperative. Piotr completed a medical training and got employed part time by the same employer. He is also very active in the local Polish diaspora and a charity organisation. In 2009 they decided for a third child. They live in a nice but affordable apartment built within a social development scheme. They also own a house in Poland, currently taken care of by Piotr's father.

**Robert** is 37. As a student, he developed his own business as an event organiser. He was so successful and engaged in it that he didn't see any point in completing his studies in marketing. When he felt he could not achieve any more in Poland, he moved to Italy in July 2004. Initially he continued a long-distance relationship with his Polish girlfriend. In 2007, when she asked him to return, they broke up. Then he went to the UK, to join his brother, where he spent 4 months, partly working as a bartender. Subsequently he left the UK and returned to Italy. He also worked for some time in Singapore and Bangkok. In Italy and in Asia he has worked as a freelancer in his usual profession, in the fields of public relations, visual advertising and event organising. He has an Italian partner, five years older than him. For professional reasons they live apart, but within the same region. They have no children.

**Sylwia** (not fulfilling the recruitment criterion year of last moving to Italy, but kept as a contrast case for Ola, see footnote no. 19 on page 108) is a married woman in her mid thirties, living in northern Italy. She completed secondary education in her hometown in eastern Poland, then she worked in local public administration. Unable to advance within the office's hierarchy and bored, she quit her job and went to work abroad. In 2001 she married an Italian man older than herself, whom she met during summer holidays with her mother – a live in carer of his relatives. She moved into the flat where he lived with his teenage sons from a previous marriage. She has two children, born in 2004 and 2008; over that period she was at home, economically inactive. She started work (part time, on night shift) when her younger child was six months old, as the family had financial problems.

She was employed by a cooperative, within which she has been promoted to a supervisor of cleaning teams. Her husband retired early, he also had serious health issues, but recovered. They live in a very cheap council flat, in addition Sylwia expects to inherit property in Poland from her rather affluent parents. Together, the couple have had two children.

**Teresa** was interviewed in her mid thirties, in a town in northern Italy. She is a musician, educated in Poland, Italy (2000/2001 academic year), and Switzerland. Her Italian partner is also professionally involved in classical music and they had met at a festival abroad. In 2006, when they decided to move together, the partner wanted it to be in his hometown. Teresa performs at concerts all over Europe, and she finds living in Northern Italy very convenient for her travel. She and her partner are not married and have no children, as he still hasn't divorced his wife. Teresa declared that their relationship was in crisis and that should it finish, she probably would not stay in Italy.

#### **Interviewees in the UK (19 people, including 3 couples)**

**Adam** is 30. In Poland he used to study business administration and live with his parents. When they were unexpectedly forced to move out of their council flat and buy a small one, Adam decided to leave to make his parents' situation easier. He came to London in 2006, where he had a good friend and started to work as a driver. Apart from work, his aim in London was a private school of music production, his passion in which he wanted to become a professional. In 2006-2007 he co-funded and ran a courier company, but his business partner failed him. Adam lives with his girlfriend, an immigrant from Africa. In 2008 his girlfriend and his mother persuaded Adam to return to his abandoned studies, which he completes in an extramural mode by travelling to Poland frequently over four years. The couple want to do postgraduate studies (Adam – in logistics) and try to persuade their employers to invest in their studies. They have postponed buying a house and having children until after they have got their postgraduate diplomas.

**Barbara and Borys** are a married couple with one child, living in Greenwich. When they met, in their home city in southern Poland, he was a finance student and she was completing her PhD in art history – she is 6 years older than him. Then they moved to



Warsaw, as he got a job in the financial sector there while she didn't get employed at her university. Barbara could only get temporary jobs below her qualifications. In 2009 they bought an apartment on mortgage and had a child. Borys was encouraged to apply for a job in the City, and when he got one, they decided to move (2010). They rent a small terraced house, while they let out their flat in Warsaw. After two years Borys registered his company in the UK. Barbara completed MA studies in London and is about to start a PhD programme. They have a dilemma about whether to have another child as due to Barbara's age (36) it would need to be soon, but at the same time she has only started to develop academically again. They believe one day they will have to return to Poland permanently, as they are both only children, to care for their elderly parents.

**Celina** is 28, married, with one child. After graduating from economics, she used to work for a British company producing a drink in Poland. When the production in Poland was closed, she was offered the chance to continue her work in London. She moved, found a room in a flatshare with a former employee of her company. Disappointed with the company's plans of relocating her to a countryside factory, she looked for another job. Despite the break out of the economic crisis, in autumn 2008 she found a new job as a manager in a multinational company. She started a relationship with her former colleague, who is 10 years older than her and a professional from another EU country, and together they rented a separate apartment. In 2009, she got pregnant unintentionally. It turned out that her company is very child-friendly, with a paid 12-month maternity leave and flexible working time. Celina's husband decided to quit his full time job, first to help Celina at home, but eventually in order to become the primary carer of the child, so that Celina could return to developing her career. Due to his decision they save money by not using costly childcare services, but they have had to postpone home-buying. They rent a house in a part of London, where her husband's siblings also live with their children.

**Dorota** was interviewed at 35, pregnant with her fourth child. She comes from a town in northern Poland. She has a diploma in English literature. During the studies, she went to UK twice in order to work: once unsuccessfully trying to find an irregular job, another time through a programme of summer internships for students. At university she met her husband, a mechanic, and they moved back to her home town. They lived in her

parents' flat. Dorota only had unstable jobs, translations and private tutorials, without a work contract. Her husband had a job in his profession, but it was low paid so he often took extra tasks in the evenings. They have had 3 children during that period. The grandparents provided childcare, when the parents worked in the evenings. Early in 2011 a colleague persuaded the husband to go to London, to do the same job, for the same international company, for much better money. He went there, rented a flat and after three months and end of the school year the family reunited. Dorota spent the summer with the children, found a school and a nursery for the two older ones. She had planned to return to work once the smallest one turned 3, but then, not planning it, she got pregnant for the fourth time. The family rent a flat, they live on one salary plus child benefit, the salary is high enough that they don't qualify for other benefits.

**Edward** is a 28-year-old finance specialist in London. As a teenager, he spent a summer in the UK doing irregular work as a kitchen porter. Then, in 2005 he also got a summer job in the UK, again unregistered – to avoid taxation. He got his BA at an international university in Germany, followed by an International MSc in Finance in a Spanish graduate school. During his time in Barcelona, he began a homosexual relationship with a fellow student, a non-EU citizen. Towards the end of the studies Edward considered many potential places to work, but his partner insisted on London as the best place for career in their field. They both got jobs, although Edward's partner as a non-EU citizen had more difficulties. They rent a flat together, the partner is even considering buying. They both have jobs guaranteeing free evenings and weekends. With their profession and lifestyle, London is a good place to live, while Edward is afraid in Poland they would not be accepted and couldn't develop their careers.

**Franek** is 32, and lives and works in western England. In Poland he used to be an accountant, but lost a good position due to fraud of one of his employers. He didn't complete his studies and also had a personal crisis due to divorce. In 2008, with a new girlfriend, he went to work in the UK as a bus driver, through one of the massive recruitment programmes in Poland. His girlfriend got pregnant and insisted on returning to Poland. The relationship broke apart, leaving Franek with joint debt and a son he is not allowed to see. In 2010 he returned to UK, again as a bus driver. He rents a flat with a few other single men. He has a girlfriend in Poland and they plan to move to London together.

**Gabriela** is 29, single and works as a professional manager in a global logistics company. She first came to the UK on a yearly student exchange, followed by an internship. Then, back in Poland, towards the end of her studies in economics, she applied for an entry position in a multinational company, as she always wanted to work for a corporation and abroad. The company has a well-defined progression path and a global programme of talent management, for which Gabriela was selected. Although she started work in Warsaw, her career involved a period of work in the Netherlands and another, of frequent business trips to Asia. During her time in Warsaw, Gabriela had a partner, whom she planned to marry and with whom she moved to a flat she bought on mortgage. However, the couple broke up after she transferred to the Netherlands. As the next step in her career, Gabriela chose a company's division in London. She has a two-year contract, with the costs of renting a flat covered by the employer. She leads a busy social life traveling on weekend to friends all over Europe. She was critical about the high costs of living in the UK and declared she would only stay longer if the employer still paid for her flat. In the long-term perspective, she wouldn't want to live with a family and children in the UK.

**Helena and Henryk** are both in their 30s and have two children together. They come from a town in eastern Poland, where they lived in their own flat, but had very low income. Helena got an MA in social policy and had a short internship with the local authorities. Henryk has secondary education and worked as a security guard. In autumn 2004 they moved to a city in England, where Henryk could start work in his dream profession: as a lorry driver. They decided that this job would allow them to buy a flat and let Helena stay at home once they have a baby. Helena worked as a cleaner until she had her first child, and then had the second one. Afterwards, she completed many professional courses and when their children became big enough she found a job as an Ethnic Minority Coordinator in local education authorities. She also teaches in a Polish Saturday school.

**Iwona and Igor** are a married couple with two children. Iwona is 36 and has vocational education while Igor is 32 and is an architect. In Poland, Igor had very low paid internships and he couldn't get a better job in Warsaw as he spoke little English. When Iwona's sister living in the UK needed help, they decided to go there for a while, both to

earn some money and learn English. They moved in November 2003 – Igor insisted their move was very much influenced by the EU accession, they only came early to „reserve a place". As they arrived before the 2004 EU-enlargement, they enrolled at a language school and got student visas allowing them to work. They moved into a houseshare and quickly got jobs in elderly care homes. Within weeks after the EU accession they moved to regular, better jobs: Igor in a food factory, Iwona, in light industry, in her profession. In the following years Igor was promoted to the marketing division of the factory, they got married and moved to more comfortable and less crowded flats. In 2007 Iwona was pregnant and they had almost decided to return to Poland as there were more job opportunities in construction, but Igor got a job offer in their city. Iwona had their first child and a year of maternity leave, than another child some time after her return to work. Each child started a private nursery after turning one; this was especially costly when both attended, before the older started school. Thanks to having full-time jobs, recently the couple were able to buy a detached house on mortgage.

**Joanna** was interviewed at the age of 26. She came to London in 2005 to study in art school. Her mother had gone there first to arrange for her stay, lived with her during the first year and left only after she made sure Joanna's partner was trustworthy. Joanna and her partner, also Polish but raised in another country, met in a department store where she worked during holidays. They married when she was 23. Joanna graduated and got a job in advertising, based on her visual arts skills. By 2012 they had decided to have a child (Joanna was pregnant during the interviewed) and also saved money towards buying a flat. They decided to move to Warsaw, to her parents, counting on their help with the baby. They plan to move to the parents' house and use their savings to buy a flat to let out as an investment. Joanna has made arrangements to work remotely for her employer.

**Kamila** is 26 and lives in a city in southern England. As a teenager she worked in a factory in the UK, in the summer of 2004. A year later, after finishing high school, she moved to England again, with no definite plans. She had several jobs, including one she was really satisfied with, but at some point found herself working simply in a supermarket. In 2008 she got pregnant, without planning it and without being in a stable relationship. She worked until the birth of her son, then she started maternity leave and got generous

social assistance as a lone mother. The period at home with the child allowed her to define a new aim in life. She returned to work part time as a cleaner and completed an alternative medicine course. She is preparing to set up her own treatment studio, when her son starts school.

**Lucyna** is in her forties, married, with two adult children. She and her husband had their own businesses (beauty salon and a transport company) in the area of Warsaw, but they were dissatisfied with the changing regulations and barriers they encountered as entrepreneurs. Her husband also worked as an international truck driver and he learnt that he could earn more as a driver in the UK. In 2006 he moved and after a year Lucyna sold her salon and joined him; at that time they were 42 and 37 respectively. Their son was 18 and there was no clear education path for him in the UK, so he was sent back to Poland to finish high school under his grandparents' supervision. The younger daughter, aged 14, stayed with the parents and started secondary school. After a month Lucyna started to work as a beautician, on her own, in clients' homes. In 2009 her husband launched his company. Their son returned to the UK to work and lives with his parents. Lucyna and her husband helped their daughter to get a student loan and go to university. They live in a town in the east of England. They would like to buy a house in the UK but they need to sell their old house to get money for the initial payment.

**Oskar** is 26 and lives in the west of England. Back in Poland he worked in a factory and studied on weekends. In 2006, inspired by the popularity of migration, he went to the UK, initially only for the summer. In autumn he applied for a leave from the university and returned to England, to the same city and same job as before. In December he met his girlfriend, also Polish. They moved in together, and in March they had to face an unplanned pregnancy. For four years the family lived together but in 2011 the couple separated and Oskar's former partner moved with the daughter to a new partner. Oskar has shared custody and spends every second afternoon and each weekend with his daughter.

**Patrycja** is around 30, with accounting oriented secondary education, and a married mother of three children. When she was on first parental leave her employer went bankrupt, her husband also lost his job and afterwards the family gradually fell into a very

difficult financial situation. They decided that her husband must go to work abroad around 2006, when they were expecting their second baby and living with her husband's parents. After a few months Patrycja and the children arrived in London. They first lived in a room in a houseshare but over years managed to rent an independent flat. The husband does construction and renovation work, Patrycja is at home with children. In 2011 they had the third child and would like to have another one. Thanks to stable employment, social benefits and careful planning, the family is happy, plans to stay in the UK and buy a house one day.

**Roman** is 33 and single. In 2005, after dropping out of college in Poland, he came to the UK to work. He worked for about 6 years in the hospitality sector, in 3 different locations – as he moved to another town after each finished relationship. Subsequently, he worked for a few months in a factory, but was then offered a job as a restaurant manager. He has lived in various rented flats, with friends or workmates. At the time of his interview he declared his latest relationship with another EU-immigrant was suddenly breaking up, although they had planned to get married the following year.

**Sandra** was interviewed at 27. She first lived in the UK between 2003 and 2005 during an international high school programme. After final exams, she was not accepted to her selected British universities, so she left England and prepared to undertake studies in her home city in Poland. Yet in September 2005 she was accepted by a Scottish university from her reserve list and moved there to study. There she met her partner, a political refugee from one of the African states. After getting a BA in natural sciences she decided to go for postgraduate studies in law in London. In 2010, when she completed the studies she was already pregnant. In London they lived in rented rooms or studios, afterwards her parents, successful Polish entrepreneurs, bought them a flat in a town east of London. After her studies, and while pregnant, Sandra undertook unpaid work for one company and completed the project successfully. Half a year afterwards the employer offered her further, remunerated work. Her partner is finishing studies at a local college and their daughter attends a nursery.

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