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Contents

Children, Parents and Institutions in the Mobility Maze

This timely issue of *Central and Eastern European Migration Review* addresses the clear urgency of promoting empirical research focused on the realm of transnational experiences of family migrants from Poland. The main strength of the volume is a presentation of the four main pillars of the mobility processes, showcasing two crucial receiving countries of Polish contemporary family settlement abroad. More specifically, the qualitative studies gathered here are rooted in a multi-perspective approach with regard to the actors that they examine and cover both the relatively well-researched destination of the United Kingdom and the more 'novel' or 'recent' example of Norway as the receiving state, with the latter marked by family reunification mobility and considerable visibility of Poles in the ethnicised public discourses. The four main elements of the 'mobility maze' that the papers can help navigate reflect the subjects, handlers and agents of the Polish mobility. They are constituted by two generations of family migrants – **parents and children** – as well as **schools/teachers** and **peer groups** representing specific politics and practices of integration with the host society.

The most pronounced empirical and knowledge gap that this volume seeks to address is linked to childhood and children. We argue that looking at the youngest generation of migrants can be paramount in acting as a magnifying glass to discern the relevance of migration issues across different analytical levels that are often unjustly treated as separate. Children themselves have finally arrived in migration scholarship as the reflexive and critical agents of mobility that they are (see e.g. Orellana, Thorne, Chee and Lam 2001; Bushin 2009; Huijsmans 2011; Ní Laoire, Carpena-Méndez and White 2011; Tyrrell, White, Ní Laoire and Carpena-Méndez 2013). At the same time, children as migrants are nevertheless very much subjected to the decisions, ideologies and actions of others. Secondly, migrant children are enveloped by their respective receiving countries' school systems, where they become 'others' among the locals. Thirdly, it is the children that encounter the representatives of the host society in the purest form, namely by being submerged in peer groups abroad, making friends and negotiating the categories of sameness and difference (De Reus, Few and Blume 2005; Pustułka, Ślusarczyk and Strzemecka 2016; Slany and Strzemecka – in this volume). The four pillars of **children, parents, peer groups and schools/teachers** shed light on the interrelations between the macro, micro and meso levels in the analyses of the migration issues affecting Polish transnational families abroad.

It is important to underscore that the debate centring on children and how other institutional, familial and group contexts frame and examine them is relatively new – both for Polish migration scholarship and in broader terms. While children 'on the move' have been covered at length from the positions of vulnerability (e.g. as refugees, victims of crimes) and dependency (i.e. as the 'trailing' family members tied to primary economic male migrants and 'mere luggage'), studies that investigate children's experiences from the modern perspective offered by sociology of childhood remain scarce (see e.g. Orellana *et al.* 2001; Bhabha 2008; Dobson 2009; Ensor and Goździak 2010). The findings of the Transfam project supply material from interviews with children conducted from a child-centred perspective (see e.g. Slany and Strzemecka 2015; Pustułka *et al.* 2016; Struzik and Pustułka 2016, forthcoming), alleviating the skewed perspective, which largely details the usually

negative portrayals of migrant children's behavioural and school problems (e.g. Kawecki, Kwatera, Majerek and Trusz 2012; Szczygielska 2013; Kawecki, Trusz, Kwatera and Majerek 2015) and only marginally sees them as important actors within the social systems of transnational kinship (e.g. Danilewicz 2011; White 2011). Simultaneously, international scholars increasingly look to migrant children to shed light on the particularities of the context of Polish migrant children (e.g. Moskal 2010, 2015, 2016, Ní Laoire *et al.* 2011). For instance, Ní Laoire and colleagues researched children in Ireland and focused on translocal belongings (2011: 160, 162), especially tackling the ways in which sense of belonging is perceived, renegotiated and manifested across the different contexts of 'pluri-local life-worlds' (*ibidem*: 159). Drawing on Ní Laoire and colleagues (2011), Pustułka *et al.* (2016) claim that Polish children's individual identity is built through constant negotiations with others in the process of doing multi-layer identity and belonging, reiterating that the three main social contexts of this process encompass family, peer groups and global culture. Analogically, three components of affinity and propinquity, language and lifestyle, as well as family practices (e.g. leisure patterns, food) correspond with these areas (Pustułka *et al.* 2016) and are also explored in this volume by Slany and Strzemecka, as well as Moskal and Sime. On this note, we would like to emphasise that the editors' engagement and work in the international research project Transfam (*Doing Family in a Transnational Context. Demographic Choices, Welfare Adaptations, School Integration and the Everyday Life of Polish Families Living in Polish–Norwegian Transnationality*)[1] constituted a profound impulse for bringing together research that revolves around children in mobility in the Polish case. As an international research endeavour, the Transfam project has fostered international cooperation and yielded in-depth examinations of the relevance of the Polish migration to Norway, more importantly using a range of methodological approaches to provide a holistic portrait of the family and mobility nexus in the case of Polish–Norwegian transnationality.

The multi-perspective lens of Transfam puts families under the microscope, addressing, among others, challenges faced by migrant children, both as members of families and broader kin, and as 'first points of contact' with the receiving society as school attendees. A finding that transpires from the Transfam research results reflects the manner in which the centrality of children's transnational biographies shines through the stories of parents, teachers and children themselves. As argued by the authors in this volume, the fundamental position of children is crucial for discerning a systemic policy standpoint of the receiving locale's institutions, as well as clearly deterministic for migrant parents and patterns of settlement. This argument notwithstanding, children also experience a loss of social status acquired in the country of origin, as the migrant trajectory often causes feelings of confusion across the 'interconnected spaces' (Ní Laoire *et al.* 2011: 157). This means that, as Wærdahl argues in this volume, the children feel 'temporarily visible'. Consequently, the articles presented here seek to fill the void with regard to disconnected themes and areas in the studies on children, discussing their belonging, linguistic practices, school performance, challenges and outcomes, as well as family ties.

The next departure point proving the tangible interlinks of the debates on the children/families/mobility nexus is that it cannot be denied that the identity constructions, agency and subjectivity of a child migrant will always rely on the connections between the micro, macro and meso levels (Ślusarczyk and Nikielska-Sekuła 2014: 177). Breaking down the matrix in which children take centre stage, it is nevertheless notable to see them as entangled with other mobility-relevant aspects and ascertain that they predominantly live their lives abroad as a consequence of their parents' decisions. While this does not negate the fact that children's views are only considered to a limited extent in the family mobility decision making and trajectories, it is clear that many adults explain their reasons to migrate as something they have embarked on 'for the sake of the family', not least in the Polish case, as Ryan and Sales (2013), Ślusarczyk and Pustułka (in this volume) and Pustułka *et al.* (2016) argued. More specifically, in terms of the immediate nuclear family practices and orientations abroad, children's life chances and pathways are shaped by the parental attitudes and views about mobility and

belonging (see e.g. Lopez Rodriguez 2010; Ní Laoire *et al.* 2011; Pustułka 2014; Pustułka *et al.* 2016; Ślusar-czyk and Pustułka – in this volume; Trevena, McGhee and Heath – in this volume). They also depend on the somewhat more measurable role that the family's social class status and its economic standing play in eliciting and evoking the realisation of certain educational ideologies (Kirova 2007; Goulbourne, Reynolds, Solomos and Zontini 2010). Migrating to ensure a better future for their children means that parents not only hold their offspring's happiness dear, but also actively engage with their educational attainment (see Trevena *et al.*; Ślusarczyk and Pustułka; Wærdahl – all in this volume). The financial stabilisation of the family situation post-migration be-comes one of the predicators of children's (educational and adaptation) success.

Next, on the meso level, peer groups are particularly conducive to how migrant children's wellbeing and success are viewed. Though not directly covered by the authors in this volume, they seem to permeate as a backdrop for the final area enclosed by the **school** setting**.** In fact, it can be argued that there is no more important setting here than the macro-level of systemic, institutional and political sets of beliefs that are real-ised in the context of schools, classrooms, curricula and so on (Devine 2005, 2009; Kirova 2007; Arzubiaga, Noguerón and Sullivan 2009; Portes and Rivas 2011). While there is certain progress and more dedication to informing parents about the differing ideologies guiding the schooling systems across Europe (Devine 2005; Ryan, Sales, Lopez Rodriguez and D'Angelo 2008; Sales, Lopez Rodriguez, D'Angelo and Ryan 2010; Kosmalska 2012; Kułakowska 2014; Trevena 2014), it remains valid to claim that the migrant parents' resent-ment and resistance towards educational approaches abroad may affect children's willingness to integrate and impact on both their peer relations (see e.g. Pustułka 2014) and their educational outcomes (Trevena *et al.* – in this volume). In that sense, the families need assistance that is aimed at overcoming the challenges of migration processes. Various forms of aid on the one hand relate to the available welfare instruments (see Ślusarczyk and Pustułka – in this volume), but also signify the contact with people from their new surroundings (teachers, peers/friends, neighbours, co-workers), as Wærdahl correctly argues in this volume. Some of the 'zones of contact' are further explored in this special issue's papers, equally in the UK (by Moskal and Sime) and in Norway. Paradoxically, at present, many concerns appear to stem from an evident lack of family-centred diaspora politics and policies on the part of the Polish state.

In sum, migrant children are never left in a vacuum as subjects with full agency; rather, their biographies and experiences are something of a litmus test for the irrevocable connectivity of the nuclear family (migrant parents), transnational kinship, peer group, and the socio-legal and educational system of the receiving country. One further dimension of the fourfold analysis and the thematic enquiries into the lives of children pertains to the aforementioned geographic scope and context. Broadly speaking, the selected articles zoom in on the two key destinations of the Polish post-2004 mobility and include analyses of migrant families residing in the United Kingdom (Trevena *et al.*; Moskal and Sime) and Norway (Slany, Strzemecka; Ślusarczyk and Pustułka; and Wærdahl). Peripheral yet equally important are the two somewhat differently positioned contributions on the amassed gendered (conjugal and interfamilial) causes of emigration found among Polish women (Ur-bańska) and the ethnicised reception of migrant children in Norway (Nikielska-Sekuła). The authors paint a multidimensional picture made possible by the range of methodologies that the studies employ, which we will now describe in more detail.

Contributions and structure of the volume

The issue comprises seven articles, as well as one research report. Krystyna Slany and Stella Strzemecka's article *Who Are We? Cultural Valence and Children's Narratives of National Identifications* opens the collec-tion. In their analysis of Transfam's empirical material collected during interviews with young children of contemporary Polish migrants in Norway, the authors share a robust and designated framework for linking

theoretical conceptualisations of identities to children's stories. With their timely and innovative revival of Antonina Kłoskowska's cultural valence (adoption of culture) approach, Slany and Strzemecka demonstrate a plethora of factors that determine the relationally constructed belonging(s) of the youngest migrants. Their findings prove that children not only need a sense of national belonging(s), but also gladly demonstrate their identification(s). Slany and Strzemecka concur with international scholars in saying that expressing identification neither necessarily means belonging to a single national culture (e.g. Polish and/or Norwegian), nor does it equate with the adoption of said culture. The approach proposed by the authors appears to have a continuous relevance for future investigation, as children's identity work is clearly tied to the scope and strength of the internalised material and symbolic elements of their parents' home country, yet is also likely to be subject to change in the context of the host society, with its ideologies transported through schooling, peer groups and the broader integration politics of the Norwegian state.

The next article, Marta Moskal and Daniela Sime's *Polish Migrant Children's Transcultural Lives and Language Use*, transports us to Scotland, where Polish children have had a chance to be incorporated into the educational system over the last decade, following the most intensive migrant influx occurring immediately after Poland's EU accession. The authors bring together two stand-alone studies and discuss the vital issue of language use among children with a Polish ethnic background. Basing their arguments on interviews with children, parents and teachers, as well as observations in schools and family homes, Moskal and Sime point to the dynamic and struggles for linguistic hegemony between the public/school/majority language (English) and the private/family competence in the parents' mother tongue (Polish). While Polish children are found to have substantial language skills in English, which may even leave them operating as cultural interpreters, there is a downside to the fact that maintenance and tuition of the home/ethnic language falls exclusively on families. Therefore, Moskal and Sime argue, there is a need to reflect upon the current form and focus of the language policies, as the capital, capacity and identity work encapsulated in the use of language have a cardinal effect on the situation of the transnational migrant families and children. According to the authors, reform of educational policies and practices should not only encompass Polish children in Scotland, but rather tackle the ethnic and linguistic diversity among school-aged migrants across Europe.

Switching to the stories of Polish parents raising school-aged children in Norway, Magdalena Ślusarczyk and Paula Pustułka demonstrate how parental perceptions of the Norwegian education system not only vary and change over time, but may also hinder or aid their children's adaptation processes. In their article *Norwegian Schooling in the Eyes of Polish Parents: From Contestations to Embracing the System*, the authors point to the fact of constant 'referring back' by the parents to what they know about schools either from their own experiences of growing up in Poland, or from the stories and comparisons made with reference to the kin members left behind. Ślusarczyk and Pustułka differentiate the generalised educational ideologies with which they find the parents eventually complying, and the more specific evaluations of certain practices of disciplining, social distancing and grading. Above all else, the authors clearly argue that Polish family migration is no longer hectic, but rather child-centric in terms of how educational attainment and ease of anchoring a child (or children) in the school setting has become a priority for the parents. As with the previous article, when reflecting on Norway the authors also point to the need for critical assessment of the potential systemic ethnic discrimination on the one hand, and add individual biographic experiences that allow the Polish parents to alleviate the tensions stemming from cultural and systemic differences on the other. Using the temporal dimension of the length of stay abroad as a predicator, they also show a novel area of Polish parents actually praising the Norwegian schools for their approach to diversity and inclusion, as well as support and assistance mechanisms.

Staying in a similar framework of learning about children from their parents, Paulina Trevena, Derek McGhee and Sue Heath's article further highlights the paramount dedication and potential misunderstandings

that Polish migrant parents face, this time in the context of the United Kingdom as the receiving state. In their article *Parental Capital and Strategies for School Choice Making: Polish Parents in England and Scotland*, the authors focus on the critical moment on the trajectory of migrant children's education that is the selection of a particular school. This process is comparatively interesting, since only the recent democratisation and marketisation of schooling in Poland has brought the dilemmas of school choice and rankings to the homes of middle- and upper-class Poles (Kołodziejska and Mianowska 2008). On the contrary, as Trevena and colleagues demonstrate, the British education system elicits and demands parental involvement in the school choice process to a much greater extent. The authors examine the desires for high academic achievement that Poles (regardless of their social class status, and thus unlike the native populations in England and Scotland) believe to be the guarantee of a successful life abroad. At the same time, Trevena *et al.* share evidence on how this ideology needs to be reconciled with the lack of 'insider knowledge' about the system. In the face of widespread educational misconceptions, the researchers see Polish parents as relying on 'bonding social capital' and provide insights into choosing faith-based educational entities. Furthermore, they venture the claim that any 'mistakes' that are unavoidable in the face of unfamiliarity with the local context may in fact have a long-lasting negative effect for the educational outcomes of Polish children in England and Scotland.

Going back to Norway, Randi Wærdahl's contribution draws on the Transfam findings and pairs them with the interview material collected for subsequent projects. In her article entitled *The Invisible Immigrant Child in the Norwegian Classroom: Losing Sight of Polish Children's Immigrant Status Through Unarticulated Differences and Behind Good Intentions*, Wærdahl wonders what awaits Polish children who arrive in Norway. Though Polish migrants might be the most visible ethnic group in Norway at present (Bell and Erdal 2015), there is little attention given to Polish children, especially in the field of educational policy. The author examines how Polish migrant children are faring through the prism of school integration, looking at the stories shared by Polish migrant and returned mothers, teachers who work with Polish children on a daily basis in Norwegian schools, as well as social workers. In her paper, Wærdahl shows that Polish children are frequently seen as unproblematic due to their cultural and racial proximity to the local population. At the same time, she argues that downplaying the differences of norms, expectations and ideologies that guide school and necessitate certain behaviours as appropriate on the part of children and parents alike can in fact be a 'disservice' to the children whose challenges are overlooked. By engaging with the categories of sameness and difference, Wærdahl's contribution expands the outlook of this volume, which calls for employing a critical lens for looking at ethnicity and mobility in postmodern families (De Reus *et al.* 2005).

Finally, in the article *Transnational Motherhood and Forced Migration. The Unexplored Reasons of the Polish Working Class Women Migration 1989–2010 and Their Consequences*, Sylwia Urbańska focuses on making a broader typology of maternal migration and absence. She presents a biographically oriented case-study, mainly investigating the intersection of culture, economic conditions as well as pre-existing kinship structure for mother–child relations in the separated dyad. Urbańska demonstrates how the left-behind husband and in-laws impact on the migrant women's mothering experiences and the emotional weight of the broken family bonds across time and space. Urbańska's approach interestingly contextualises the story of a Polish migrant mother in the body of literature on domestic/intimate partner violence, dissolution of conjugal relations through and due to mobility, as well as forced migration. Using the biography of her respondent, Aldona, she shows how transnational mothering should be a conceptually and empirically more nuanced label/notion. The stories of 'unbecoming' mothers and wives illustrate a process in which migration exacerbates the intersection of gender/caring family regimes, rather than being a simple function of spatial distance.

In the separate section that once again returns our attention to Norway, Karolina Nikielska-Sekuła's research report *Selected Aspects of Norwegian Immigration Policy Towards Children* presents the issues concerning the conditions of migrant children's lives in the light of selected models of immigration and integration

policies. The author makes the secondary sources, such as the *White Paper* on migration issued to the Norwegian Parliament, more familiar and relevant for a broader conception of policy analysis, also pointing to the interrelations and interdependencies between political backing and the lives of different ethnic groups. Nikielska-Sekuła also makes use of expert interviews and ethnographic observations, indicating that children are an important target group of the Norwegian integration policy. She claims that the educational system and Child Welfare Services remain the most powerful entities that shape the agenda and determine what kind of position migrant children occupy in the Norwegian public discourse, parenting practices and society in general.

Overall, all contributions touch upon several research areas within transnationalism and migration, Polish mobility and family studies, as well as, first and foremost – the experiences and positions of migrant children. The main areas of focus outlined above crisscross throughout the analyses presented in this volume, suggesting a preference that should be given to an intersectional approach, capable of leveraging the former 'sedentary bias'. In this sense, research on children may not only no longer assume settlement in one place as normative and somehow easier for children due to their young age, but also ceases to reduce mobility to an always negative occurrence. Instead, the changing understanding of home and place among children whose voices and stories we can witness through the articles include 'images and emotions from both their locality of origin and their current place of residence' (Moskal 2015: 143). Replacing the flawed, yet deeply rooted and widely reproduced thesis of immigrant children who 'quickly adapt' (Ní Laoire *et al.* 2011: 74) faster and easier than adults (e.g. Ní Laoire *et al.* 2011: 161; Strzemecka 2015), it is proposed to further investigate how migrant children are required to put in a lot of work and effort to become part of the societies to which they transnationally belong. This applies equally to their own self-perceptions as to their position and agency in the eyes of others – their parents and institutions, as well as local peer groups they aspire to. We hope that this issue of *Central and Eastern European Migration Review* will become an impulse for ongoing and all-encompassing research that takes into account the '**mobility maze**' of peer relations, teachers' expectations, (national and global) schooling ideologies, and parental visions and goals that Polish and other migrant children find themselves navigating across Europe.

Notes

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Who Are We? Cultural Valence and Children's Narratives of National Identifications

Krystyna Slany*, Stella Strzemecka*

The article provides a sociological analysis of national identities of Polish children growing up in Norway. The research results presented are unique in the sense that the portrayals of national identifications constructed in the process of migration are shown through direct experiences of children. The analysis is based on semi-structured interviews with children, observation in the research situation (children's rooms) and Sentence Completion Method. Adopting Antonina Kłoskowska's analytical framework of national identity and her terminology of the so called 'cultural valence' (adoption of culture), we argue that identities are processual and constructed, a result of the fact that mobility took place at a certain moment in time and in a specific geographical space. In addition, we see identities as conditioned by a plethora of identifiable objective and subjective reasons. The intensified mobility of children due to labour migrations of their parents leads to multiple challenges within the (re)constructions of children's identities in their new place of settlement.

Keywords: children; migration; national identifications; Poland; Norway

Introduction: researching children's national identification

The article deals with the highly topical issue of national identifications of children of Polish migrants and is empirically grounded in the research results of *Children's Experience of Growing up Transnationally*, a study conducted within the framework of the project titled *Doing Family in Transnational Context. Demographic Choices, Welfare Adaptations, School Integration and Every-Day Life of Polish Families Living in Polish–Norwegian transnationality* (Transfam). The question of identities among children raised in the families of Polish immigrants in Norway is particularly relevant in view of the fact that it has become a new immigration country for Poles after Poland's accession to the European Union in 2004. It gained further prominence as a destination locale in the face of the global economic crisis (Coulter, van Ham and Findlay 2013), as other Western European economies (e.g. the UK and Ireland) were gravely impacted (Terazi and Şenel 2011) and pushed CEE nationals away from their labour markets. According to estimates, Polish immigrants are the largest group of foreigners living in the Kingdom of Norway (SSB 2015). The number of Poles (especially families with children registered in the flows) is increasing annually (see Iglicka and Gmaj 2014; SSB 2015).[1]

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The objective statistical background confirms the urgent need for conducting systematic research dedicated to children from a multidimensional perspective (including Polish and Norwegian cultural background, social, institutional and legal factors, as well as global trends). An important factor is the noticeable difference between the two national cultures, with national norms and values permeating many spheres of everyday lives and only limited space allowed for multicultural optics in policies, institutions and practices. In this context, the tensions that children migrants may experience are a particularly valuable area of inquiry, and the main question is as follows: *Who are the Polish children* (or perhaps just children of Polish migrants?) *in Norway?* It is vital to see what can be said about their identities, experiences, processes of self-labelling, or their everyday joys and worries. Children's experiences and feelings reveal much more than just their individual character: they are embedded in some of the more general global trends that facilitate inquiries into migrating subjects. Overall, research focusing on the issue of children's identities documents that children have a strong sense of their identities as well as their well-being. Moreover, they are confident and involved learners, highly effective in terms of communicating their views to others (see AG 2009). Fast-paced global changes in the societal, economic and cultural realms reach and affect children, permeating into the core of children's world. They speed up the process of growing up and expand children's intellectual, cognitive, critical-thinking and reflective capacities, raising their overall level of consciousness and sensitivity to the processes going on around them. This clearly applies to the process of migration, which they attune to as active participants.

In this article, we want to emphasise the uniqueness of the voice of children in the description of national identifications from the sociological perspective, which is fundamentally different from the psychological perspective.[2] Diane Hogan (2012: 23) offers a strong conviction that 'sociologists of childhood criticise psychology for its focus on documenting age-related competencies at the expense of investigating what it means to be a child. They argue that the developmental approach leads to a detached and impoverished understanding of children's needs'. Furthermore, Hogan argues, 'the ontological and epistemological basis for this (sociological) approach lies mainly in constructivist and critical theory paradigms. The methodologies are primarily case studies with children conceptualised as active participants of the research endeavor, and the favoured methods of data collection are interviews and participant observations. There is a strong emphasis on reflexivity, and on interpretative approaches to analysis'. Hogan (*ibidem*) points out to the pitfalls of psychological approach as seen by sociologists, which she perceives as the fact that 'focus on development has led to the neglect of the quality and meaning of children's present lives, the search for 'universal' laws of child development, the assumption that child development is 'natural', a view of children as passive, and a focus on age-related competency/deficits rather than on subjective experiences'.

This perspective emphasises the complexity and multidimensional nature of the socio-cultural environment, as well as political, institutional, legal, individual and biographical contexts in which the processes of adaptation take place (Kłoskowska 1996).[3] While painting a clearly sociological portrait of children's national identifications, we address the strong presence of migration experiences in the lives of children growing up abroad. On the basis of findings obtained through selected research methods and techniques we argue that children have a strongly developed sense of belonging and identity. Children identify with specific locales (e.g. the village that they or their parents come from), people (e.g. kin members, friends, acquaintances), as well as cultural artefacts belonging to both their country of origin and the destination country (language, rituals, habits).

Our findings provide specific data about processes taking place in the early phase of migration (among children aged 6 to 13). The paper's main aim is to show which identifications are manifested by children experiencing the situation of migration. International mobility is seen as causing multifaceted changes in family system, school system, peer relations, as well as demands and expectations of the receiving state, particularly when compared to those of the sending country. We assume that national identifications at this stage of

the life-cycle need to be seen as socially constructed and processual in character. They are to some extent a response to the subjective and objective factors impacting life in the new country. In order to uncover and analyse the national identifications of children of Polish immigrants in Norway, we employ the theoretical framework of cultural valence, proposed by the renowned Polish sociologist Antonina Kłoskowska in 1996. The results of our study demonstrate that migrant children not only need a sense of national belonging but also manifest their identifications. At the same time, expressing identification does not necessarily mean belonging to a single national culture, nor does it equate adoption, or valence, of this culture.[4] Our research into migrant children's identities makes a small yet unique contribution to the existing body of knowledge, particularly so in the context of Anselm L. Strauss's important thesis put forward in *Mirrors and Masks. The Search for Identity*, which holds that 'a man must be viewed as embedded in a temporal matrix not simply of his [her] own making, but which is peculiarly and subtly related to something of his own making-his conception of the past as it impinges on himself' (Strauss 1959: 164). Therefore, the migration process is unique in how it forces individuals to tackle the question of identity on an almost daily basis. A child migrant wonders who he or she is in the new social setting, whether they feel 'at home' here or, on the contrary, experience alienation and feel 'foreign' or unfamiliar. Importantly, the experiences of self-identifications and ways of belonging to spaces in the early life impact on the future choices and life-orientations, as they form the projected identities with the use of resources and richness of two or more cultures (Castells 1997).

The literature review: intersections of nation, identity and childhood in mobility

Over the last two decades, there has been growing interest among social scientists in migrant children and young people (Orgocka 2012), but, as noted by Moskal (2014: 279) 'the perspectives of migrant children and young people have been largely omitted in youth studies. Existing literature focuses predominantly on young people born to migrant parents in the host country, while the problems of first generation of migrant youth have received limited attention'. The current research landscape is marked by quite a number of studies dedicated to children's identities in general. However, a review of the sociological literature shows an apparent research gap when it comes to the issue of Polish migrant children's identities as a specific topic of empirical and fieldwork-based studies. It is easier to find studies on adaptation, communication, language competence, diaspora/migrant organisations and educational entities. Notably, much research on Polish migrant families with children in the receiving countries has been conducted by foreign researchers and/or Polish scholars affiliated with universities abroad. Some relevant authors in this area include White (2011), Moskal (2010, 2014, 2015), Ní Laoire, Carpena-Méndez, Tyrrell, White (2011, 2013), Praszałowicz, Irek, Małek, Napierała, Pustułka, Pyłat (2013), as well as Ryan and Sales (2013) and Pustułka (2014).

Among plentiful available approaches to children's identities, one research lens offers a conviction that children's identities are moulded by developmental changes aligned with the life-course (Bailey 2009; Wingens, Windzio, de Valk and Aybek 2011; Akesson 2015), alongside the emotions associated with their current 'socio-spatial experience' (Akesson 2015: 35). The process of identity-shaping in childhood encompasses 'the integration of the past with the present and the future to provide continuity and/or consistency' (*ibidem*). In the context of migrant children, the issue of identity and a feeling of belonging were addressed through the lens of hybrid identity perspective, used by Ní Laoire, Carpena-Méndez, Tyrrell and White (2011) researching children of immigrants in Ireland, among others. It has been stated and verified that children's individual identity is built in the constant process of negotiating with others (relational identity and belonging), which occurs on multiple levels at the same time. Many variants of identity serve children in their everyday life goals – depending heavily on the social context that they find themselves in (Ní Laoire *et al.* 2011, see also Pustułka, Ślusarczyk, Strzemecka 2015). A 'travelling self' of migrant-child may be also seen 'as one who

moves physically from one place to another, following "public routes and beaten tracks", but who at the same time embarks on undetermined journeys, constantly negotiating between home and abroad, between here and there and elsewhere' (Minh-ha 2011: 27, cf. Oikarinen-Jabai 2015: 78–79). Oikarinen-Jabai's (2015) research among Somali youths in Finland shows that, although the youngest migrants would not travel physically, they are permanently experiencing a journey. This leads to ambivalence, an important phenomenon that – based on Oikarinen-Jabai's study – one is likely to find when analysing the narratives of young participants (*ibidem*: 78–79).

The relations between identity and place are complex and constantly evolve through time and space (Hopkins 2010; Ní Laoire *et al.* 2011; Duhn 2014; Akesson 2015; Millei 2015; Moskal 2015; Oikarinen-Jabai 2015). Scholars exploring postmodern conceptualisations of identity show that fluidity may also be a constant challenge for an individual who seeks to reach stability and finally feel rooted (Burszta 2004: 37). The importance of traditions and pre-existing values decreases as the interactions between local communities and new global orders increase. The 'cultural codes' (Rapaille 2007) and 'anchors of certainty' (Burszta 2013) which used to decide a directionality of a person's actions and decisions have become less 'set in stone'. Consequently, the traditional frames of identity disappear as the new identity framings take over. Even our seemingly inconsequential decisions in the everyday realm – what to wear, how to have fun, how to care for our body – are all parts of the process in which we constantly create and (re)define our identities. The contemporary world in general, and the context of growing up transnationally in particular (e.g. Ní Laoire *et al.* 2011) mean that identity is necessarily a reflexive process (Giddens 1991) of a highly complex nature (e.g. Jano 2013). No longer 'a state', it is now a process of 'doing identity'.

We agree with other researchers (see AG 2009) that the notions of identity and belonging go beyond the family milieu and are constructed on the levels of local community, nation-state and the globe. The identities are created and inter-negotiated in relations with 'significant others', places, and cultural artefacts. Positive experiences collected in childhood allow the child to develop, understand oneself better, experience a feeling of self-respect and belonging, a sense of affinity and/or rootedness. It is children's agency, as well as guidance, care and teaching by families and educators that shape children's experiences of growing up.

Theoretical framework: national identifications and cultural valence

Exploring the issue of children's national identities, we apply the well-known conceptualisations of national identity and 'cultural valence' (*walencja kulturowa*) developed by Antonina Kłoskowska in her 1996 book *National Cultures at the Grass-Root Level* [published in English in 2001]. Cultural valence is defined not only as an adoption of a significant portion of the national culture, but relies primarily on the fact that this culture comes to be considered as one's own: it is seen as familiar, serves to ascertain a sense of self-worth, dignity, and belonging to a community. These frameworks, which move beyond the hybrid, fluid and fragmentary concepts of identity, refer to what is relatively persistent and constitutes the basis or the core of 'Polishness', described in particular as culture (language and literature, religion), tradition-led practices (e.g. Christmas, Easter, family bonds, children's names) and history (partitions, uprisings, wars, Solidarity movement). While this conception does not imply an unambiguous identification or does not necessarily assign the individual to a single place, culture, or flag, it allows discovering the cultural differentials. It also helps to investigate the issue of belonging in the increasingly shared spectrum of transnational experiences (fashion, life's style, electronic gadgets, and virtual communications).

Adopting Kłoskowska's (1996: 113–133) particular analytical frame (1996: 113–133) does not mean that the presented identifications are stable, persistent and exist in their pure form. Rather, it means that identities are processual and constructed: they result from the fact that mobility took place at a certain moment in time,

in a specific space, and, finally, it was conditioned by a plethora of identifiable objective and subjective reasons. Over the life-course of a child, identifications are likely to change multiple times, take the form of an 'identity journey' (dwelling-in-travel, or being 'on the road'), or even emerge as particular turning points – dramatic and conflict-centred identities that need to be 'reworked anew' (Trąbka 2014), and perhaps reach the point of national conversion.

The four identified types of cultural valence and their respective national features crucial to identity are as follows: 1) univalence – inherent and integral national identification, unidirectional in nature, 2) bivalence – dual/binational identity, 3) ambivalence – uncertain national identification, and 4) polyvalence – cosmopolitism (Kłoskowska 1996: 129). On the latter, we note Lash and Urry's (1994, cf. Trąbka 2014: 27) understanding of cosmopolites' interest for places they visit and culturally different people they meet, as well as Hannerz's (1996) approach to cosmopolitan traits as focused on transnationality and deterritorialised lifestyle. These insights are important in that they showcase competencies – an approach to be also noticed in some other identifications.

Methodological framework and applied methods

Methodology and conceptual issues of interviewing children

Childhood and children should not be seen as natural or universal features of human societies but rather should be seen as socially constructed (Smith 2011: 15, 16). As a form of social construct, they determine not only everyday thinking but also scholarly reflections. Although the assumption that children are incapable of either forming or comprehensibly stating their views has plagued earlier research, we favour the current approach which sees children as fully competent narrators of their experiences. Additionally, we urge not to use age as an indicator of competency (or lack thereof) but instead offer a stance embedded in respect for children's rights and agency, again following Smith's directives (*ibidem*: 16). Thus, our methodological framework for studying children's national identifications is grounded in the concept of agency and the idea that children are active agents (see e.g. Hyvönena, Kronqvistb, Järveläa, Määttäa, Mykkänena and Kurkia 2014: 85). This type of lens includes the notion of young participants as 'social actors, subjects, partners, knowers, and contributors'. As children's experiences become increasingly centralised in the research process, the researchers begin to count on children and research collaboratively with them (*ibidem*: 86, see also Smith 2011). Of course, the point here is not who – an adult or a child – is more important. Rather, it is the conviction that empirically co-constructed meanings should take into account equal visibility of opinions. In our study we believe that an authentic engagement in research from children's side can only come from an original, meaningful and interesting topic (Smith 2011: 17). In addition, we draw on Smith's claim that 'chances of participatory dialogue and gaining an understanding of the child's standpoint are greater when the topic meant something to both child and researcher, and when the researcher positioned herself as less knowledgeable then the child' (*ibidem*). For example, the topic of international mobility was found to be this type of a critical subject for children during the interviews, as further elaborated in *Methods and fieldwork* subsection. Westcott and Littleton (2005) rightfully find it surprising that researchers separate their conceptual standpoint from the field methods they use, and we sought to avoid this pitfall by constantly maintaining a link between the empirical methods used and the theoretical conceptualisation briefly discussed above.

Methods and fieldwork

In 2014 we carried out research with children of Polish immigrants in Norway.[5] The participants were children born in Poland, Norway and the UK, aged 6 to 13, who live permanently in Norway. The children come from intra-ethnic (Polish–Polish) and inter-ethnic (Polish–Norwegian) couples, currently attend Norwegian primary schools and speak Polish (and display at least communicative competence in the language).

Recent research on children's opinions has favoured the use of a combination of methods (see Hyvönena *et al.* 2014: 87). Similarly, our sociological analysis of national identifications among migrant children is based on the following data sources: 1) semi-structured interviews with children aged 6 to 13, born in Poland to intra-ethnic couples (a total number of 30), 2) observation in the research situation (children's rooms), and 3) Sentence Completion Method applied in the case of older children (aged 9 to 13).[6] It is to be noted that the 30 interviews analysed actually encompassed 32 participants (20 boys, 12 girls), as two group interviews with sibling pairs (four children in total) were conducted in addition to the 28 individual interviews.[7] The main issues raised in our approach comprising a semi-structured interview guide, drawing(s) and Sentence Completion Method[8] were as follows: 1) family and leisure: relations with parent(s) and sibling(s), wider kin in Poland and Norway, types and frequency of contacts, patterns of spending time and leisure activities (hobbies and interests), 2) school/learning and friends/peers: assessing peer groups and networks, relations with teachers and evaluation of the support received from school, language competences, 3) national identifications, choices and future plans.

According to our research scheme, each meeting with a child would start by obtaining a written consent of the parent and a verbal consent of the child who was to participate in the study. The researcher presented the aim of the study, asked for a permission to (audio)record the meeting, as well as answered any questions the parents and/or the child/ren had. Subsequently, the researcher informed the child/ren that she would like to spend some time with her/him/them and learn about their lives, for instance how old they were, which school they attended, how they liked living in Norway and whether they had visited Poland, and so on. After the consent was obtained (i.e. an affirmative answer to the question of: 'Do you agree to speak with me?' was given), a child would usually invite a researcher into her/his room. At that point the research meeting began with either drawing and/or interview probing. The researcher always brought a selection of art supplies (paper, crayons, pencils, etc.), which were much welcome by children. The initial warm-up task was aimed at building rapport (Punch 2002: 328) and often meant a request for drawing of (something that pertained to) child's family and/or a conversation about kinship. If a child did not want to draw, he or she would usually propose a different activity such as browsing photographs, playing a game on the console, having a snack/meal together, playing with a pet, or showing their hobby/collection, and the interview then went on.
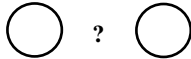
Overall, the children were positively disposed to spending time with the researcher and enjoyed the meetings and her company in the child's private space. Choosing to conduct the interviews in children's homes clearly facilitated working in partnerships and a sense of togetherness in knowledge-building. In our research, boys and girls proved to be engaged informants providing what we choose to call 'migration knowledge'. This knowledge was transferred not only through a conversation with the researcher but also when the children showed their private lives. They shared their worlds, stories, experiences, interests, or affection for specific people and places.

Findings: Polish migrant children's national identities

Delineating national identifications

Of particular interest and importance for our interpretations were children's declarations concerning their national identities. When discussing their sympathies and antipathies, as well as feelings of (non)belonging, the children often referred to a variety of geographical spaces (e.g. in phrases such as 'in my home country – Poland' or 'in "our" Norway') and used descriptors such as 'here' and 'there' for places they perceived as 'closer' or 'more remote'. In many cases the narratives included clear statements like 'I am Polish' or 'I am Norwegian', as well as equally fascinating declarations like 'I am Polish and Norwegian' or 'I am not quite sure who I am'. The child participants were allocated to the different types of national identification not only based on their declarations (both oral in the interview and written using Sentence Completion Method), but also relying on observation of children's rooms. The categorisation into a specific type was conditioned upon several criteria such as language use (Polish/Norwegian/English), bonds with family members and acquaintances in and/or from Poland, consumer behaviours and preferences (e.g. favourite cuisine being Polish/Norwegian/international), supporting sports teams (Polish/Norwegian/other), media and literary preferences (Polish/Norwegian/international) (see Table 1).

Table 1. National identity types present among children of Polish migrants born in Poland, currently living in Norway based on the children's declaration

Type 1	Type 2	Type 3	Type 4
Univalence – Poland	**Univalence – Norway**	**Bivalence – Poland and Norway**	**Ambivalence**
Poland ◯	**Norway** ◯	**Poland** ◯ ↔ **Norway** ◯	**Poland** ◯ ? **Norway** ◯
Inherent and integral national identification with Poland	**Inherent and integral national identification with Norway**	**Double/dual/ bi-directional national identification**	**Ambivalent national identification**
Special attachment to Polish culture e.g. use of Polish language, maintenance of family ties, return to Poland, do not follow some specific Nordic norms (e.g. 'candy day'[11]).	Selecting Norway as one's place of settlement / centre of life, using Norwegian language in the everyday life, at home and in school, produce an original version of specific Nordic norms (e.g. 'candy day') or adapt the norms unchanged.	Preference for both what is Polish and what is Norwegian. Confident use of both languages, create an original version of specific Nordic norms (e.g. 'candy day').	Uncertainty of one parents' living situation causes fears, depression, poor results at school, insufficient knowledge of Norwegian language, no sentiment for one's space/place of life, do not adopt specific Nordic norms (e.g. 'candy day') or create their original versions.

Source: Based on A. Kłoskowska (1996).

Kłoskowka's framework not only fits the analysis well, but it also remains a valid and contextualised approach to the uniqueness of national identities in the Polish cultural context. Having decided to use Kłoskowska's framework, we thoroughly analysed which types of identifications appear among the declared identities of the respondents, and what kinds of explanations are given for those specific choices. In the process of ongoing analysis of the empirical data, it was confirmed that Kłoskowska's types do not appear among children in their 'pure' form. The fluidity of categories, as well as their mutual entanglements and cross-influences were noted and discussed in the biographies analysed by Kłoskowska. Special attention is given to the events from child-

hood and youth, which are believed to be constitutive of national orientations at the later life-stages. Nevertheless, each of the types has a dominating core of 'Polishness' and/or 'Norwegianness', or, alternatively, 'ambivalence' or 'cosmopolitanism' feature.

Across the 32 individual declarations (made by children born in Poland to Polish–Polish nationally homogenous couples), the double Polish–Norwegian identity is the one most commonly manifested (14 children, 6 girls, 8 boys). For as many as 9 children (1 girl, 8 boys) we discovered ambivalence and uncertainty. Five children with an integral unidirectional identity displayed a Polish orientation (2 girls, 3 boys) and four respondents showed a unilateral Norwegian identity (3 girls, 1 boy).[9] Bearing in mind the processual nature of identity formation among children and the fact that research was conducted at a particular temporal moment of their lives and broader history, we tackle these four types of identifications in the analyses below.[10]

Bivalence –Poland and Norway

Some of the general and pronounced characteristics of children declaring bivalent orientations include using both Norwegian and Polish in their private spaces, celebrating both the Polish and the Norwegian holidays, consumption divided between Polish and Norwegian products, dishes (cuisines), as well as culture texts (newspapers, books, TV programmes, movies), cheering on Polish and Norwegian sportsmen and sportswomen, and, last but not least, a wish to live in Norway and/or in Poland. Children with this orientation create their original version of the 'candy day' norm. For children in this group both national and social spaces – Polish and Norwegian – are relatively well-recognised, discovered, familiar, and, most importantly – well-liked. We present a selection of children's statements below.

Adrian (aged 10, migrated at the age of 4):

Stella: *Do you like it here in Norway overall? You have been here for quite some time now.*

A: Yeah, well, it can get a bit boring (...). I am really missing my grandma's apple pie, Polish milk and also the yoghurts, Kubuś [a Polish juice brand], as well as many, many things (...).

S: And where would you like to live?

A: In a place that is a blend of Norway and Poland.

S: A blend of Norway and Poland, right?

A: Yeah.

S: And how do you do that?

A: Somehow.

Alicja, who is now 9 years old and migrated at the age of 1, filled in her SCM as follows:

Lubię Polskę, bo *for det er varmere*

Lubię Norwegię, bo *for jeg har mange venner*

I like Poland because it is warmer (the weather is warmer than in Norway)

I like Norway because (translated from Polish) I have a lot of friends (here in Norway)

Children name a plethora of reasons, such as friends, family, climate, school successes, and excellent language skills (which could allow them to pass for a native speaker) to explain their affinity with Poland and Norway. The reasons listed are considered significant 'here and now' and validate children's links to both countries. When asked about blending or managing the two national identities, a child does not offer any specific solutions, but seems to believe that somehow it will simply happen. A striking feature of many narratives is that children's identifications are not fixed but tend to be fluid. In certain situations, they are more indicative of the ambivalent type. Within the bivalent identification (as well as in the univalent Norwegian one), children accentuate these particular competences that make it possible for them to feel well and 'at home' in Norway and prevent them from feeling 'out of place' or 'unwelcome' due to the fact that they are Polish. Children speak a lot about positive experiences of befriending Norwegian boys and girls, in addition to the special role of 'multicultural integration facilitators' played by computer games and the new globally spreading communication technologies. The virtual connections translate into real lives and result in being invited to friends' birthday parties, playing sports together, or organising slumber parties.

Ambivalence

Broadly speaking, a child with an uncertain ambivalent identification often has contradictory feelings about using Polish or Norwegian in a particular space or place, he or she may feel strange about celebrating Polish or Norwegian holidays, and feels less comfortable discussing their consumption choices as rooted in the Polish or Norwegian context. Children with this orientation do not adopt the standards of 'candy day' or develop their original version of this habit. These children are often unsure about where they would like to live, and may experience fear, depression, as well as suffer from diminished well-being in connection with language difficulties which, in turn, impact on the school achievement, ability to do homework as well as the frequency of communication breakdowns between school/teachers and themselves/parents. It is quite common for children in this group to have a rather narrow social network of friends and acquaintances, as their limited language skills exclude them from peer group membership.

Let's hear from Adam, aged 10, who migrated at the age of 2:

I am very stressed when I have to go to school… Yhm, there is something that spoils the atmosphere at school. [it is] very nice [in Norway] but I also like [being] in Poland. I would rather live in Poland because it is okay for me to live there, but in Norway it is also very nice, but well I would rather prefer [to be] in Poland. (…) I simply like Poland more than Norway, I don't know why. (…) Yes, I miss it because I have been in Norway for so long. When I grow up I do not know if I'll move to Poland, but (…) I don't know if that would happen. I will think some more about it because I am not sure.

Consequently, filling in the SCM test, Adam wrote: When I grow up I would like to live in *I am not sure.*

Next, two brothers, Sylwester (8) and Jacek (9), who migrated in 2012, discuss their preferences:

S: Do you go to Polish school?

Sylwester, Jacek: Yeah.

Sylwester: In kindergarten it was fun. I played a lot.

S: Yes.

Jacek: It is better there… Polish school is better than Norwegian, because there they are fighting all the time.

S: In the Polish school?

Jacek: No, in the Norwegian one.

S: They fight in Norwegian school? Oh look at that, during the breaks?

Jacek: All the time.

Sylwester: Mhm.

S: Where would you boys like to live?

Sylwester: I don't know, I don't know, nowhere.

S: Jacek?

Jacek: I do not think about that.

Nina, who is now 10 years old and migrated at the age of 7, is reflexive and open about her troubles at school:

I have huge problems with her [a teacher] and I have trouble communicating with her and sometimes it got to the point of, oh man! The problems were so huge! At least Grandma is always taking my side. She always goes to school and takes my side, defends me. She always comes to school and talks to the teacher. Mum cannot protect me from that after all, because, firstly, she does not speak Norwegian very well, and, secondly and more importantly, she does not feel like she could protect me that much. But Grandma does, she is more like that, that she always protects me and defends me from everything. I have a feeling that the teacher always gives me more homework, and I also have this thing when one has trouble reading and one reads in a different manner, letters get all mixed up. The teacher knows about it because they gave me a test. She knows about it and still gives me more homework. The more difficult ones, and I tried to talk to her about it but she says that this is so I can learn more. (…) I know that I do many things wrong. (…) I would really [like to] change my grade, even repeat a year, take my time over it. The teacher does not understand that I need help and more time. Actually, when I was younger I always wanted to have a horse

and this is still my destiny, to have a horse. And yes, right, to go with him to Spain, alone. This is my dream. And also to ride and play the guitar. And this is somehow well… I was young, I had a big imagination. Now it's also big, but maybe different, because I know that it cannot really be done.

The problems these children articulate are typical of their age and so refer to school, may be linked to peer violence or (most commonly) directly stem from a poor language competency. In their responses, they avoid the subject of national affinity expression or fail to point to the place they choose, which may suggest certain difficulty in organising their life as children of migrant parents. Children are rarely consulted – they cannot choose but tend to be forced to migrate and cannot overturn or contest the decision that is crucial for the entire family. Children's agency should depend on their capacity to deal with requirements posed by social life in the new and complex context of the destination country. A specific child-like solution to accumulating problems is evident in Nina's story: she is raised by a single mother who works long hours as a cleaner and travels a lot due to her involvement with the Jehovah's Witnesses church. A grandmother, who is Polish but married a Norwegian man, is Nina's carer, friend and defender when she gets in trouble. Faced with feelings of loneliness and helplessness, Nina chooses an imaginary and unrealistic 'escape' to warm Spain on her dream horse and with her dream guitar. Nina's problems escalated and a teacher worried about her well-being (e.g. she reported suffering from a sleep disorder). At the same time, Nina identifies with a country that she only knows from stories – she wants to belong to an unrealistic social setting. She identifies neither with Poland nor with Norway, which may be attributed to her problematic family history as well as a sense of alienation and uprooting through migration.

Language deficits translate into a perceived lack of talent for school learning, which in turn affects children's self-worth and identity. In some cases, they reinforce a negative attitude towards the receiving society. Children do not have the same skills for managing identities as adults, and they are lacking in the effective defence mechanisms that would protect them against the psychological costs of adaptation.

Univalence towards Poland

Children who manifest univalent identification with Poland mostly use Polish language at home / in private realm, often visit their family in Poland and their Polish relatives in Norway, often use Skype or telephone for communicating with kin members in Polish, express preference for Polish food, largely take part in Polish supplementary schooling, are religious (take holy Sacraments, attend Polish masses, pray at home and before meals). Their cultural consumption is in Polish (newspapers, magazines, books, as well as TV is read/watched in Polish), and they support Polish sportsmen and sportswomen. Children with this orientation do not follow the norm of 'candy day'. For many children, it is their private life at home that constitutes a 'small Poland' – a contained space of patrimony abroad. This private sphere protects them from the consequences of failures, compensates for troubles or conflicts with peers or at school. It is here that what is Polish is certainly going to be properly protected and maintained. In that context Marek, who is now 7 years old and migrated at the age of 4, has stated his identity early on in the interview:

M: I am not Norwegian.

S: You aren't, are you?

M: No, I am Polish.

Similarly Paulina, who has been in Norway since she was 3 years old and is now 11, strongly declares her love for Poland as her patrimony. On the one hand, she does not seem to have much in common with her destination society and, on the other, she misses her grandparents and the warm atmosphere of closeness. Once again, we hear of problems connected to an insufficient command of the local language:

I would like to live in Poland because that would mean I would live close to my grandma and I would understand more at school. Whenever I visit Poland, I don't have the heart to leave for Norway.

The second method (Sentence Completion Test) supports this finding as Paulina's written declaration sounds like a clear statement of a plan:

When I grow up I would like to live in Poland at my grandma's and I would like to study at the university there.

Univalence towards Norway

Children in the group marked by the univalent Norwegian identification generally display features to some extent opposite to those described above for the children focused on Poland, but here oriented towards Norway. These children primarily speak Norwegian, both at home and elsewhere, and adore Norwegian holidays and celebrations. Children's consumption preferences (meals, food) are for Norwegian products and dishes. Similarly, books, newspapers and TV are also in Norwegian. Children with this orientation usually produce an original version of 'candy day' or adopt the unchanged local standard. Also, peer contacts and friendships are stronger with Norwegian rather than Polish children and support is shown primarily for Norwegian sportsmen and sportswomen. Children univocally express a wish to live in Norway: living there brings them many pleasures and a high degree of satisfaction overall. For many, migrating to Norway made it possible to fulfil dreams that it was impossible to realise in Poland. This indicates a success story of parental migration and upward mobility, as well as a higher social/material status attained in the destination country. In their stories migration is the opposite of 'problematic': it opened doors and offered new prospects, as well as very positive changes that were conducive to the unilateral identification with Norway.

For instance, Marta, who is now 9 years old and migrated as a one-year-old toddler, sees Norway as her home and uses a telling metaphor of a 'dog-bed' in a positive sense: just as a dog needs its home/house, she also needs her warm and stable place – a home. Arguably, this means that her living conditions in Poland were not particularly appealing and there was nothing to return to there:

M: I really like my life.

S: So you wouldn't like to live in Poland in the future?

M: No.

S: And where would you like to live?

M: I would like to live in America or in Norway. But normally here in Norway. I have my place here, just like dogs have their places and do not want to sleep in a different place. Norway is this kind of place for me.

A similarly unambiguous narrative was presented by Honorata who is 10 years old and came to Norway just 10 months prior to the interview. She appears to enjoy the Norwegian rules, life values and lifestyle. Not only does she speak Norwegian fluently, but also seems to suggest she has forgotten her Polish. A shift in her identification is quite radical, given a short duration of her stay abroad:

S: So how do you like it here?

H: Everything is great, people are kind.

S: Yhym.

H: I cannot complain.

S: I know that you have not been here for long, but where would you like to live?

H: HERE!

S: And why is that?

H: Because the rules here are better… (…) There is not one thing here that I do not like. (…) For a long time me [and my younger brother – 6-year-old Leon] did not speak Polish anymore, so this is why the words escape us, one has to do it in Norwegian.

Honorata chooses to fill in the SCM test in Norwegian and does not hesitate to declare her attachment to Norway:

Når jeg blir voksen, vil jeg bo i Norge *When I grow up I would like to live in Norway.*

Grown-up's perspective: Karol's case

Having analysed a vast empirical material, we were still curious about how identities of young Poles in Norway change over time. The longitudinal and life-course perspective is generally extremely important (Bailey 2009; Wingens *et. al.* 2011), and the questions about persistence of identity orientations over long periods of exposure to different cultures were raised by scholars interested in biographical and autobiographical inquiries, such as Antonina Kłoskowska (1996), and, more recently, Agnieszka Trąbka (2014) in her study on the processes of identity reconstructions among Third Culture Kids (TCKs). For those reasons, we were intrigued by a possibility to look at grown-ups, as we were convinced that it is not only longitudinal and panel studies that can provide answer to the questions of orientations durability and the prospective implications of childhood migration from Poland to Norway in adulthood. Below we present some ideas on how to address the above questions, as we had an opportunity to interview a grown-up son of one of the interviewed experts and hear his childhood migration story from a grown-up's perspective.

Please bear in mind that this part of our article is more illustrative in character, as we show the national identification as a dynamic and remarkably complex social process. The sense of belonging and national identity is subject to constant negotiations, both at the individual and group level. This process is by no means easy for individuals and is manifested in, for instance, the retrospective histories. Thanks to the account of an adult

man, one can observe significance of migratory experiences from the life-course perspective. During the interview, a young adult man reveals details of his struggles with the criteria of Polishness and Norwegianness that began as early as his school years. Eventually, the respondent encountered formal requirements that shifted his adult life closer to being Norwegian. Growing up abroad brings about a plethora of chances and barriers that must be tackled by the youngest migrants – today or perhaps sometime in the future. From separation with close kin members, to experiences of peer relations, to a decision to formally give up Polish citizenship the events mark subsequent identity-centred reconciliations. Renouncing Polish citizenship was particularly crucial, a sign not only of the formal process of naturalisation, but also of a loss of an identity marker of a patriotic and nostalgic character (Désilets 2015). It evoked feelings of stress, tension and a sort of trauma linked to the loss of Polishness, which were surprising to the respondent himself.

Our interlocutor, 22-year-old Karol, came to Norway 9 years earlier. Being interviewed posed quite a challenge to him, as it constituted a sort of 'cleansing' experience, an evaluation of his childhood, youth and early adult life. His story contains reflections on integration-related competences – institutional as well as legal requirements that the Norwegian state asks immigrants to meet. It also revealed certain topics and problems that may not have been understood thus far by the interviewed children. The story we present constitutes a noteworthy example of 'identity-making' (Woodward 2004: 16) in Polish–Norwegian 'space of transnationality' (Jackson, Crang and Dwyer 2004: 1).

Karol is a son of Polish immigrants, born in Norway in 1993 as a Polish citizen. Karol's parents decided to return to Poland soon after his birth and he was raised there until he was 13 years old. He was proud of 'being Polish and having been born in Norway' and he manifested this fact openly in front of his peers, receiving much welcome attention and admiration. He always dreamed of visiting the country of his birth. When he was 10, his father started going to Norway for seasonal work due to economic reasons. Three years later the family (Karol's parents, Karol and his younger brother) decided to move to Norway. This migration was initially planned for one year but eventually turned into permanent settlement. Following migration, Karol went to an integration class with other children of foreigners (*Innføringsklassen*) in order to catch up with his peers in terms of his Norwegian language skills. He then started a regular middle school (*Ungdomsskole*) with Norwegian children, a period he describes as difficult:

What was most difficult and strangest for me was this forced integration [of children]. They want to integrate everyone, and you feel that you are different. (...) It is common that the effect is the opposite of what was intended (...). The welcoming process for a foreigner – child [earlier visits in the future Norwegian school during the time] at the Innføringsklassen treated as mobbing, children then 'turn'. They use it against the new person. It is a type of small hypocrisy. At the beginning everyone was so open that I was even scared – it is unnatural to be so nice to someone. There are also boundaries. And there were no boundaries there. They wanted to know everything about me within an hour. This was in some way unnatural (...) because when I look back, going to this school, I thought I would be the same type of pupil, but then when I arrived, the way they were treating me, as if I was made of porcelain, so I felt like an object that everyone was looking at. Of course that was not totally normal, and it surprised me. (...) It was good during a visit in my future school but then they [peers] started to use it against me. It is very likely that if those groups did not use it against me, then my experience of it [entering Norwegians school as a foreign pupil] would be positive for me.

Karol stresses his then feelings of alienation, rejection by the Norwegian peers, isolation and their pretend interest. After early experiences in a special class, he faced the reality of a foreign language and it quickly transpired that his language competencies were not on a par with those of his Norwegian peers. He came to

Norway as a teenager with no knowledge of the language whatsoever, which tremendously affected his trajectory of adaptation. Karol stated that during school breaks he was constantly teased by his peers to say something in Norwegian. Permanent difficulties contacting with others prevented him from entering the peer group and led to depression:

(...) so when they teased me they laughed of course and I would then also pretend that it was funny but being a clown is really not much fun. So it resulted in me starting to keep to myself, becoming isolated. I would go to school and not open my mouth for the whole day unless I was forced to do so. When I think about it now I think I had a period of depression. I did not want to get up to go to school. (...) I would brush my teeth, run to the bus and then wait until the school was over so that I could go home, do something else. I would go for a run, or train, do things to fill the time and not think about the school and everything around me.

From a life-course perspective applied to Karol's story it is possible to conclude that it was his agency, confidence and interests (sport, photography) that made it possible for him to deal with the lack of acceptance and being rejected by peers:

What I was always good at [at school] was sports. I felt like a king, if only just for a moment. I always managed to show it. Thanks to that I somehow managed to go through it [school life]. I had a goal of beating records. I also found a passion – photography and started to work as a newspaper deliveryman every day after school. I would run with those papers and look at it as sports training. (...) There were heaps of papers and I [delivered them] on time. The fastest – the better. This is how I first had my own money, some satisfaction and a way to get away.

Unfortunately, Karol's parents were having their own issues at the time (a number of work and home-related issues) and were not aware of the severity of his problems. Luckily, in Karol's view, his parents bought a house in a less affluent/elite district:

[The parents] were focused on themselves and did not see it as a big problem. Comparing my problems to their problems – mine did not seem big, but well, everyone has their own scale, and during that time it was a lucky coincidence that they bought a house on the East side of Oslo and I finished the gymnasium there (...) with more people from abroad around, [children of] all nationalities were found there in one place.

That was a big change for Karol, whose previous school was mostly attended by Norwegian upper-class children oriented towards physical appearance and interested in fashionable clothing. A change of environment through a residential move from an ethnically homogenous to a multicultural surrounding led to a betterment of Karol's well-being and improved educational outcomes – crucial for the life-course perspective outlook. The children at the new school were somehow 'charmed' by Karol, as he moved from a richer district, but he also stated:

I told them I was Polish and did not speak Norwegian so well, and then it turned out this was the best thing that could have happened to me, because I was then taken out from this current I was starting to follow (...) my grades got better not because I suddenly learned a lot but because I was motivated to study.

Karol sums up all his school experiences (in Poland and in Norway) and reflects on their meaning from his current standpoint. His own trajectory brought about a positive attitude towards cultural diversity:

> *It is like this: when you are used to being okay and being liked [in Poland], then you will have a problem here when they are teasing you. It depends on the person a lot, I mean, their character. Everyone must deal with some things alone. Now as some time has passed I admit that this experience was good. I became more open thanks to that. (...) I can now relate to various cultures, I know the 'street code' and can make friends really easily.*

After completing his compulsory schooling, Karol decided to apply for admission to special forces. A prerequisite to attend this kind of establishment was to be in possession of Norwegian citizenship. Karol did not have it and was given one year to renounce his Polish citizenship. A *de iure* abandonment of Polishness turned out to be a really tough decision that generated a lot of stress. Similarly to the difficult peer problems he experienced as a teenager, this decision made an impact on his identification. Entering adulthood coincided with a national conversion – Karol stopped being Polish and became Norwegian:

> *I am having a difficult time now. I actually do not know if I am Polish or Norwegian. I am partly from Poland, I mean I totally am, I also have my roots there, but I am not sure. I cannot imagine going back to Poland. I like it here [in Norway]. (...) I cannot say whether I feel more Polish or Norwegian. I guess it is Norwegian.*

Conclusions

The findings presented here demonstrate, first and foremost, that children have a lot to say about themselves, their relatives, school, peers, Poland, Norway and, generally, about the world that surrounds them. Drawing on the research among children aged 6 to 13 accompanied by a case study from a grown-up perspective (22-year-old man), we conclude that national identifications are embedded in a constant (re)definig process (Kłoskowska 1996). Children of Polish migrants shared what they were currently feeling, showcasing their opinions and national orientations 'here and now'. The adult respondent's story, however, allows us to look at how identifications – especially conversion – are not only formed but also dynamically change throughout the life-course cycle, depending on the matrix of subjectively and objectively experienced events. Future orientations and choices of the many Polish children of migrant parents in Norway will further demonstrate what growing up transnationally means in terms of self-definitions and a person's ties to Poland, Norway, and beyond.

As the data shows, Polish children try to actively (re)construct their post-migratory identities and therefore respond to the challenge delineated above. The bivalent, dual identity is a feature of the largest group of children followed by the ambivalent attitude. Conversely, the unilateral, one-directional national identifications are equally rare for the Polish and for the Norwegian focus. The first type of declarations (bivalence) should be seen as a positive sign – it facilitates creation of networks, bonds and cultural, social, and economic relations between Poland and Norway. One can hope that a shift towards Norway does not indicate a permanent loss of knowledge about one's roots, but it may also be understandable in terms of a fast and conflict-free method for feeling at home through acculturation. It is possible that children manifesting bivalence will soon become the ambassadors and interpreters of what is Polish in Norway and what is Norwegian in Poland. Such connected identities additionally allow a new, useful phenomenon to emerge, which is described as the feeling of 'ownership' over one's identity without forsaking one's heritage. A bivalent identification strengthens the feeling

of belonging and identity that facilitates adaptation and attainment of what Mostwin (1985) called a 'third value' – a higher degree of humanisation. A person's self-worth, dignity, and a feeling of community membership are positively linked to considering two cultures as one's own. A high competence in Norwegian language opens doors for social citizenship and participation in various forms of activities within the Norwegian social life. Notwithstanding the above successes, it is important to explore the stories of children who declare ambivalence, have no clarity about their belonging and seem to be 'on a swing' moving between Poland and Norway. While there is evidence a particular migration-induced dilemma exists, it would be flawed to expect stability, certainty and durability of identity during childhood as a life-course stage. Some researchers (e.g. Bokszański 2007) claim that a forced relocation/displacement of a child can contribute to the emergence of an unauthentic identity in the future. Children with ambivalent orientation usually experience a sense of detachment from certain models of daily life and lifestyle, as well as suffer a loss of status position formerly held in their country of origin. This leads to a sense of loss with regard to security and a feeling of being 'visible' in the receiving society. This visibility means that children are treated as different by others (especially by their peers) and feel differently as well (see also Strzemecka 2015). This is exemplified by a general feeling of relative deprivation, deficits in school achievement, insufficient command of the local language, feeling excluded from the peer environment, as well as no objective success within parental migration stories. Like adults, children may also suffer greatly as migrants. They may display and narrate experiences of loss, physical separation from one's kin members, isolation in the destination society, lack of transferable capital and inability to deal with a change that took place in their life. Children construct their own identity as citizens of the newest nation, so their statements are temporary, captured as at the time of research. With a longer stay in Norway, national identification of children may vary in terms of the 'roots' (belonging and local) and 'wings' (becoming and global) (Duhn 2014: 224).

As with any research, our theoretical framework may be challenged, verified, continued and/or reworked; nevertheless, it serves to initiate a grounded debate on the national identifications of the youngest participants of the migration processes. One issue that deserves much more exploration is the context of Poland-to-Norway migration in its novelty and specificity. We need to look at international relations as well as similarities and dissimilarities between the two national societies, which we believe are characterised by rigorous and strictly defined contents and norms regarding identity, specified by the role of culture, economy, religion, and state in delineating the meaning of nation and nationality. The relative impact of new cultural messages the legal, institutional and environmental contexts (introduced to children mainly by schools and peer groups) will vary, but they are nonetheless expected to influence adaptation strategies and their identity-relevant effects very soon. Any challenges brought by identity and identifications should be linked not only to the scope and strength of the internalised and specific material and symbolic elements of the sending country, but should also be viewed through the lens of the destination country, which includes the Norwegian programme of integration politics.

Notes

[1] The total Polish population in Norway (on 1 January 2015) amounted to 100 000 persons (SSB 2015). The number grew exponentially from just 7 580 people registered in 2004, representing an 11-fold growth by the end of 2012. Among them, 19 360 persons migrated on the grounds of family reunification, meaning that Poles have been the largest group entering Norway for family reasons since 2006. After 2009, the year that was especially harsh for Polish families in Norway (a decrease in the family reunification statistics from 4 423 in 2008 to 2 773 in 2009), a strong drive towards using reunification strategies has been visible again (with the inflow of 4 612 registered in 2010) (Iglicka and Gmaj 2014). As many as 11.6 per cent of

all immigrants and Norwegian-born children with immigrant parents are Polish. Statistics showed 793 Polish children were born in Norway in 2004. In 2013, the number grew to 5 939 (Dzamarija 2014: 35; see also Slany and Strzemecka 2015; Strzemecka 2015).

[2] Although we are aware of the extensive literature on children's identities from a psychological standpoint (see e.g. Boski 2010a, 2010b; Grzymała-Moszczyńska and Nowicka 1998; Grzymała-Moszczyńska 2009, 2010a, 2010b; Baumann 2014; Espín and Dottolo 2015), our research and this article have a clear sociological orientation. We use a sociological theoretical framework by Kłoskowska (1996) rather than J. W. Berry's psychological concept of acculturation, which was used and developed in Poland by P. Boski and H. Grzymała-Moszczyńska among others. In this conceptualisation 'psychological acculturation refers to changes in an individual partaking in a situation of cultural contact (...) and directly affected by external culture, as well as changes in the culture that an individual is a participant of' (Boski 2010a, quoting Berry 2003: 19).

[3] Ivar Frønes noted that '[t]here is not one childhood, but many, formed at the intersection of different cultural, social and economic systems natural and man-made physical environments. Different positions in society produce different experiences' (Frønes 1993, cited from Christensen and Prout 2012: 54).

[4] Some sections of this article were used in the Work Package 5 interim report and Working Paper 1 available at: http://www.transfam.socjologia.uj.edu.pl/documents/32445283/07755f03-e527-43dc-900b-ea1f5fb96b47.

[5] From January to May 2014 Stella Strzemecka lived in Norway and carried out ethnographic research of the Polish community. For two weeks she was supported by two field researchers Anna Bednarczyk and Inga Hajdarowicz.

[6] 19 tests in total; SCM was available in three language versions (Polish, Norwegian and English) and children could freely choose which one they would like to complete.

[7] A total number of interviews conducted with children of Polish immigrants amounted to 50, but, for the purpose of this article, data subset from interviews with children born abroad and raised in mixed families were not analysed.

[8] The following sentences were analysed for the purpose of examining national identification preferences: 1) I like Poland because ….., 2) I like Norway because ….., 3) In Poland I don't like ….., 4) In Norway I don't like ….., 5) My home is ….., 6) When I grow up I want to live in ……

[9] The striking gender dynamics will be examined more thoroughly in a future research paper.

[10] The use of Sentence Completion Method was tailored to children's anticipated language preferences and the sentences were available in Polish, Norwegian and English. For the 19 completed tests (11 filled in by girls and 8 by boys) children chose the Norwegian version 11 times, the Polish version 6 times (though one was filled in using a combination of Polish and Norwegian), and the English version twice.

[11] In Norway (similarly to Sweden or Finland), there is a cultural norm associated with the consumption of sweets for children (Lördagsgodis – Saturday Candy or Smågodis – Little Candy). Its tradition dates back to the 20th century. Following the 'healthy eating' prescriptions, it argues that children should only be allowed to eat sweets one day a week (usually Saturdays) (see e.g. Wiklund 2014). Nowadays, children usually receive pocket money, and Norwegian sweets are available to everyone on the shelves in stores at any time. When it comes to Polish transnational family in Norway, the 'candy day' (a term used by children of Polish immigrants) is a standard adopted only by 2 children and rejected by 14 children. An interesting research finding is that this norm is practiced mostly in a non-standard variant (16 children). Based on interviews with children, we have identified three most common variants of 'candy day': 1) sweets twice a week – e.g. on Saturday and Sunday, 2) sweets three times a week – e.g. on Wednesday, Saturday and Sunday, 3) sweets once a week plus – e.g. on Saturday and each time guests are visiting (family members or friends), regardless of the frequency and day of the week.

Funding

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Polish Migrant Children's Transcultural Lives and Transnational Language Use

Marta Moskal*, Daniela Sime**

This paper addresses the issue of language and belonging in the transnational context of migration. It draws on two research projects with first-generation children of Polish labour migrants in Scotland. The paper examines the role that language plays in fostering multiple ways of being and belonging, and in understanding how children make sense of their identity. It suggests that language should take a more central place in debates about cultural connectivity and transnational migration. Findings point to the need for a more holistic approach to supporting migrant children, including the explicit recognition of family cultural and language capital in the host society.

Keywords: migrant children; language; identity; belonging; transcultural perspective

Introduction

With an increasing trend towards employment mobility in and across European countries (Favell 2008), transnational families resulting from migration are becoming a more regular feature of children's lives than is currently acknowledged. Since the enlargement of the European Union (EU) in 2004, Scotland has seen an unprecedented rise in the number of Central and Eastern European (CEE) migrant families arriving to seek employment. The vast majority of these have been Polish, following a strong history of Polish migration since the Second World War (White 2011). The increased opportunities for settlement offered by EU membership meant that many decided to bring children over with them or have children after migrating. Currently, children from Poland make up the biggest white ethnic minority in Scotland's schools (Scottish Government 2014). The number of Polish-speaking children has increased by about 1 000 every year since 2004. In 2014, there were over 11 500 Polish-speaking children in Scotland's schools.

However, despite this trend, research on children's experiences of intra-EU migration is still quite limited in scope and extent. Many more studies have focused on family relationships during processes of migration and mobility from CEE to the United Kingdom, without including children as research participants (for example, Lopez Rodriguez 2010; Ryan and Sales 2011; Ryan, Sales, Tilki and Siara 2009; White 2011). The small body of research that does focus on children's and young people's experiences of intra-EU migration as part of migrant worker families suggests that there are multiple ways in which children manage and cope with the processes of intra-EU family migration (see Devine 2009, 2011; Moskal 2014a, 2014b, 2015; Moskal and Tyrrell 2015; Ní Laoire, Bushin, Carpena-Méndez and White 2009; Ní Laoire, Carpena-Méndez, Tyrrell and

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White 2011; Sime and Fox 2015a, 2015b). Some of this work (Moskal 2015; Sime and Pietka-Nykaza 2015) has also focused on children's and families' transnational relations and identities specifically after migration.

Valentine, Sporton and Bang Nielsen (2008) argue that migration has profound implications for individuals' identity and belonging, which are closely related to language use. Increased mobility of languages is transforming localities and leads to the creation of diasporas with multiple linguistic allegiances and perceptions of belonging that are no longer identified purely with territory (Valentine, Sporton and Bang Nielsen 2008: 376). These complex forms of belonging and identity emerge from the geographical mobility of individuals raised in different linguistic communities. Transnational migration, with its dynamics of departure, circulation and extended social networks (Condradson and Mckey 2007: 1), has been shown to rely on language as central to the maintenance of transnational relations (Rumbaut 2002). In this context, migrant children can find themselves pulled between the contrasting demands for linguistic assimilation made by the receiving country and those for linguistic preservation made by the ethnic community and the extended family (Fassetta 2014; Phinney, Romero, Nava and Huang 2001).

This paper focuses on language use by Polish migrant children (aged 5–17) who have migrated to Scotland in the United Kingdom (see also Moskal 2014a, 2014b; Sime and Pietka-Nykaza 2015). As the focus is on language from a sociocultural perspective, we are concerned with the role that language plays in how children make sense of their identities and affiliations (cf. Rampton 2006). The paper contributes to the current debates on transnational family migration by arguing for the centrality of language in the everyday lives and identities of young migrants. It shows the role of language in connecting young people transnationally to or disconnecting them from other people and places. It also looks at the role of language in articulating cultural differences and shaping identities in local contexts (Bhabha 1994; Valentine *et al.* 2008). Finally, the paper makes some policy recommendations in support of the equitable benefits of education and the processes of language acquisition by young migrants.

Transcultural lives, bifocality and bilingualism

In the exploration of children's and young people's identity, belonging and language from a transnational perspective, the concepts of 'transculturation' and 'bifocality' seem particularly useful. Transculturation deals with human interconnectivity and focuses on a selective weaving of cultural elements to create a new cultural belonging. It also concerns the quality of being connected to oneself and to others in relationships located in space and time (Hébert 2005: 107). The term 'bifocality' covers a variety of situations documented in transnational migration studies (Rouse 1992) and refers to the ways in which transnational connections and practices impact upon the cognitive, social and cultural orientation of migrants (Vertovec 2004). Guarnizo (1997: 311) and Suárez-Orozco and Suárez-Orozco (2001: 114) have called this 'a dual frame of reference', through which migrants compare life experiences, events and situations from the points of view of both their society of origin and their host society. Agnew (2005) has similarly identified a 'dual consciousness' shaped by multi-locality. Vertovec (2004) observes that the transformation of everyday orientations towards both 'here' and 'there' at the same time is a change that accompanies the transnationalisation of social practices and institutions among migrants. Transnational practices occur within and have an impact upon the daily lives of migrants (Voigt-Graf 2004, 2005).

The notion of 'bifocality' has rarely been mobilised in the context of migrant childhoods. Conceptualising children's belongings in a 'bifocal' way destabilises popular ideas of childhood as a site of stability and fixity. Instead, children's mobility and the 'transcultural' or culturally 'blended' nature of their lives is underlined (Hoerder, Hébert and Schmitt 2005). The powerful ideologies that place idealised childhoods in fixed and bounded spaces are challenged by the complex realities of the lives of many children (Ní Laoire *et al.* 2011: 158).

However, Lam and Warriner (2012: 195) point out that nation-states still do not recognise such dualistic orientations, and their practices monopolise the means of coercive power within their borders and adjudicate discourses of national loyalty, citizenship, language ideology and language policies in education. The restrictive language policies that have become pervasive in the United States and Europe have placed widespread limitations on the use of immigrant children's native languages in the educational process (Blommaert, Creve and Willaert 2006; Gal 2006; Gutiérrez, Morales and Martinez 2009).

Research focus and methodology

The data analysed and discussed in this paper were gathered as part of two independent studies on intra-EU migration. Both studies focused on Polish migrant worker families in Scotland, United Kingdom. The common aims of the studies were to explore children's experiences of migration from Poland or CEE countries to Scotland, and to understand how migration impacts on children's everyday lives, with a focus on family and schooling.

The data from Moskal's study (hereafter Study I) that are discussed in this paper were collected between 2008 and 2010 during fieldwork with 65 members of Polish migrant families in Scotland. The study involved 41 school-age children who had arrived from Poland in the five years prior to the data collection period. Individual interviews were conducted with boys (n = 18) and girls (n = 23) aged 5 to 17. The children's opinions were set alongside those of their parents (n = 24) and teachers (n = 18), who also took part in the research. All the family members who participated in the study were first-generation migrants, born in Poland and having migrated to Scotland. In the majority of the families, children and parents did not come to Scotland at the same time, but were reunited after an extended period of separation. Among the 30 families studied, in 28 cases children and parent(s) did not migrate together. In some families, older children or other family members were still in Poland at the time of the study.

Sime's study (Study II) draws on data collected with 18 Polish families with children, of which 14 had one child, and four had two children. The ages of the 22 children interviewed ranged from 7 to 14, and, at the time of the study. All families were visited at home between September 2011 and February 2012 for in-depth interviews with the children and parents. Researchers asked for 'at least one parent' to take part, and in most cases (n = 16) mothers volunteered. Three fathers took part with their partners and in two families only fathers were interviewed.

In both studies families were recruited through mainstream schools and Polish Saturday schools in diverse locations. Families in Study I lived in two urban areas (Aberdeen and Edinburgh), a semi-urban area (North Lanarkshire) and a rural area (the Highlands). Study II recruited families from an urban area (Glasgow), two semi-urban areas (Motherwell and Falkirk) and a rural area (Dumfries and Galloway). Participants were from different socioeconomic backgrounds and had various migration histories. In bringing the two studies together, we aimed to increase the diversity of the researched population and to widen its geographical scope, providing increased justification for the policy recommendations discussed later in the paper.

In addition to the data collected from families, observations recorded during visits by the authors to schools and homes were also used. Children and young people participating in both studies were first-generation migrants, who were born in Poland and had come to Scotland with or after their parent(s). Since Scotland was usually the first foreign country they had lived in, they were all learners of English as a second language. The length of their residence in Scotland ranged from a few months to five years, the average duration being two years. Owing to the wide age span (5–17) participants were at different stages of learning English and various levels of competence, which were not assessed. The focus of the present analysis is language use and the role of language in transcultural connectivity, with a particular focus on the first language. The influence of age,

exposure, length of stay and other factors on second-language acquisition is not the direct focus of this paper, as there is sufficient existing research on these factors. We do report, however, on children's experiences of learning and using English as a second language in their new country, as we examine the role of language in children's relationships, self-identity and belonging.

Despite some differences in aspects of the research design, the two studies provide comparable data on the experiences of children in intra-EU migrant worker families, particularly on their experiences of schooling and transnational family relationships. A distinctive feature of both projects is the particular attention given to the views of children (Christiansen and James 2000) and the recognition of children's competence as research participants (Morrow 2008). All family members were given project information sheets. During the home visits, the research process was explained to all volunteering family members and then children were asked if they wanted to be interviewed individually or with other family members. Children were free to discontinue the interviews and activities at any point. Both studies were children-inclusive and adopted a child-centred approach (James, Jenks and Prout 1998; James and Prout 1990; van Blerk and Ansell 2006). This involved spending time with the children and communicating in ways we hoped they would be comfortable with. For example, participants were encouraged to tell their stories in their own words, through successive meetings and in an atmosphere of safety and respect. Additionally, drawings were used in Study I to add an element of creative engagement and activate the children's imagination (Anning and Ring 2004), and photographs were used in Study II to prompt children to think about the range of settings in which they used language. Other studies (den Besten 2010; Harrison, Clarke and Ungerer 2007; Mitchell 2006; Moskal 2010; van Blerk and Ansell 2006) have used drawings as an alternative way to understand children's knowledge and experience, while photo-elicitation has been shown to make research more engaging for children (White, Bushin, Carpena-Méndez and Ní Laoire 2010).

Children's experiences at home and school, in both the home country and new country, have been shown to affect the ways in which migrant pupils experience their identity and sense of belonging post migration (McGonigal and Arizpe 2007). In this paper, we explore the question of identity by looking at how migrant children deal with multiple languages in the new country. We report on language use in the formal (classroom) and informal (peer relationships) contexts of the school, and within the family and community context both locally and transnationally.

Migrant children's language use

Language use in the school context

A sense of overwhelming pressure to learn the new language quickly and integrate into the new school system was reported by Polish children and young people in both studies. This was often associated with anxiety and resistance. Marek, an 8-year-old from a semi-urban primary school (Study I), described how he had adapted to his new school: 'I like the children and art classes and football. I also like maths, but I do not like English because English is very difficult'.

Young respondents noted that achieving fluency in English was very important and a desire to improve their English was linked to an awareness of the lack of cultural currency or recognition of their native language in the classroom (see also Devine 2009). Olivia, a 15-year-old attending a rural high school (Study I), emphasised language learning as the most important part of her adaptation:

I must learn English well. I already know a lot, I think. I am glad there are no Polish pupils in my class, so I am learning faster. Although, I am befriending only Polish people at the moment. I tried to make English friends, but it is difficult, as I do not communicate as easily as they do.

A mobile lifestyle, involving several adjustments, seemed to impact upon young people. They often felt uncomfortable in the new location, and preferred to or felt forced to socialise with ethnic peers (see also Ní Laoire *et al.* 2011). For example, Mateusz (8 years old) reported during the interview: 'I have many Polish friends, and among the Scottish schoolmates no one wants to play with me, because I am Polish, and when I play football no one want to pass me the ball'. In both studies participants reported the perception that language was a barrier to socialising with their peers in the new environment. Soon after migration, it became clear that peer relationships were important relational resources, as well as the source of major problems. Children and young people encountered difficulties in expressing their thoughts and opinions and understanding the demands others made of them. They sometimes felt ridiculed and rejected by their peers because of their limited proficiency in English.

Language shapes not only who 'we are' but also who 'we are not' (Reay and Lucey 2000). In her view of school, Wiktoria, a 10-year-old from a Catholic urban primary school (Study I) saw an obvious division:

We, Polish, are many, the biggest group in school after Scottish children of course. Recently another Polish child joined our class; she does not understand anything, so I have to be with her and translate her everything. And there is another one who just arrived, and I have to help them both.

Wiktoria's example also illustrates how some schools that lacked efficient specialist linguistic resources relied on the willingness of Polish-speaking children to accommodate the communication needs of the migrant students.

Resources are a very important factor in the accommodation of increasing numbers of migrant children. Teachers interviewed in Study I raised concerns about the lack of specialist support in schools for children for whom English is not their first language. Some schools (mostly urban secondary schools) had developed specific language support programmes for migrant pupils, delivered by teachers who had some training in EAL (English as an Additional Language). 'Bilingual assistants are rarely available on a continuous basis, more likely in city schools than in the other areas', an EAL teacher at a city community high school (Study I) pointed out.

Without clear policies on support for new pupils with EAL needs, schools tended to rely on their teachers' abilities to improvise and adapt, as well as on other Polish-speaking children. Sometimes the presence of language support teachers resulted in paradoxical situations, where mainstream classroom teachers became more passive about addressing the immediate needs of migrant children, believing that the language support staff should handle these instead (see also Devine 2009).

Many participating families spoke of a lack of access to information on the school system of the host country. There was also confusion in the matter of language learning and language needs, especially for children who had already spent some time in the new country and had started to become bilingual before entering school. For example, a mother of a five-year-old boy reported sending her son to speech therapy on her own initiative, as she was concerned about her child's ability to cope with school. The mother did not perceive the speech therapy as effective because her child did not have any speech difficulties, but needed some support with his English language. She reported that other Polish parents also used speech therapy as a route to support English-language learning. The speech therapy practice is clearly an example of a misunderstanding around

migrant children's bilingualism. Polish parents are often concerned that bilingualism is a risk for their children, as it may distract them from formally learning English, a common misconception (Sobków 2014).

Some parents also spoke of their frustration at not being able to support children's learning because of their lack of knowledge about the education system or their own limited language skills, which did not allow them to engage with schools in a meaningful way. Children are usually quicker to learn the language of the country in which they settle because they are immersed in the dominant national language at school. Their parents may spend most of their time with other Polish migrants in low-skilled jobs that attract migrant labour, where they have limited exposure to and opportunities to learn the new language.

One of the mothers, Ludmila (Study II), talks about 'a friend', who felt unable to help her child with homework:

> *I have a friend, her daughter is now 13, and before they came here four years ago, her daughter used to go to school in Poland. And there, she knew how to help her daughter with homework, she knew the questions in the homework, but here, she doesn't. She feels so embarrassed because she can't help her daughter, and her English is not good enough.*

Aware of their parents' frustration and inability to help, children often became self-sufficient or adopted the 'expert' role themselves. In the interview cited above, after Agatha's mother talks about 'her friend' being unable to help her child with homework, Agatha, aged 8, intervenes:

> **Agatha:** *But I don't ask you for help with homework.*

> **Mother:** *No, you don't, it's true. You learn a lot from school. Plus I work, so I don't have much time to help you.*

> **Agatha:** *At school, we learn songs and poems, letters, and English… and sometimes my mum would ask me to translate things for her, and that's fine, I don't mind.*

Agatha is clearly adopting considerable agency in the processes of managing her schooling and protecting her mother's feelings, and this is significantly influenced by her experiences and interactions in different places (school, home) and through learning about customary practices of parental engagement.

Communication with school was difficult for many Polish parents, who often had poor English-language skills. They expressed uncertainty about addressing their children's problems at school and were often unaware of parents' events or opportunities for getting involved in their children's learning. Maria, a 43-year-old mother (Study I) whose two daughters had been attending a school in a Scottish city for a year, said:

> *I do have a great barrier to overcome and that's speaking English. I understand most things, but I cannot speak well, and I feel powerless. In Poland, I could speak to other parents if I didn't like something or their children were bullying mine, but here, my daughters were bullied at the beginning of their schooling, and I couldn't do a thing.*

While some schools were able to provide interpreters for parents who had more limited English skills, others did not have the resources to offer this service. Frequently, parents themselves had to find someone to assist them in communicating with the school. Ewelina (Study I), mother of a 9-year-old boy, stated: 'I usually bring

somebody I know with me when I go to school to be able to communicate with the head teacher and to avoid the situation when I don't know what has been said'.

In a similar context, Valentine and Skelton (2007) point out that providing an interpreter or making other special provision for people who lack the proficiency to use the majority or dominant language can enable individuals to communicate with public institutions and so access benefits and rights to which they are entitled.

Concern for the education of their children was an important factor cited by parents when they were making the decision whether to remain in Scotland long term or return to Poland. Joanna, a 17-year-old girl at a suburban Catholic high school (Study I), described how concerns about her and her siblings' education influenced their parents' decision to migrate:

Maybe when I'm older I will go back to Poland. My parents are waiting for my siblings and me to finish schools here, and then they want to go back to Poland. But they say they'll give us the choice of where we would like to live as adults.

Academic engagement and achievement were strengthened by supportive family relationships; migrant children expressed their motivation to learn for the sake of their parents, who were often seen as having made sacrifices to enable their children to have better opportunities (see also Suárez-Orozco, Suárez-Orozco and Todorova 2008). For example, Adam, aged 13 (Study I), draws a tree of important things. (This was one of the thematic drawings children could choose. The children were asked to draw a tree with roots and then to draw or write beside the roots the things that they were attached to.) Describing his drawing, Adam expressed the sense of responsibility he felt toward his family:

It's really important for me to help my family, so I should help my family. I also need to get on with my classmates here to cope with the language; I mean the Scottish language and the English language, which is important when you need to go out of Scotland. On my tree there is also the family, friends and learning.

Adam recognises differences, important in communicating competently within the school context, between formal English taught in school and the Scots language or English spoken with the Scottish accent used by his local peers. His narrative provides an opportunity to go beyond the focus on language attainment and considers the networks of support in which migrant children operate, giving weight to meaningful relationships and family communications.

Language, family and community relationships

Migrant children often act as facilitators in the processes of settlement and community building through their role as language and cultural brokers (Orellana, Thorne, Chee and Lam 2001). They 'bridge the gap' by assisting not only their peers but also their parents in the process of cultural integration. They often act as translators or interpreters for parents who are not able to communicate in English. Gosia (14), Study I, explained how her older brother, who was 16 at the time and the only English speaker in the family, helped with her registration at school soon after arrival: 'When I arrived I had a few weeks off and from September I went to school. We had no problem with the enrolment and the paperwork because my brother spoke English'. Through their children, parents often established contact with other parents, teachers and social service providers. Parents with little or limited English skills were socially isolated and some schools organised meetings for parents to encourage socialisation. For some of the parents, especially mothers, this was their only opportunity for a social life:

I've made two Polish friends here [in Scotland]; we meet sometimes, but not very often. There were some meetings in my son's school, organised by the head teacher. I went and they arranged a translator. Every Thursday women from different ethnic groups met there for tea or coffee and a chat about their country, and to learn something together like photography or show their national cuisine. I made 'bigos'. The Scottish liked it. They even asked for the recipe, so I gave it to them, but I am not sure they used it (Ewa, 41 years old, 3 children, Study I).

While families in both studies seemed to agree on the importance of learning English for their children's education and prospects, there was a marked distinction in terms of the importance that different parents attached to maintaining their native language. Kasia (Study II), a mother of two young children, expressed disbelief that some Polish parents would be willing to abandon their native language and impair their children's ability to interact with their families:

We always speak Polish at home, but I have many [Polish] friends who speak English to their children. They say they want their children to know a bit of English before they start school. Which is funny, because they [the parents] usually don't know English well, so I can't imagine how they can teach their children? And then their child will go to Poland to see the grandparents and won't be able to speak to them, which is kind of sad.

A good number of parents taking part in both studies, however, did not want their children to abandon their Polish identity and language. For example, Jolanta (Study I), a 35-year-old mother of two school children living in a semi-urban area, explained how children's enrolment in a complementary school was so important for her family:

We found out soon after arrival that there is a Polish Saturday school open in the area and our children could go there. We want our children to remember Polish language and the country they come from. This is also important in relation to their grandparents, as the children should be able to communicate with them and to know our culture and history.

Many Polish migrant children and families may be motivated to join Saturday schools as they look for a group to share similar views or experiences in addition to a shared language. There is a sizeable and increasing need to secure a Polish educational offer in the UK, including in Scotland, as Sobków (2014) has pointed out. Polish Saturday schools are usually financed by parents themselves, as well as supported by the Polish government. Migrant communities create themselves through practices such as language, effectively building particular solidarities, giving meaning to particular spaces and impacting on individuals' self-identities (cf. Valentine and Skelton 2007). Praszalowicz, Irek, Malek, Napierala, Pustulka and Pylat (2012) also highlight the integrating role of the Polish schools in the UK context. Here language, space and identities are being mutually constituted (Valentine *et al.* 2008: 377).

For many young Polish migrants, family respect for their cultural capital seemed to offset the socioeconomic disadvantages they encountered. Polish labour migrant families seemed to draw on the cultural capital originating from educational practices in their home country.

Children's family and peer relationships are also affected by family migration, including their relationships with parents, ethnic peers and extended family, who represent 'home' and the native country. In both studies

presented here, the sense of connection with the home country was often maintained through internet conversations, phone calls, and more or less frequent visits to and from Poland. Weronica (Study I), aged 10, explained through drawing the significant role of media in keeping in touch with her family and friends:

I drew the phone to call my family in Poland and a computer to talk to them. I've got four cousins and grandma and granddad and three aunts and three uncles and many friends in Poland. We often call grandparents, and I talk with my friends on Skype and there is one friend from Poland who went to Ireland and I contact her by Skype too.

Internet and other electronic technologies play a prominent role in the development and maintenance of Polish migrant pupils' home language (McGonigal and Arizpe 2007: 96). Another child, Ralph (Study I), 11 years old (from an urban Catholic school), describes his tree of attachment:

On my drawing, I placed under the tree all the important people: in Poland, my father, brother and grandmum and granddad and in Scotland, my mum. I call my grandparents in Poland every day. I also stay in touch with my father and older brother via Skype and I use the computer to talk to my friends in Poland and in Scotland.

Ralph's example illustrates his 'dual' orientation as he places two homes under his tree of attachment. Adrian, 9 years old, shows a similar dual orientation: 'I have got exactly two – one home in Poland and one here, but Poland is more of my home'.

The bifocal aspect of Polish migrant children's experiences of local belonging was a feature of most cases in both Studies I and II. They were bilingual – or were at various levels of developing bilingual competence – but, in general, they used both languages on a daily basis. They were also 'bilocal' – while some saw Scotland but others referred to Poland as 'home' and significant for their identity formation, they had all developed an emotional attachment to both the place(s) of birth and the new place of settlement. Overall, they considered themselves culturally competent in two systems – the 'Polish' and the 'Scottish' – and, through their everyday practices, combined the two systems or kept them separate, as necessary.

Being socialised in two cultures, that of the Scottish school with its friendships and that of the Polish home, often meant that children were exposed to conflicting values and some talked about the challenging process of managing and negotiating identities and choosing between cultural affiliations according to the circumstances. Zuzanna, 12, (Study II) explained how she used her Scottish accent at school and how she 'felt' a different identity at home: 'I learnt to speak with a Scottish accent quite quickly. My friends like that, although they'd sometimes make fun of my accent or how I say things. I'd say I'm more Scottish at school and more Polish at home'.

This situation reflects what Portes and Rumbaut (2001) called dissonant, consonant and selective acculturation, when family members vary in their readiness to embrace the new culture. In some cases children learn the language and adapt to the new culture very quickly, while their parents do not adapt at the same pace (dissonant acculturation), and in other cases children and parents embrace the new culture and abandon the old one at the same pace (consonant acculturation). The former is more likely to create intergenerational conflict, as adults and children in the family disagree on the morality of leaving one's culture behind. Most of the families in our studies adopted a selective acculturation approach, whereby their links with the co-ethnic community and the sustained transnational relations allowed parents and children both to maintain aspects of the native culture, including the language, and to embrace gradually elements of the new culture.

The evidence from both studies is indicative of more significant changes in families' relationships and roles after migration than has previously been recognised. The separation brought about by migration inherently challenges traditional roles within the family. Structural changes that families experience are accompanied by cultural changes brought about by the processes of acculturation and integration into the new society, and these can often lead to intergenerational tensions.

Migration does not, however, mean the disintegration of family ties. This study showed the great lengths to which migrants go to keep in touch with family members left behind and maintain their cultural practices (see also Sime and Fox 2014a). Children spoke very fondly of their relationships with their grandparents and their regret at having to be separated from them. The emotional support they received, often mediated by computer technology or phone calls, was key to their stability and confidence in coping with the new environment. They also expressed strong feelings of belonging to both cultures: that of their families' homeland, as mediated by their contact with their grandparents and parents, and that of their new country, as mediated principally by school and local friendships. Strong transnational bonds highlighted children's awareness of the importance of the values learnt from their distant relatives and how these were part of their cultural identity and ethnicity.

Conclusions and recommendations

In this paper, we have drawn on the experience of Polish migrant children in Scotland to focus on how language practices, identities and belonging change as a result of family mobility. The children involved in both studies were bilingual, at various levels of competence, which opened up for them a range of possible enactments of the self. Particular spaces – here we focused on the home and school – are produced through specific hegemonic languages (Polish at home, English at school). These have distinct norms or regimes that regulate communicative practices and encounters between different linguistic performances. In this way, speaking a given language in different spatial contexts can define individuals as being Scottish or British at school and Polish at home and affect their sense of identification and belonging (Valentine *et al.* 2008).

The research discussed in this paper suggests that there is a need for language to play a more central role in debates about cultural connectivity and transnational migration. As children's multiple competences in the new language and culture develop through interactions in several sites, such as schools and friendships, the role that language plays in their family and peer relationships, as well as their own sense of self, cultural identity and sense of belonging needs re-examining. While at school they may see themselves at times as 'outsiders' and disadvantaged due to their developing competence in English and despite their bilingualism, their position at home as 'cultural experts' in the new language and culture brings other pressures and may challenge traditional roles and hierarchies. Competence in the majority language is clearly essential at school to enable children to fully participate in the curriculum and develop friendships – while children may bring a wealth of knowledge of other languages and cultures to the school, this may be different from the knowledge required and valued at school. These discontinuities and mismatched expectations may lead to migrant children becoming marginalised and under pressure to learn the majority language quickly, as well as adopting new identities of language learners and cultural brokers at the intersection of majority and minority cultures, both of which they are now part of at one and the same time. The evidence presented also argues that language as an enabler to access the majority culture and form new relationships can constitute a barrier to the equitable benefits of education. Children and adults are asked to conform and adopt the new majority language, sometimes to the detriment of their own, and these assimilationist tendencies are manifest in the curriculum, teachers' expectations and the nature of the opportunities available for learning and socialising, which promote the almost exclusive use of English. Children's first language becomes thus relegated to the home, configuring in

time the identities that children adopt across different spaces and also their sense of belonging (or marginal position) across spaces such as home, school and public spaces (Hébert 2005). The acquisition of English as a second language thus has a broader impact on the everyday lives and identities of young Polish migrants in Scotland and their families, given the tensions in the priority children and adults give to one language and the difference in competency between adults and children that arises in time (see also Sime and Pietka-Nykaza 2015). This leads to young people's 'dual consciousness' (Agnew 2005) as formed at the intersection of the cultural frames they interact with; the bifocal nature of their everyday lives is filtered through the language they are encouraged or allowed to use. A conflict of loyalties often occurs when children struggle between demands from schools to prioritise English and pressure from parents to maintain their home language, which they may see in time as too time-consuming or irrelevant. Anthias (2011) sees these manifestations of inter-generational struggles as parents' attempts to maintain control over young people's futures. In seeing the preservation of their own language as a key marker of cultural identity, parents want their children to maintain the cultural values left behind by their family's migration, leaving open the option of an eventual return.

To this extent, it appears that education policy and school practices in Scotland have not proved fully capable of integrating difference and diversity into the educational environment to allow children full access to the curriculum, as well as enhance their sense of belonging. The findings point to a need to reconsider education policy and practices in Scotland, and across Europe more generally, in light of the contemporary realities of migration and intra-European mobility. For example, teachers' and parents' awareness of the significant role of primary language retention needs to be raised, as the new language is acquired most successfully when a child's first language has been allowed to develop alongside it (Baker 2000; Cummins 2000; Skutnabb-Kangas 2000). New migrants to Scotland arrive with the potential to become bilingual in their first language and English, with all the educational and cultural advantages which bilingualism can bring. The research presented here provides evidence that migrant families benefit from using both the majority and their home language in terms of better relationships within the family, peer groups and communities. Bilingual children frequently outperform monolingual children on certain cognitive skills and may also have an edge over monolingual children in their socio-emotional development (Willard and Leyendecker 2013). Research on second-language acquisition and bilingualism (Suárez-Orozco, Darbes, Dias and Sutin 2011: 315) also suggests that 'balanced bilinguals', that is, migrant children and young people who maintain their home language as they acquire a second academic language, tend to demonstrate better educational trajectories over time.

Despite these proven benefits of bilingualism, the task of maintaining children's home language too often falls to the families. Schools need better mechanisms to promote home languages in meaningful ways, and to include them in the curriculum. This would have benefits for children and parents alike, enhancing their sense of identity and belonging at community level, as well as promoting cultural diversity to benefit all groups. Valentine *et al.* (2008) suggested that provision might include: increasing incentives for schools to give more time to the teaching of modern languages; recognition of the increasingly diverse range of linguistic needs and competencies of pupils and parents/families; and active promotion of multilingualism through school activities. Currently, in Scotland and across Europe, practices to support home language development in school-aged children need further exploration and evaluation, given the enormous impact of majority languages during the school years.

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Norwegian Schooling in the Eyes of Polish Parents: From Contestations to Embracing the System

Magdalena Ślusarczyk*, Paula Pustułka*

The issue of the educational system remains one of the crucial areas for the discussions pertaining to migrants' integration and contemporary multicultural societies. Ever since the inception of compulsory schooling, children and youth have partaken in largely state-governed socialisation in schools, which provide not only knowledge and qualifications, but are also responsible for transferring the culture and values of a given society. Under this premise, the schooling system largely determines opportunities available to migrant children. This paper seeks to address the questions about the pathways to youth Polish migrant integration, belonging and achievement (or a lack thereof) visible in the context of the Norwegian school system. The paper draws on 30 interviews conducted in 2014 with Polish parents raising children abroad, and concentrates on the features of Norwegian school as seen through the eyes of Polish parents. Our findings show that the educational contexts of both sending and receiving societies are of paramount importance for the understanding of family and parenting practices related to children's schooling. In addition, we showcase the significance of Norwegian schools for children's integration, illuminate the tensions in parental narratives and put the debates in the context of a more detailed analysis of the relations between school and home environments of migrant children. The paper relies on parental narratives in an attempt to trace and reflect the broader meanings of children's education among Poles living abroad.

Keywords: migrant children; migrant students; school system; Polish families in Norway

Introduction

The migrants who either leave their countries of origin as mothers and fathers or become parents after moving abroad eventually need to make decisions about their children's schooling. The moment of entering a foreign educational system by migrants' children can very much be seen as the foretoken evidence of settlement choices – a decision to stay relatively permanently (or alternatively – a cause for return). From this point onwards, parents must plan long term and take into account the interests of their children finishing certain stages of education (grade, school level).

At the other end of the spectrum, the countries that are attractive to migrants sooner or later have to develop educational policies that include pupils with migrant backgrounds within their ambit. The choices made on

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macro and mezzo levels may have varied impacts on different institutions, which may then either conform to the suggested framework for supporting migrant children, or, as is the case with Norway, establish (or choose not to implement) its own need-based solutions locally. At any rate, the school is a linchpin, a predicate of integration-related successes and failures in the destination society.

For a child with migratory background, starting a new school will occupy a central location in the nexus of multiple and often conflicting interests of adults (parents, teachers, school personnel, policy makers, relatives / kin members) and institutions (schools, ministries), conceivably located across the borders, and cultural logics of two or more nation-states. A situation of a particular child will be a result of societal pressures in the receiving society, family setting and family practices germane to education, as well as – in the later years – child's individual choices.

In this context, this article seeks to address questions about the pathways to youth migrant integration, belonging and achievement (or a lack thereof) visible in the school system context. Due to the ample scope of the topic, we limit our analysis to the school system and the relations between parents and school, although other areas, such as peer and hobby groups, extracurricular activities, diaspora participation / strategies for maintaining heritage and shaping Polishness, as well as forms of leisure are equally important for examining processes of children's integration. In this paper, we focus on questions pertinent to how mothers and fathers frame the role of children's education in their migration and how parents perceive the school in the destination society, with the narratives here being illustrative specifically of the Norwegian case. The main aim is to show the general opinions that Polish parents have about the Norwegian education system, while also seeking to showcase the contradictions in these opinions as suggested by the article's title. These contradictions are embedded, more specifically, in the interplay between praise and doubts about schools in the destination country, as well as the possible problems stemming from the fact of being an immigrant in Norway. The main argument we put forward in the article is that narrative evidence clearly shows the titular tendencies among the respondents, who often talk about the Norwegian schooling of their children in a manner full of contradictions – partly embracing and otherwise contesting the foreign system. The analysis proceeds in a two-fold manner. First, we outline the types of parental generalisations about schooling, both those negative (e.g. poor curriculum) and those positive (e.g. focus on health, diversity, laid-back approach), seeing them as embedded in the existing educational model described in the literature section. Secondly, we present the particular and non-systemic factors relevant to the educational pathways of success and dissatisfaction for Polish migrant children abroad (individually sought and implemented solutions, chance encounters, etc.).

Politics, integration and values: migrants and the education system

The leading criterion for looking at children's school situation following migration is the immigration policy, especially the views on integration dominant in their destination country. Together with other pertinent factors, the intersecting influences are presented in Figure 1 below.

To reiterate, a conceptualisation of cultural integration relies heavily on the attitude of the receiving country towards immigration, as well as the concepts of citizenship and framing of nationality, which govern societies. Across the globe, the contingent solutions seem to ensue from differing situations and historical inceptions of the more visible influxes of migrants. They are stretched on a continuum ranging from implementations closer to assimilation (e.g. in France; Schulte 2001; Freudweiler 2003; Morokvasic and Catarino 2006), to middle-ground approaches (e.g. in Germany, where the initial attempts at ignoring the large numbers of incoming populations shifted towards integration focus; Puskeppeleit and Krüger-Potratz 1999; Neumann 2006; Steffens 2006), to multifarious variants of multiculturalism (e.g. in the United Kingdom, Sweden; see Schulte 2001; Freudweiler

2003; Beyersdörfer 2005; Anthias, Cedeberg and Raluca Torre 2006; Cedeberg and Anthias 2006; Ślusarczyk 2008; see also: Adams and Kirova 2006).

Figure 1. Children with migrant origin in the schooling system

School system:
- egalitarian vs selective
- the role of parents in the school
- centralisation/decentralisation

Migration and integration policy:
- between assimilation and multi-culturalism

Migrants in the society:
- number of migrants
- dispersion
- ethnical differences
- polictical influence

Immigration educational policy:
- organisation of the school system: integration vs selective
- teachers' competencies
- curricula
- intercultural education

Economy:
- investments in education
- infrastructure
- differentiation (country scale)

Migrant children/students

Local enviroment

Parents/family:
- migration decision-making tied to schooling
- social capital
- support / lack of support
- mothers as agents of education
- supplementary schooling as means of cultivating heritage (e.g. Polish Saturday School)

Source: Ślusarczyk, Nikielska-Sekuła (2014): 178.

The Norwegian school system as an environment is believed to be capable of facilitating the blending in with the country's multicultural society, as well as fostering knowledge acquisition and focus on professional qualifications recognised in the receiving society (Taguma, Shewbridge, Huttova and Hoffman 2009; OECD 2010). A portentous influx of immigrants into Norway began after the Second World War and reached its high point during the 1960s. At the beginning of 2015, the number of immigrants totalled 669 400 (SSB 2015), while 135 600 people were born into migrant families. It is estimated that as many as 222 nationalities and ethnicities are represented in Norway, and the Polish population is currently the largest immigrant group, totalling 91 000, or 14 percent of all immigrants in Norway (SSB 2015). Notably, the Polish discourse and research on the character of migration outflows and their influence on children seems to include two tracks. One is highly critical and foregrounds an assumption that mobility is hectic, spontaneous, non-strategic and overall has a negative impact on children and their education (e.g. Kawecki, Kwatera, Majerek and Trusz 2012). At the same time, the second empirically-grounded research strand suggests that migratory decisions made by Poles, especially those with families, are very much organised and prepared; migrants carefully choose when to move abroad as they search the conditions that are possibly most beneficial for their offspring and their education (see e.g. White 2010; Pustułka 2013; Ryan and Sales 2013).

Linking the country-case with earlier description of systemic approaches, the Norwegian system can be classified as close to multiculturalism, although it is not named as the official integration policy. The discourse of diversity and multiculturalism first emerged in Norway around the 1970s as an alternative to assimilation at a time when the society was still relatively homogenous. In 1980 the assimilation policies were officially rejected, and, simultaneously, it was stressed that the receiving state bears as much responsibility for maintaining the unique national cultures of the incoming populations as the migrants themselves (Hagelund 2002: 406–407). As a result, the Norwegian immigration policy is described as 'de facto multiculturalism'[1] by some scholars (Akkerman and Hagelund 2007: 197–198).

To complete the discussion of the Norwegian immigration policy, let us highlight some features of the local education system (see e.g. Marlow-Ferguson and Lopez 2002; Melhuish, Sammons, Siraj-Blatchford and Taggart 2004; Einarsdottir and Wagner 2006). In Norway, children aged 0 to 5 can attend early years education provided by kindergartens (Kamerman 2000), although this implies paid care. Elementary level education (*grunnskole*) is compulsory and free for children between the ages of 6 and 15. This stage is split into two levels: primary school for children aged 6 to 12 (*barneskole*), and middle school (*ungdomskole*) for youth in the 13 to 15 age bracket. The afterschool programme / additional care (SFO) is available for 6 to 9-year-olds both before and after classes. The programme is voluntary and participation costs are covered by parents (*egenandel*). After completing this step, children continue their education in the state-funded (obligatory) 3-year high school (*videregående skole*), which opens the doors to university (Norwegian Ministry of Education and Research 2007).

The stages of Polish compulsory education arranged according to children's age are quite similar, although it was only recently that the school starting age has been reduced from 7 to 6 years in a political decision that has since been reversed. This macro-similarity of levels may be deceptive to parents, who could perhaps assume a smooth educational transition upon migration and/or return. In fact, the deep-lying differences between approaches to schooling, grading, skills and curricular focuses are quite stark (*Education and Migration Strategies…* 2008; Ślusarczyk and Nikielska-Sekuła 2014; Muchacka 2015). Besides the formal conditions, for instance a mechanism of repeating a grade and its connotations in Poland, the assumptions within the educational framework are fundamentally different. Despite several consecutive reforms, Polish schools are still dominated by academic approaches and impose curricula that are often evaluated as overloaded with lessons using largely lecturing-based didactic methods. Academic attainment and grades are strongly correlated with socio-economic status of families. While individual approach and teaching agency are declared, they are difficult to acquire because local councils seek to reduce educational costs and so there are now 30 or more pupils in one class (Ślusarczyk 2010; Gulczyńska and Wiśniewska-Kin 2013).

A holistic immigration policy and strategies of integration impact the shape of educational policy, including the degree and type of provisions made for children with migratory backgrounds. Broadly speaking, two concepts of separation- and integration-centred models can be discerned (Todorovska-Sokolovska 2010). Under the first of the two approaches, children of migrants attend separate (transitory) divisions and classes for a certain period. They are expected to use that time and training to master the local language to the degree allowing them to actively participate in tasks carried out in the regular classroom (EIW 2007). The integrational model assumes that children of migrants partake in the obligatory classes and follow the same rules as the local children. In addition, they receive help in the form of supplementary language modules or assistance from (bilingual) assistant teachers (Szelewa 2010; Todorovska-Sokolovska 2010; Ślusarczyk and Nikielska-Sekuła 2014). Both these solutions are actually found in the Norwegian schooling system with the choice over their selection left at the discretion of the commune. Furthermore, the Norwegian state infrastructure strives to welcome children into the educational institutions as early as possible, seeing the nursery and the kindergarten as crucial tools of socialisation and integration (Norwegian Ministry of Education and Research 2007: 23, see

also Sammons 2013 and Miller, Votruba-Drzal and Levine Coley 2013 for broader context). For several years now, a strategic plan has been in place that is grounded in the equality of participation in the educational system for students from linguistic minorities.[2] Apart from aid focused on increasing children's competency in Norwegian and their inclusion in the peer groups and school community, some steps are taken to foster opportunities for cultivating aspects of children's home/ethnic/parental/origin culture at school (EIW 2006).

In practice, when children at the school age do not know the Norwegian language, they receive teaching help. One of the common solutions is to open integrational divisions at schools. The so called welcoming divisions – *innføringsgruppa* – are located within schools and tasked with introducing both the language and the Norwegian culture and social norms.[3] At times, these divisions are available for more than one age group or beyond the introductory level.[4] Another possibility, which sometimes functions as a continuation of the initial study period in the special class, is for the child to be assigned a bilingual teacher assistant, fluent in both Norwegian and the child's mother tongue. Here the support is delivered once or several times a week (depending on the commune) and takes the form of meetings and ongoing help with schoolwork, as well as translating homework assignments, in-class tests and their results, and other measures of grading the child's achievements. Evidently, integration-focused strategy and the selection of educational model cannot be functional without appropriate qualifications and engagement on the part of teachers, teacher assistants and other teaching personnel. The same requirement applies to the availability and superior quality of intercultural curricula and relevant changes to the actual teaching methods and the philosophy of teaching.[5]

School achievement levels (a combination of grades/attainment and integration) of the foreign pupils can also be affected by the underlying macrostructures, such as the schemata behind the educational system, the level of egalitarianism, and the pre-set thresholds of selection. The Norwegian schooling is generally assessed as 'inclusive' in this realm (Flem and Keller 2000; Taguma *et al.* 2009; OECD 2010).[6] Its characteristic features such as a unified and clear structure and curriculum outlines, as well as a nation-wide standardised organisation of teachers' qualifications, make the system relatively ready to promote integration and receptive to the needs of migrant pupils.

On the one hand, the clearly pronounced goal of this policy is to promote egalitarianism and equality and secure equal access to education, regardless of children's social status, cultural origin, place of residence, gender and needs (Norwegian Ministry of Education and Research 2007). On the other hand, the decentralisation of the system results in slightly unfair dependency on the communes: children will receive support as long as the commune has the infrastructure, political will and financial resources to provide it.

An analysis of the policy and organisation of the school system does not exhaust the topic under discussion. As it was already suggested at the beginning of this paper, an equally vital aspect is the component of the community and home environment, which mark the different intersecting axes of the child's situation. Operating in the space where public (institutional) and private (familial) spaces meet, children and their parents navigate the often unfamiliar waters of their new locality. This is due to the fact that the school not only transmits knowledge and teaches certain skills, but also promotes and imprints ideologies, norms and values, which may openly contradict or subliminally contest the ones conveyed at home and by family members (Freudweiler 2003: 171; Möbius 2003: 588). Therefore, a structural analysis of the school success/failure predictors should be paired with the investigation of family practices as well as the type, form and level of support (or its lack) that the children receive in their family setting. Another aspect that must not be overlooked is the importance of *habitus* understood in the Bourdieusian sense as the complex set of tendencies, attitudes and dispositions immanent to individuals and introduced into the sphere of human habits (Bourdieu and Passeron 1990: 9); *habitus* is of pivotal importance for the attitudes to school and studying, as well as the chance of academic success. Migration scholarship particularly underscores the role of mothers, who operate as *capital*

brokers, making viable 'a crucial link for maintaining, enhancing or destabilising the intergenerational repro-duction, accumulation and transmission of cultural capital within family strategies' (Erel 2012: 466). In sum, children's scholarly success depends to a large extent on their parents' views of education, aspirations, plans, and support.

Of similar importance is parental response to the requests, norms and demands that school requires them to confront and either conform to or reject. Here one finds the issue of how much significance is assigned to the cooperation on the school–home front and the active engagement of parents in school life. Among migrants, the perception of the norm might be skewed, while the language difficulties may further hinder parents' per-formance in the eyes of the school.

Three types of assistive measures found across Europe are written information booklets in the respective mother tongues of the migrants, employment of interpreter's services, and using special personnel delegated to migrant support (EACEA 2009). Relying on hiring and utilising assistants is believed to be the best option, as it fosters maintaining activity and subjectivity of migrant pupils as well as their parents. This is definitely favourable for the student populations with the representation of asylum seekers' children, who are often said to have experienced trauma, but is also seen as the swiftest way to deal with problems with the chance of parental engagement in school matters of their children *via* an appropriate proxy (an adult without stake in the matter rather than their child, for instance).

In the Norwegian system, where high levels of parental participation in education are prioritised and seen as one of the main predictors of the child's success, the latter solution is unsurprisingly preferred. The problem arises, however, when parents are unprepared to benefit from the support offered to them. Several reasons contribute to such situation and the first issue might stem from the simple inner-differentiation within migrant communities – both intra- and inter-ethnically (stratifications, class). Bourdieu's habitus explains social and material features of life-styles and attitudes to scholarly and alternative means of education. Secondly, some migrants assume that the separation between the institutions of school and family that they were familiar with in their country of origin is organised in the same manner in the destination society. This false conviction is of paramount significance for Polish migrant parents in Norway, as the Poles were said to constitute a rather *latent* group (Olson 1965) as far as the landscape of social participation is concerned. On the macro-scale, Poles seem to benefit little from the available options of becoming engaged in schools and influencing their actions. Their organisational efforts are concentrated on the *ad-hoc* defence of interests, while their perception of the above mentioned institutional capabilities remains unchanged: they still see them as fake and maintained for the sole purpose of legitimisation of the decisions made by school authorities and administrative bodies within the education system (Ślusarczyk 2010; Gulczyńska and Wiśniewska-Kin 2013; Muchacka 2015).

To conclude, the situation experienced by Polish parents in Norway at the time when their children enter the education system is marked by a degree of uneasiness, as they are not culturally prepared or equipped for tackling the systemic demands and understanding the local practices. The results section will examine how they come to terms with this issue, while it also showcases the resultant narrative tension. The inquiry seeks to demonstrate how it is possible for parents to be highly critical of the Norwegian system on the one hand, and, on the other hand, to be absolutely delighted with some of the components and practices offered by the schools they encounter in their destination country.

Methodology

The empirical basis for the study was the data collected under the *Migrant Families in Norway: Structure of Power Relations and Negotiating Values and Norms in Transnational Families* study within the Transfam

project *Doing Family in Transnational Context. Demographic Choices, Welfare Adaptations, School Integration and Every-Day Life of Polish Families Living in Polish–Norwegian Transnationality*.[7] The methodological approach was that of a small-scale qualitative in-depth inquiry and a combination of biographical and narrative interviewing techniques was used for data collection, yielding a dataset of 30 interviews. The respondent pool contains interviews (cases) with 40 members of 30 households, which cover both individual mothers (18) and fathers (2), as well as migrant parenting couples interviewed together (10). The aggregated characteristics of the respondents show the average age of 37.5 years within the 29–54 age range. The interviewees are parents to 57 children and the number of children per family is 1.9 (the participating families had between 1 and 5 children).[8] The average age of the child falls into the early school years at just below 9 years. A more detailed breakdown of children's ages is shown in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Respondents' children by age, N = 57

Age group	Number of children
over 18	5
teenagers (13–18)	5
pre-teens (10–12)	11
early school years (6–9)	23
preschool (3–5)	7
under 3	6

The respondents and their children reside in the Norwegian capital and its surrounding suburban areas, as well as slightly more remote, rural places (up to 200 km away from Oslo), where they live largely middle-class lives, while representing a vast array of occupational statuses and educational attainment backgrounds.

The research design relied on the pragmatic premise of acquiring biographical narratives that focus on specific topics and events (Wengraf 2001), namely family and mobility. A rigorous data analysis process entailed a systematic approach to the use of analytical grids prepared immediately after the interviews and, most importantly, the meticulously transcribed interviews subjected to open-coding and textual organisation. In this paper, the focus is primarily on the narratives solicited through questions on the opinions that the respondent(s) had in connection with their child's or children's experiences at different levels of education (preschool, primary school, middle school, and so on). Follow-up probing on how the respondents compared Polish schooling (as remembered by the parent and/or experienced by children prior to leaving the country) to the Norwegian system and the forms of communication and engagement with local educational institutions abroad were also analysed and used for illustration in this article. The analysed material yielded a data matrix with a sufficient degree of depth, robustness and saturation.

'So much help but so little Mathematics!' – school evaluations and tensions in the interviews with parents

To begin with, the findings presented here have a somewhat bilateral track of macro- and institutional-level themes on the one hand, and a more individualistically oriented focus on particular practices and unique biographic accounts, on the other hand.

In terms of the former, the narratives support earlier data collected for Polish parents and children on the institutional role of school. The results continue the line of argumentation which sees schooling as vital for the wider migration decision-making process and a primary space of socialisation in the destination country (e.g.

Ryan, Sales, Tilki and Siara 2008; Lopez Rodriguez 2010; White 2010; Pustułka 2013; Ryan and Sales 2013). This is clear from statements made by the interviewed parents, for instance:

> *I always explain that the fact we decided to come to Norway with our son [is] because he was still very young. Because I think that had he been 8 or 9 years old and had started a stable education in Poland, then we would not have made this decision. We personally believe that it would be an effort for him, then, it could do him some kind of harm. (...) I think he would still be able to make it in terms of picking up the language if he was 8 or 9 but I also think that it was different for him coming here at 3, starting kindergarten, learning two languages at once* (Marek, 34, 2: 2006, 2012).[9]

This behaviour, which is very common among the respondents, suggests an alternative track to the earlier conceptualisations of Polish mobility as hectic, spontaneous, precipitant and involving overly optimistic convictions about the unproblematic language acquisition and fast adaptation that children would experience if migrating at an early age. Looking at the post-migration context, this attitude of child-centrality understood through the lens of educational success persists. Further, it is a novel finding that children's schooling might even be prioritised over parents' employment and career ambitions, much like in other similarly positioned global locations (e.g. Park and Abelmann 2004; Erel 2012). Talking about unwelcome changes in her husband's workplace, Kamila said:

> *The topic of searching work [and moving] elsewhere keeps coming back like a boomerang. And I say to my husband: 'Good Lord, [we've had] this one really big move, let the children at least finish the schools, they can't be moved about like that. They are in the middle of their primary school!' So even though our daughter has recently changed schools – she did not like the Norwegian one and, just days ago, in January, she started a private school (...) it's in English, more demanding. (...) At any rate, she's just changed schools, so at this time there is no way we can move. Unfortunately, he [Kamila's husband] has to forget his ambitions for now* (Kamila, 46, 2: 2003, 2006).

To reiterate, when they consider the timing of their move abroad, parents pay as much attention to their children's education (hoping to ensure they have a smooth educational transition abroad) as they do to purely economic considerations (White 2010; D'Angelo and Ryan 2011; Praszałowicz, Irek, Małek, Napierała, Pustułka and Pyłat 2013; Pustułka 2013; Ryan and Sales 2013). From this it follows that parents no longer have the illusion that children can succeed in spite of living in a state of flux and ponder the impossibility of return from the educational setting's perspective:

> *If we wanted to go back now, we think it would be quite difficult [with our daughter] who goes to the 3rd grade here. We don't know what it looks like there but knowing the Polish school from experience, [knowing] the teachers and the Polish system, we would expect many difficulties, because of the curricular differences, I think we would hit the wall* (Daria, 37, Adam, 38, 2: 2005, 2009).

Moving to look at the details, all biographies of school-aged children's parents, without an exception, contained elaborate descriptions and evaluations of the Norwegian education system. The opinions were usually formed based on reference to the parents' own schooling experiences back in Poland, as well as early education of children prior to migration whenever applicable. Interestingly, we found that many parents tried to stay up to date with the developments of the Polish school and mentioned their kin members with children of similar age, such as cousins, nieces or nephews, as well as friends' kids. Having analysed the entirety of responses,

one comes to the conclusion that a whole spectrum of evaluations – from highly enthusiastic to profoundly negative – can be found in the stories of Polish parents in Norway. Another notable finding is that factors such as the length of stay abroad, having a foreign/Norwegian partner, as well as the social class and type of education are significant for how parents formulate their understandings, which mirrors some previous research results (e.g. Ryan *et al.* 2008; Lopez Rodriguez 2010; Erel 2012; Pustułka 2013). The parents established meanings using heuristics, random experiences, information (of varied quality) acquired from other Poles, research, or even one's own professional record in educational sector abroad, since as many as seven female respondents had a history of employment in teaching-related positions.

As mentioned above, the parents first and foremost engage in a comparative evaluation of the two distinct and often incompatible educational systems of Poland and Norway(see e.g. Hörner, Döbert, Kopp and von Mitter 2007). The Poland's education system continues to be based on achievement and competition (see e.g. Muchacka 2015) and many reforms seem to be there 'on paper' only (e.g. guidelines on not using grades during early childhood education). The system is said to reproduce and reinforce educational and social inequalities, as well as foster elitism by judging schools and pupils on the number of awards, achievements and competition wins (Kołodziejska and Mianowska 2008; Mikiewicz 2008). This view of schooling is reproduced by many respondents, who often point to a much lower 'level' of schools understood as a limited curriculum and slow pace of learning. While Jan accepts his daughter's school, he stresses that one particular teacher is much better than others:

The level [of education] here is much lower, for sure lower than the corresponding grade in the Polish school. But this teacher that runs the class, their division, is one of the better 5th grades in the region, and accordingly the teacher keeps up a decent level, shows them some knowledge, so that's all right. (...) And anyways [the daughter] is doing okay I think because she is always in the top of her class. (...) There are things she can be proud of – the number of points she has collected and so on (Jan, 53, 2: 1980, 2004).

Kornelia directly criticises the Norwegian school, which she believes does not demand enough of pupils. Her narrative is interesting in the sense that it highlights what is a commonly-held conviction in Poland, namely, that there is nothing wrong with a lot of studying (see also Pustułka 2013), and that many hours dedicated to homework every day are not at all problematic:

I think their teaching methods are stupid. Instead of teaching the basics in some order, like it is done in Poland, they teach some irrelevant stuff (...). Maths is particularly poorly taught. [My child] is now in 4th grade and she is learning multiplication table just now (...) while my brother [4th grader in Poland] did it long time ago. (...) [Norwegians] have a completely different approach, far less homework because when I call home [in Poland, my brother] is always doing homework – an hour, an hour and a half (Kornelia, 34, 1: 2004).

Other differences the parents also comment on are the issues related to school discipline and what is considered 'appropriate' school behaviour for children:

I think in Poland there is more disciplining in school, in teaching, (...) here parents are called because a teacher cannot handle the children [in the second grade] so I wonder what she is going to do in two years. (...) So there was a meeting with parents, and the teacher talked to the children and they had to come up with a solution, they had to sign a contract at home, the parent as well (...) and it seems to have worked (Ela, 38, 3: 2003, 2005, 2008).

Similarly, school is seen as promoting or allowing the behaviours that would not be found at the core of the Polish family values and what is seen as the Polish way of bringing up children:

> *I think that children, well – I am not sure how it is now, but I feel like children in Poland have more discipline. Here children can do whatever they want – a mother would ask children about their wishes rather than tell them what to do. (...) I am not optimistic about this, I think a child needs to have some boundaries, needs to be taught to know their obligations. (...) Norwegian parents seem to be too lenient. Looking at teenagers like my daughter [who complains about not being allowed to do things] I am a very strict mother according to her because other children can go to school with painted nails, heavy make-up, dyed hair, they can be out in the town after 10 p.m. – my child is not allowed to do that, she is only 13 years old, so I am very different from Norwegian parents on this matter* (Marcelina, 39, 2: 2001, 2007).

To sum up, the three most common issues that parents find hard in Norwegian schools are the less demanding curriculums, a lax attitude to pupils and youth who are often said to behave in a disorderly manner, and, finally, minor complaints about school spaces being dirty and food served at educational institutions appearing unhealthy. The broader concerns are normally filtered through parents' own schooling experiences and their knowledge about education in Poland, which they continuously weigh against what their children encounter. Let us mention at this stage that the discrepancy between parental opinions about Norwegian schooling is very high and particularly illustrative of the two completely different ideologies relayed through education in the Polish and Norwegian system. In accordance with what Muchacka (2015) and Wærdahl (in this volume) concede about Polish parents being primarily concerned with measurable educational attainment and outcomes (e.g. passing tests, obtaining high grades) as well as ratings (e.g. being 'best' in one's division, winning prizes), their philosophy often collides with the Norwegian schooling system. It is usually the parents of older children or those who have spent more time abroad that are able to reassess their convictions and modify their evaluations. Antonina's story highlights such transformation from a negative to positive view, with the latter featuring appreciation for an individualised approach to the pupil and consideration given to developmental constrains:

> *[Initially] I said 'Good Lord, what will my child grow up to be here?' [laughs] I was frightened, but then I [gained some] deeper understanding, I just looked harder, and eventually I realised that here they allow children to grow up. It is not their system that is flawed but ours in Poland (...) [where] children are overburdened with unnecessary things, really unnecessary subjects or curricula (...) the children need to have the right to be children* (Antonina, 47, 3: 1993, 2000, 2003).

At the same time, Antonina nevertheless underscored her daughter's unique achievements and fantastic results, similarly to Ilona and Adrian, whose story also supports the significance of flexibility that the Norwegian school offers in terms of not wasting children's abilities and talents:

> *Primary school is definitely at a lower level here [in Norway…]. One example is [our daughter] who was (...) sent to learn Mathematics with pupils three grades above her (...) When she started middle school, she was going to Maths classes to a high school, to a different school. (...) But now when we compare university studies, I must say that I find the level of difficulty is really, really high* (Ilona, 41, Adrian, 41, 2: 1994, 2004).

Parents with older children are not the only ones to express positive opinions; it seems that positive experiences contribute to a change in earlier-held convictions:

School here is great, really super! There were some opinions that the level of education in Norway is horribly low, and maybe there is a difference in other schools here, but I see [it is not so], when she [the daughter] has something to learn, and how many activities and exercises she gets from a teacher. So now I really do not believe that the level is low (Magda, 39, Michal, 40, 2: 2004, 2012).

Let us now move on to responses that are unequivocally positive about Norwegian school. Here, the parents add several issues other than the individual approach and focus on age-related needs of children. They list a balance between study and play, as well as the amount of time spent outside as clear advantages. The conception of childhood and education that focuses not only on the intellectual aspects, but also includes the emotional and physical development of a child and adapts the learning pace to the child's needs was acknowledged:

When six-year-olds go to school [in Poland] the classroom is not ready for them, they just study books, locked inside the school building. I like that here they (...) have breaks for playing, [children] can go outside, get some fresh air. (...) It is not stressful at all... [in Poland] they rush through the material and here it's different, it's calm (Klara, 31, 1: 2007).

I promised myself to look into a first-grader's textbook when I go to Poland next, I am very curious what I will find. (...) Everyone says that Polish education is a nightmare, there is just too much in the syllabus, too much and much too hard, children study all night. (...) The fact is that here the syllabus is fine. [My son] started school and now they are doing 10 in Maths and have not even done the whole alphabet yet. (...) They do one letter per week (Edyta, 37, 1: 2007).

Zooming in on the issues vital to migration parenting and education, the respondents raise some points about the (general and language) support (or lack thereof) for children with migrant backgrounds, the curriculum content, student–teacher relations and the expectations towards parents. As mentioned above, the interviews illustrate that contemporary family migrants are disenchanted and understand the potential pitfalls of having (or moving with) children abroad and consequently are mostly appreciative of the efforts on the part of Norwegian schools towards successful welcoming of children. They refer to systemic policies outlined in the first part of this paper which include 'welcome classrooms', bilingual teaching assistants and language tutors. Though the aid may not be timely and requires parental effort, the instruments for easing the transition to a new egalitarian system are usually utilised:

I found out that there is a law in Norway that a bilingual teacher must be provided but our commune said they cannot afford it and the child must be able to handle it alone. So I was understandably disappointed with the system. But as of the following September, [the daughter] was granted [help]. (...) They created a special division for children learning Norwegian and only there she was able to speak (Kamila, 46, 2: 2001, 2003).

The above quoted Ilona and Adrian also did their research prior to the daughter's arrival and knew about the transition classrooms for language learners:

[First] year it was the year of learning the language, so the child did not lose that year but rather moved forward with the curriculum [from where she stopped in Poland] but throughout that year she mostly studied Norwegian (Ilona, 41, Adrian, 41, 2: 1994, 2004).

In general, the Norwegian school is seen as responding well to the challenges brought about by migration, though this should not be seen as universal due to the fact that support offered to migrant children is determined at the commune level and may vary significantly in terms of scope and availability of help (Ślusarczyk and Nikielska-Sekuła 2014). One area that parents stressed was the way in which schools handle ethnic diversity and religious pluralism, placing it in clear opposition to the concept of catechesis in Poland:

> *They learn religion but not in the Polish way, they learn about Buddhism, Christianity. (...) They learn about many religions and not one religion that happens to be the one we believe in* (Edyta, 37,1: 2007).

To a certain degree, parents discuss the broader ideologies behind the multicultural classroom and promotion of diversity, rather than a specific response to the Polish influx, as Julia, quoted above, stated:

> *There is a degree of tolerance among children, in Jola's class. Jola is from Poland and there are two girls from those Pakistani [Middle Eastern] countries. I know that in Oslo there are much more, more foreigners and maybe two or three Norwegians in the entire division, but here in the area there aren't that many, so the class is not so 'colourful'. There are those really good rules in school that you can either invite everyone or maybe like all girls for your birthday. But you can never invite (...) only one selected friend* (Julia, 41, 2: 2006, 2008).

The second part of this quote is of particular interest, as the inclusivity-driven strategies of Norwegian schools were consistently highlighted across multiple interviews:

> *So here it is very good that when a teacher sees that a child is becoming isolated, retreats, then the teacher will try to include them in a group, first they sit down and talk to him or her, and then they include them in the group, they call upon some children so they play together and that child does not feel lonely, they have this type of system and I saw it in kindergartens many times. (...) No child must be isolated, in no way excluded, all children have to play together, it is actually forbidden to invite only a few classmates to your birthday party – you must invite everybody* (Aneta, 34, Karol, 36, 2: 2007, 2013).

These seemingly banal or inconsequential practices that are put in place to prevent ethnicity-based and other forms of discrimination or bullying, actually appear quite effective in the eyes of parents.

> *[There is] different treatment on the grounds of ethnic origin (...) they underline that everyone is different and that has to be accepted. (...) When [the daughter] was in kindergarten the children had to draw their family [and one boy drew two daddies and two mommies] and she said it was cool. (...) [In Poland] we talk about 'divorced parents' [in a negative way...] that the boy has been left alone and here he has two mothers. (...) Here they work on getting the children together [and explaining] that everyone is different* (Daria, 37, Adam, 38, 2: 2005, 2009).

Apart from the above display of understanding for school's efforts, parents and children do not find it easy to reconcile their migrant cultural identity and educational entities as sites of socialisation (Ryan *et al.* 2008). The observations they share on the Norwegian schools highlight certain actions taken as a response to their children as individuals with specific migratory backgrounds. Edyta, for instance, stated during the interview:

In the beginning [there were problems] with the Norwegian language, then, well, now these problems have returned, because, well, [the migrant background] matters. But if you are asking about racism or being treated differently because we are Polish then, no, we do not really feel that. [But... once on a tough day] I went to pick Felek up from school and Frida [his friend] said that I have no right to speak Polish at school (...), but she is just a kid, she did not mean it, it was not racist but it was about Felek being called out because he constantly uses Polish when speaking with his friend Martyna, Felek always picks Polish children to play with, it is easier for him. (...) The school forbids that (Edyta, 37, 1: 2007).

The socialisation taking place in Norwegian educational institutions has obvious implications for children, but it also demands changes in parenting practices, especially with regard to home–school communications and engagement. There is something to be said about the child's right to privacy, which until recently had not been respected in the Polish school, as bad grades and conduct of a child would be shared with all parents attending a class meeting. Marcelina clarifies:

I like the fact that parent–teacher conferences in Norwegian schools are about school environment in general (...) whereas when there is something about children, then the teacher talks to the parents, sometimes also in the presence of the child. (...) In Poland every parent knows everything about every pupil (Marcelina, 39, 2: 2001, 2007).

However, the novelty of individual consultations may also be a source of stress and frustrations, as the above-quoted Edyta mentions feelings of inadequacy stemming from mistranslating messages from the teachers and not doing certain things on time. Although she noted that she felt anxious about accepting an invitation to a social meet at the Norwegian home of fellow-parent due to her limited competency in Norwegian language, she overcame her doubts eventually:

Sometimes some papers come and I fail to translate or misunderstand and [son] gets something later but we do not feel too much on the outs. I am invited over by other parents (...) but last time [when I got an invite] I said my Norwegian was not so good (...) but she said that it was definitely sufficient and so I went (Edyta, 37, 1: 2007).

Overall, the experiences with Norwegian schooling might be difficult at first and certainly require reflection on the systemic complexity, yet the findings point to a rather optimistic feature of Polish parents' complying with the destination country's rules. Ultimately, the parental choice to adapt is conditional on a set of factors, both system-related (e.g., assistance or infrastructure) and individual (e.g., networks, openness to change or reflexivity). Furthermore, it is overpowered by a realisation that a return to Polish school would be near-impossible, and, for many, very much unwelcome, as they praise relationships built by their children with teachers and peers and a healthy balance of study and play.

Discussion

Children's schooling is one of the most powerful institutional and organisational concerns of migrant parents – especially mothers – worldwide (e.g. Parreñas 2005; Erel 2010; Vasquez 2010; Pratt 2012). This is closely linked to the fact that 'varying levels of available cultural and social capital differentially enable parents to influence their children's educational desires' (Howard, McLaughlin and Vacha 1996: 146). The discrepancies in parental evaluations are not surprising as respondents find themselves at different stages of both parenting

and the length of their particular experience of handling school matters abroad. In the case of Poland, it was predominantly the social networks and the related social capital that played a vital role for schooling evaluations. Thus, migrants oriented 'towards Poland' (with largely Polish networks and strong ties with Poland) mostly compared their children with their kin members of similar age in Poland, while migrants oriented 'towards Norway' (with more diverse networks and fewer ties with Poland) were more inclined to adopt the Norwegian system and appreciate its advantages.

Underlining once more that a holistic analysis of school integration and attainment requires incorporation of extra-curricular activities, peer group membership, leisure, and strategies designed to maintain ethnic identities, it is nevertheless clear that an analysis centred on the school–family interactions and relations pinpoints the significant facets of both familial and institutional contexts. All too often, a general 'conclusion' on 'temporary labour migrants' (that can be extrapolated from earlier works within migration studies in particular) views women and children as problematic. Formerly, similarly to women, children abroad were portrayed as culturally inept, resisting integration, costly for welfare and causing social unrest. Smart explicitly wrote that '[c]hildren from minority ethnic backgrounds have tended to be understood as living problematic lives' (Smart 2011: 104). This view has been perpetuated not only in research, but, more importantly, by the policy-makers in the education sector (see e.g. Suarez-Orozco and Carhill 2008, as well as Krüger-Potratz 2006 and Moskal 2014: 279, for critical perspectives). Such framings not only bring about the expected negative consequences for individuals, as families and migrant children are treated as deeply disadvantaged (Adams and Shambleu 2007), but also, when children do not 'cause' any problems, they simply become invisible (Wærdahl, in this volume). This type of universal lack of problematisation in turn may affect individual children, who pay the high price of being 'thrown' into a system that does not see them and are expected to invest unbelievable amounts of extra effort to keep up (Tomczyk-Maryon 2014).

An overly prominent focus on the anticipated lacks and shortcomings may translate into the 'institutional discrimination' phenomenon (see e.g. Gomolla and Radtke 2002; Gomolla 2010; Klemm 2010, who analyse this issue for Germany). This entails a 'grey area' between legally forbidden discrimination (i.e. rights which formally guarantee equal educational opportunities) and individual experiences, which are easier to spot, name and address. One of its main pitfalls is that it may appear without its agents being aware (Kristen 2006), and even include activities planned and intended to better the situation of pupils with migratory background. A typical scenario of institutional discrimination means that all problems of migrant students are automatically attributed to their ethnic/national origin and the (wrong)-doing of their parents, with no further explanations ever thought of. For example, the difficulties that a child is experiencing with the language and the presumed lack of parental support in this area (see e.g. Gomolla 2010), prevent the diagnosis of (health or behavioural) problems unrelated to one's background (e.g. dyslexia, autism spectrum disorders). On the large scale, it leads to the so called statistical discrimination, which means that individual children are evaluated through the lens of problems that are believed to be prevalent in their ethnic group as a whole (Kristen 2006). The problem is henceforth reproduced under the hypothesis of (cultural) inheritance (Kalter 2005) and a conceptualisation of ethnicity as a hindrance and a predicate of insufficient cultural capital (Putnam 2007: 156). Indirect discrimination relies on the matrix of cross-institutional co-dependencies, namely the excessive bureaucratisation and a high number of regulations, limited flexibility, and low level of individualisation and agency. In different contexts, some instruments may serve either as support and assistance, or as a stepping stone for discrimination against migrant pupils. These include, for instance, a tendency to create homogenous classrooms (avoiding placing 'different' children with majority groups), an option of delaying school, transitional divisions and classrooms, placing children in a specialised school, and, paradoxically, even the language assistance. Though these instruments generally benefit children and parents, who assess them positively, they might prospectively be highlighted in the discriminatory actions in the future: being in need of help is perceived negatively by

evaluators making decisions about the child's career prospects and may affect their educational recommendations (Gomolla 2010: 13).

Consequently, much more productive results can be obtained by looking at the family and parents, and the impact that their age, ethnicity, habitus, attitudes and socio-economic status have on the matters related to children's schooling (Erel 2012; Gulczyńska and Wiśniewska-Kin 2013). For migrants, the length of stay abroad and having a foreign partner also correlated with a more grounded and balanced perspective. It is important to realise that parents' status might be relative to the temporary or permanent consequences of migration (e.g. parents' deskilling on the one hand, or more work–life balance in the family thanks to mobility, on the other) and it is interconnected with social capital and the level of investments that parents make into their children's future (Edwards, Franklin and Holland 2003: 4, cf. Lopez Rodriguez 2010; Erel 2012; Moskal 2014). Research findings suggest an increasingly global subscription to an idea of child-centrality, seen as '<sacralisation> of the economically <worthless> but morally and emotionally <priceless> child' (Hays 1996: 64, see also in the Polish case: Tarkowska 1996; Slany 2002; Giza-Poleszczuk 2005; Olcoń-Kubicka 2009). In addition, the 'fetishising' of children (examined by e.g. Beck and Beck-Gernsheim 2002) was also addressed by Polish scholars who observed parents focusing on their children's futures at the expense of their own aspirations (Tarkowska 1996), naming the child the key investment that plays a crucial role in the parents' life as 'a tool for completing their unfulfilled dreams and plans' (Bojar 1991: 63, Olcoń-Kubicka 2009: 116).

Considering the socio-demographic characteristics of Polish migrants in Norway in the light of our findings, the assumption of the profound interest and engagement of parents in the schooling of their children seems well grounded. As the Polish kinship structures become ever more child-centric, the family must absolutely be viewed as an institution of socialisation in the post-migration context, which is (or eventually becomes) a full-fledged partner in the scholarly and social integration efforts extended by the Norwegian schools towards incoming children. Somehow the institutional support and indispensable help (especially regarding the language acquisition) described above must be combined with clearly expressed expectations towards parents, as well as encouragement of their cooperation and participation, all of these apparently proven as possible under the premise of the Norwegian system (see e.g. Cummins 2000; Suarez-Orozco and Qin 2006; Adams and Shambleau 2007; Miller *et al.* 2013).

To conclude, thus far only some parent-respondents (normally those who have lived in Norway for a longer time period) seem truly reflective about the school–home communication and the underlying cultural assumption of parental participation in school activities. This might be simply due to the fact that the Polish flow to Norway is still relatively recent and, unlike in other destinations, limited resources are available which would translate the 'culture of the system' (see e.g. Ryan *et al.* 2008; Lopez Rodriguez 2010; Lopez Rodriguez, Sales, D'Angelo and Ryan 2010; Praszałowicz *et al.* 2013) into the terms and rules understandable to parents.[10] In addition, it needs to be considered that the Polish population in Norway should be seen as diverse, including people from different age generations, with varied migration motivations, being part of mixed or homogenous couples, with children who were born in Norway, or those who came at the ages ranging from toddlers to teenagers. All of them have increasingly different needs and expectations towards educational entities. The analysis of the interview data points to parents believing to be required to contribute 'a lot' to schooling and education of their children, with some parents seeing it as 'too much' and too huge a demand. At the same time, the respondents follow the cultural norm brought on from Poland, which tells them to ultimately follow the rules of the institution that holds the faith of their children in their hand – very much so as they would do in Poland. While initially Polish families may fail to simply transfer their social capital across the borders, they quickly learn that the legitimised educational capital in the destination country requires them to manage resources in a way that fosters integration and social attachments with their place of residence (see e.g. Park and Abelmann 2004; Lopez Rodriguez 2010; Erel 2010, 2012). In other words, parents are socialised to embrace

norms about the participatory nature of parental engagement in the school life. Evidently, some parents begin to see the schooling as much more than measurable progress or an extensive process of learning that necessarily requires grading, as they observe the benefits of the Norwegian school that teaches children about the very nature of acquiring skills and knowledge at their own pace and in line with a less competitive approach.

To reiterate the answers to the questions asked in this article: the first set of issues is linked to the types of parental generalisations about schooling (both negative – poor curriculum, and positive – focus on health, individual approach, diversity, laid-back approach). These have to be examined in both systemic and 'experienced' dimensions, as we demonstrated that parents conduct evaluations – both *ad-hoc* and more reflexively – and link them with institutional capacity and locally available assistance, often using Poland *vis-à-vis* Norway comparisons in their arguments. Although there was some criticism of the Norwegian schooling (e.g. the conviction that curriculums are not as strong as in Poland), the parents whose children had spent more time in Norway were able to develop and express a more balanced understanding of the system, seeing 'flaws' in a more positive light (e.g. children not being overworked, having more practical knowledge). The second research aim was to additionally analyse the particular and non-systemic factors for educational pathways of success and dissatisfaction for Polish migrant children abroad (individually sought and implemented solutions, chance encounters, etc.). Here the findings support the context-dependent outcomes for each family, which are very much tied to the governing institutional system and, even more so, determined by its local realisation, as tools or support found by a one family in a given school or commune are not necessarily available elsewhere, or, possibly, might not be suitable for addressing the needs and trajectory of a Polish family at another location.

Notes

[1] Akkerman and Hagelund (2007) introduce a distinction between official and de facto multiculturalism. The former indicates a politically agreed integration strategy deployed by the government from above and (more or less) enforced under a legalised premise. The latter refers to actions corresponding to the assumptions behind multiculturalism without it being officially recognised.

[2] *Educational Equality in Practice, Strategies for Better Learning and Increased Participation for Language Minorities in Kindergartens, Schools and Continued Education 2004–2009.*

[3] The *Norskopplæring Program* deals with the societal and cultural matters. Its aim is to help with orientation and communication in Norway. It is designed to lift the participant to that specific level of language competence that an individual requires.

[4] This solution is used by some communes in and around Oslo, for example in Baerum. Note that the selection of a particular aid option is up to the commune and is based on its policy, financial standing, and the number of migrant children.

[5] Intercultural curricula are part of a wider conceptualisation of intercultural education. In the European context, they are detailed and abundantly documented, for instance in the following documents: Council of Europe, Declaration on Intercultural Education Athens, 12 November 2003, EC 2005 document *Immigrant Communities' Integration in Europe Through Multilingual Schools and Education, INI/2004/2267,* or the European Parliament resolution of 2 April 2009 on educating the children of migrants (2008/2328/INI).

[6] The OECD Report confirming to the inclusivity of the Norwegian system by Taguma *et al.* (2009) is part of the larger series *OECD Reviews of Migrants Education*.

[7] The research leading to these results has received funding from the Polish–Norwegian Research Programme operated by the National Centre for Research and Development under the Norwegian Financial Mechanism 2009–2014 in the frame of Project Contract No Pol-Nor/197905/4/2013.

[8] It is worth noting that 25 out of 57 children were interviewed for the Transfam's Work Package 5 about their experiences of growing up transnationally. As we supply the voices of parents, a paper by Slany and Strzemecka in this volume, also stemming from Transfam project, tackles the related issues of belonging among respondents' children.

[9] To inform the readers about some basic background of our respondents, we provide annotation to our interview quotes in the following format: pseudonym-coded name, age of the respondent, number of children: their dates of births.

[10] For instance, Lopez Rodriguez *et al.* (2010) prepared a bilingual guide on educating children in British schools for Polish parents. A similar guideline for Norway should become a prioritised practical policy recommendation. Within the Transfam's project, we are organising workshops (for migrant Polish parents and Norwegian social workers) and writing a pilot programme of intercultural education as part of our project deliverables for 2016.

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Parental Capital and Strategies for School Choice Making: Polish Parents in England and Scotland

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Based on a study of Polish migrants living in England and Scotland, this paper explores how Polish families who have decided to bring up their children in the UK make initial school choices. The Polish parents taking part in our study generally had low levels of social and cultural capital (Bourdieu 1986) upon arrival in the UK: they had limited networks (predominantly bonding capital) (Putnam 2000) and a poor command of English, and lacked basic knowledge of the British education system. Meanwhile, this is a highly complex system, very much different from the Polish one; moreover, school choice plays a much more important role within the UK system, especially at the level of secondary education. We found that while some parents acted as 'disconnected choosers' (Gewirtz, Ball and Bowe 1995) following the strategy they would use in Poland and simply enrolling their children in the nearest available school, others attempted to make an informed choice. In looking for schools, parents first and foremost turned to co-ethnic networks for advice and support; nevertheless, parents who attempted to make an informed choice typically lacked 'insider knowledge' and often held misconceptions about the British education system. The one feature of the system Polish parents were very much aware of, however, was the existence of Catholic schools; therefore, religious beliefs played a key role in school choice among Polish parents (with some seeking and others avoiding Catholic schools). The 'active choosers' also made choices based on first impressions and personal beliefs about what was best for their child (e.g. in terms of ethnic composition of the school) or allowed their children to make the choice. Parents of disabled children were most restricted in exercising school choice, as only certain schools cater for complex needs. All in all, the Polish parents in our sample faced similar barriers to BME (Black Minority Ethnic) parents in exercising school choice in the UK and, regardless of their own levels of education, their school selection strategies resembled those of the British working class rather than of the middle class. However, the risk of 'bad' initial school choice may be largely offset by a generally strong preference for Catholic schools and parents’ high educational ambitions for their children.

Keywords: Polish migration; England; Scotland; parental capital; school choice

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Introduction: post-accession Polish migration to the UK and issues of schooling

The EU enlargement of 2004 was a highly consequential one for the United Kingdom. The opening of its labour market to nationals of Accession Eight (A8) countries resulted in one of the largest and most intensive migration flows in contemporary European history. Although the new migrants forming this flow came from various Eastern European countries, the overwhelming majority arrived from Poland. The Polish community appears to be the fastest-growing migrant community in present-day Britain: by the end of 2007, Poles became the single largest foreign national group resident in the UK, up from 13th position in early 2004 (Pollard, Lattore and Sriskandarajah 2008: 5). Currently, it is estimated that there are 726 000 Polish nationals living in the UK (ONS 2014), compared to the 75 000 living in the country just a few months before EU accession, in December 2003 (ONS 2011) – an almost tenfold increase within the decade following EU accession. Therefore, migration from Poland (and the other new member states) has been described as 'one of the most important social and economic phenomena shaping the UK today, since this movement of people has dramatically changed the scale, composition and characteristics of immigration to the UK' (Pollard *et al.* 2008: 7).

While initially it seemed that the majority of Poles coming to the UK were single men (Home Office 2009), trends towards family settlement/formation soon became evident (cf. White, Ryan 2008; Ryan, Sales, Tilki and Siara 2009; Tromans, Natamba and Jefferies 2009; Ryan 2011; Ryan and Sales 2013; White 2011; McGhee, Heath and Trevena 2012, 2013). The rapid and substantial increase in the number of Poles living in the UK naturally also impacted on the schooling system, with growing numbers of Polish children entering schools across Britain. Already in 2008, the Department of Children, Schools and Families reported Polish as the most commonly spoken first language among non-English-speaking newly arrived migrant school children across England (DCSF 2008, after Pollard *et al.* 2008: 27). Since this time, their numbers have grown substantially: from 26 840 in 2008 to 53 915 in 2013 (in England alone). The majority of Poles who have been arriving in the UK are young (Home Office 2009), and a year-on-year increase in the numbers of Polish-born children in the UK over the last decade has been noted (ONS 2013). Furthermore, after a clear slowdown in flows of migration from Poland to the UK in the years 2008–2010 (following the economic crisis), since 2011 numbers of incomers have again started to increase (cf. Kaczmarczyk 2014) and we have witnessed continued family migration.[1] Considering this, we can expect continually high numbers of children of Polish origin entering the British education system.

Moreover, one of the major characteristics in which the 'new' Polish (and A8) migration to the UK differs from previous migration waves is its widespread geographical distribution: Polish nationals have been registered in every single local authority across the UK (Rabindrakumar 2008). This means that Polish migrants are living both in large urban areas and in remote/rural locations with no previous history of international migration (Trevena 2009).

Naturally, the sudden rise in numbers of Polish children entering the British education system has for many reasons posed a number of challenges to the schools as well as the migrant children and their parents. We shall just note the most important of these reasons. Moskal (2010) points to the fact that there has been increased pressure on schools for places and for English language support services, particularly in areas which have relatively little experience of receiving pupils of other nationalities. Furthermore, there is limited information available to teachers in the UK on the educational background and prior achievement of the Polish pupils. This, along with these new pupils' poor English language skills, sometimes results in inappropriate assessment of their abilities and misjudgement of the correct stage and pace of learning for them (Sales, Ryan, Lopez Rodriguez and D'Angelo 2008). Polish children coming to the UK generally have little preparation for education in English, and hence face significant emotional and practical difficulties upon starting school. Their parents, in turn, tend to have equally poor language skills and little knowledge or understanding of the British

schooling system. Moreover, the housing situation of new arrivals tends to be unstable and prone to change, as do their overall migration plans, which naturally has a bearing on schooling issues (Sales *et al.* 2008). At the same time, however, it has been observed that Polish parents, even those of working-class background, typically have high aspirations for their children's education (Lopez Rodriguez 2010; Trevena 2014).

Secondly, as parents migrate with or bring children over to the UK at various points in time, many Polish children start education in the UK during the school year. This poses a challenge to schools both in terms of being able to offer school places locally and in planning for additional support (Sales *et al.* 2008). Moreover, these children bring specific issues related to the migration strategies of their parents, whose migration plans, employment and housing situation are initially frequently in a state of flux and therefore prone to change (Robinson, Reeve and Casey 2007). As a result, migrant children are more likely to change schools after arrival. As noted by Jivraj, Simpson and Marquis (2012: 499), who analysed School Census data for England for the years 2003–2007, A8 migrant families (the majority of which are Polish) initially show very high levels of internal/residential mobility, with 34 per cent of A8 pupil migrants moving home address in an average year, compared with 11 per cent of pupils as a whole.

Finally, as noted earlier, Polish migrants are widely dispersed across the UK; hence Polish children are entering both multicultural, diverse schools in large urban areas and also rural schools, where they sometimes become the first/only foreign child in the school (Trevena 2012). Therefore, schools of a longer-standing tradition of dealing with non-native speaker pupils are better prepared and equipped to support such children than those with no previous experience of working with non-English speakers. Especially within rural areas, resources may be limited (Moskal 2010).

Considering the above, a question that arises is how Polish parents who have limited social and cultural capital (Bourdieu 1986) 'manoeuvre' the British education system in the initial stages of their engagement with it. Specifically, we shall look at the issue of school choice. Our discussion is based on a qualitative study carried out by the Centre for Population Change, University of Southampton, in the years 2009–2012.[2]

Differences between the Polish and British education systems and parents' school choice practices

The Polish and British[3] education systems differ considerably in terms of school structure and organisation of learning, but also regarding the philosophy of teaching and expectations towards pupils. Meanwhile, the expectations and attitudes of Polish parents towards school have been largely shaped by their experience with the – very different – Polish education system (Ryan and Sales 2011; Trevena 2014). Therefore, Polish parents are frequently very surprised (or even shocked) by the disparities between the two systems. In this section we shall explain some of these differences and consider what impact they might have on Polish parents' school choice/enrolment practices.[4]

The structure of the schooling system in Poland and in the UK is different (Sales *et al.* 2008: 10–11; Trevena 2014). Significantly, children in Britain start primary school at an earlier age than in Poland. In the UK, primary schooling is obligatory from the age of 5, with many parents sending their children to school between the age of 4 and 5; at the time of EU accession, children in Poland would start school at 7.[5] This was a difference many parents arriving in the years following accession were not aware of; in some cases this resulted in interventions on the part of the social services, as Polish parents were not sending their 5- or 6-year-olds to school (cf. Sales, Lopez Rodriguez, D'Angelo and Ryan 2010). Moreover, as our interview data shows, in the case of older children who were admitted to school, some parents tended to believe that their children had been *put up by two years* because they were clever, not understanding that they had simply been placed accordingly to their age.[6]

The ages covered by primary and secondary education also differ in the UK and Poland. In Britain, primary education covers ages 5 to 11;[7] in Poland, it currently covers ages 6/7 to 12/13. Secondary education in Britain

covers ages 11–16; in Poland currently spans ages 13/14–15/16. Nevertheless, in both countries, compulsory (full time) education finishes at the age of 16.[8] Furthermore, in both the UK and Poland young people take examinations towards the end of (lower) secondary school, the results of which are important for their future education. Significantly, Polish children entering British schools at the age of 14–16 are in the most vulnerable position in terms of educational achievement and future opportunities, especially if their level of English is low. At this stage, their peers are already preparing for their final examinations, and it may be difficult (if not impossible) for the newcomer children to catch up with them; at the same time, schools are not obliged to educate young people beyond the age of 16. Therefore, migration may prove most damaging for the educational and work trajectories of these young people.

The school term and breaks are also organised differently in the two countries: in the UK there are three terms, and in Poland two; in Britain breaks are more frequent than in Poland, but the summer holidays are considerably (2–3 weeks) shorter. Furthermore, the organisation of the school year in England and in Scotland differ in terms of start dates and the schedule of mid-term and other school breaks. The biggest difference is that in England the school year runs from early September to late July, while in Scotland it runs from mid-August to late June. In Poland, in turn, the school year begins on 1 September and ends at the end of June. Therefore, parents arriving in Scotland might not realise that children begin the school year prior to September.

One of the crucial differences between the Polish and British education systems is the range of schools available. The Polish education system is much more centralised in comparison to the UK one. What is more, in this respect there are also stark differences between the English and Scottish education systems, as they are ruled by a separate set of policies (introduced by the British government for England and by the Scottish government for Scotland), with the Scottish system being more comprehensive and much simpler in comparison. In our discussion of these differences that follows below, we shall focus on the state system (i.e. free education) exclusively, as this was the system accessed by all of our study participants both in Poland and in the UK. Moreover, it is the dominant system in both countries.

Within the Polish system at primary and lower secondary level (*gimnazjum*), we can differentiate state and non-state schools (among the latter: fee-paying community schools, faith schools and private schools) (FRSE 2014). Since the introduction of the revised Education System Act in 1991, school choice within the Polish system has continually been growing. Nevertheless, since schooling in Poland is (in comparison) still rather centralised, the differences between individual schools are not as marked as in the British system; this relates particularly to primary and to a lesser degree to lower secondary education. In consequence, in the Polish system there is far less emphasis on school choice, in particular at primary level, with parents commonly enrolling their children in their local (catchment area) school. There is more focus on choice at the stage of *gimnazjum*: some of these can be linked to higher secondary schools or universities, or have more specialist profiles, and admission to them can be highly competitive (based on test results).

In terms of organisation, the UK compulsory schooling system is far less centralised than the Polish system and hence much more complex, the English system in particular. In England, organisational and administrative differences between schools come into play already at local authority (henceforth LA) level. For example, in some LAs across England, there are only 7-year primary schools, while in others there are two-stage primary schools, where younger children attend a 3-year infant school (5–7 year-olds) and older children attend a 4-year junior school (8–11 year-olds). In Scotland, in comparison, there are only one-stage 7-year primary schools.

Moreover, in England there is a much broader range of types of primary schools (than in both Poland and Scotland), depending on how they are funded and run (e.g. by LAs, charities, churches). Within the state-funded system at primary level we can currently differentiate seven types of schools accordingly: community schools, academies, foundation schools, voluntary aided schools, voluntary controlled schools, and free schools;[9] the most important

difference between these is that some follow the national curriculum and others do not. Next, among these schools we can further differentiate between faith schools (e.g. Church of England or Catholic) and non-denominational schools, and admission policies for these may differ. The (lower) secondary system is also a highly complex one, within which, again, a number of different types of schools can be singled out. Similarly to with primary level, there are faith schools and non-denominational schools. Significantly, although the majority of non-denominational secondary schools are comprehensive by name, most of them specialise in a particular area of the curriculum (there are at least ten types of specialist schools, including languages, science, maths, arts, sports, humanities and even rural studies). Within the secondary system there are also, for example, secondary modern schools, academies, and a small number of highly selective grammar schools, admission to which is based on an 'eleven plus' exam.

Compared to England, the Scottish system is much more straightforward. In Scotland there is little choice between types of school, apart from state and fee-paying private schools. State schools are simply divided into non-denominational and (predominantly) Catholic faith schools,[10] and all of these are fully comprehensive and non-selective in intake.

In terms of religious education in schools, one crucial difference between the Polish and British state school systems is that within the Polish system, religious instruction (according to the faith chosen by the parents/children) commonly takes place in (non-denominational) schools. Although it is not an obligatory part of the curriculum and religious instruction in state schools is run *at the will of the parents*, in practice, since just over 90 per cent of the nation are Roman Catholics,[11] the overwhelming majority of schoolchildren in Poland attend religious instruction in the Roman Catholic faith (and the minority attend ethics classes or religious instruction according to a different faith or none of these).[12] What is more, if the child does attend either religious instruction or ethics classes, the grade received for these count towards the general 'grade points average' score.[13] Also, certain religious practices are frequently an integral part of school life (e.g. attending mass in the local church to celebrate the beginning and/or end of the school year, or e.g. blessing of a new extension to the school). Therefore, we may say that in practice religious instruction (in the Roman Catholic faith in particular) is part and parcel of the Polish state system. Consequently, the religious beliefs of Polish parents (and the fact that the Roman Catholic faith is strongly supported within the Polish education system) may play a significant role in their school choices in the UK. It is thus notable that in the UK, Catholic schools (and faith schools overall) have a stronger academic standing than non-denominational schools.[14]

Significantly, school admissions to most state schools in the UK are based on catchment area, with these being stricter in Scotland than in England; in both Scotland and England, parents can make a request for admission to a school which is outside their catchment area (which may or may not be granted). Similarly, in Poland there are also catchment areas, but parents can put in applications to schools outside their catchment, and these may or may not be granted depending on availability of places in the preferred school. Nevertheless, a major difference between Poland and Britain in this respect is that the catchment area policy in the UK has entailed particular 'school targeting' practices, particularly among middle-class parents, with some families moving into particular areas specifically because of the (high) quality of local schools (Reay 2001). Notably, this is a strategy which is basically not practised in Poland, and hence Polish parents are generally not familiar with it.

As mentioned earlier, school choice is not as significant in the Polish education system as in the British (and particularly English) system, especially at primary school level. Therefore, literatures on school choice in Poland are scarce. However, research on secondary school choice demonstrates that the importance of choice increases with parental education and size of place of residence (Majkut 2010). Therefore, 'skilled choosers' (as understood by Gewirtz *et al.* 1995) in Poland are primarily parents with high levels of education who live

in large urban agglomerations. While parents from lower socio-economic backgrounds choose schools according to proximity to home, perceived safety in the school and the free afterschool care opportunities offered by the school, the 'skilled choosers' focus on the school's academic performance (e.g. exam results), the education it offers (e.g. particular profile, specialist subjects) and the opinions of friends/acquaintances about it. Although class divisions within Polish society are not as strong as in British society, school choice preferences and strategies demonstrated by well-educated Polish parents as compared to those with less education resonate closely with UK literatures on the relationship between exercising school choice and class. Research has shown that while both the British middle class and working class think choosing a good school for their children is of high importance, their understanding of what constitutes a 'good school' is disparate. Whereas middle-class parents see a good school above all as one which maximises their child's future academic achievement, their working-class counterparts tend to focus on less academic aspects of schooling, such as friendliness of staff, inclusion and support for the less academically able (Allen, Burgess and McKenna 2014: 19). Moreover, proximity to the school is more important to lower-income households than to higher-income ones (NFER 2015). Such preferences may thus lead lower socio-economic groups to select themselves out of high-performing schools (Allen *et al.* 2014: 28), due both to the 'similar social environment' preference as well as to choosing schools nearer home, regardless of their academic ranking. Another major difference between the two classes is the degree of access to high-quality information on schools. It has been underlined that middle-class parents are more adept in the use of school league tables and other formal sources of information on school performance (West, Pennell and Noden 1999; Coldron, Tanner, Finch, Shipton, Wolstenholme, Willis, Demack and Stiell 2008), but also have stronger social networks of 'high-quality' information (Schneider, Teske and Marschall 2000) than working-class parents. Finally, class differences are also reflected in the role ascribed to children in the school choice process: in the case of the middle class, the child's input into the process is limited, as opposed to families of lower social class, within which the child's wishes are often decisive (Coldron and Boulton 1991; Ball 1993). Furthermore, regarding ethnic minorities in the UK, research on school choice in England shows that many BME (Black Minority Ethnic) parents find it difficult to exercise actual choice. BME parents are limited in the choices they make by such factors as structural barriers to accessing necessary information, institutional constraints on the kinds and quality of schools available to families living in deprived areas, the demand for ethnic, gender or religion-specific provision, and less tangible considerations around location, safety and reputation (Weekes-Bernard 2007: II). Thus, literatures on school choice in the UK generally conclude that the system is very much geared towards the (White British) middle class, as 'the system itself is one which valorises middle- rather than working-class cultural capital' (Reay 2001: 334).

Considering the complexity of the British education system, choosing a school can be a huge challenge for Polish (as well as other migrant and even British!) parents, especially in England, where the system is much more complex than in Scotland. As Stephen Ball (2003: 173) has underlined, the school choice mechanism in England requires time, effort, expense and skill. Significantly, school choice, particularly at secondary level, may be highly consequential for future educational opportunities (e.g. choice of a given type of school may limit possibilities for future study). Nevertheless, Polish parents might not be aware of the extent to which it may impact on their children's educational opportunities in the future.

All in all, as demonstrated in the short comparison outlined above, the Polish and British schooling systems differ considerably. Meanwhile, Polish parents coming to the UK are generally unaware of these differences and have little understanding of them (cf. Sales *et al.* 2008; White 2011: 116; Trevena 2014). In consequence, they often bring expectations of schooling based on their experience of the Polish system (D'Angelo and Ryan 2011). In this article we shall explore the role of these expectations, as well as of social and cultural capital in school choice and enrolment practices of Polish parents with no previous experience of the British education system.

Polish parents' capital and schooling

While there is by now a vast (and rapidly growing) body of literature devoted to the post-accession wave of Polish migrants in the UK, literature relating specifically to issues of schooling is still scarce. It has so far focused primarily on the experiences of Polish children in British schools, touching on issues of adaptation, integration, and school achievement (Sales *et al.* 2008; Fox, Sime and Pietka 2009; Moskal 2010, 2013; Egley 2011; White 2011: 160–163). More recently, attention has also been drawn to the role of schooling in migration decision making of Polish families (Ryan and Sales 2011; Trevena 2014). Furthermore, there is a small body of literature concerned with Polish migrants' social and cultural capital and how it might impact on their children's educational pathways in the UK (Lopez Rodriguez 2010; Moskal 2013).

In discussing capital in the context of migration and education, two concepts are of particular analytical use: Bourdieu's notion of social, cultural and economic capital (1986; Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992), and Putnam's notion of bridging and bonding capital (2000).

Bourdieu defines social capital as 'the sum of resources, actual and virtual, that accrue to an individual or a group by virtue of possessing a durable network of more or less institutionalised relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition' (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992: 119). Moreover, he distinguishes cultural capital (knowledge, skills, competencies) and economic capital (money, assets).[15] According to Bourdieu, the key characteristic of social capital is its convertibility into other forms of capital; people gain access to social capital through membership in networks and social institutions and then convert it into other forms of capital to improve or maintain their position in society (Bourdieu 1986; Coleman 1988). Significantly, in the process of international migration much of an individual's social capital is 'lost', as typically they leave (most) of their personal networks behind. Naturally, new social capital can be acquired in the country of migration; however, this process takes time. Moreover, for post-accession Polish migrants, many of whom do not have a good command of English and commonly work in low-skilled jobs in the UK (regardless of their level of education) (Drinkwater, Eade and Garapich 2006: 18; Pollard *et al.* 2008), building social networks they could truly 'capitalise on' and/or comparable to those they had in their home country can be difficult (Ryan, Sales, Tilki and Siara 2008). Furthermore, in the context of migration, their cultural capital may not be (fully) transferable: the most obvious barrier is language (one's command of English), while others can be lack of recognition of formal qualifications or non-transferability of particular skills (cf. Trevena 2013). Notably, cultural capital also encompasses what Fischer, Martin and Straubhaar (1997) refer to as 'insider knowledge': an understanding of how the social system and its institutions operate (be it the labour market, the healthcare system or the education system).

Putnam (2000), in turn, draws attention to how social capital can be formed, and distinguishes between 'bonding' and 'bridging' capital. Bonding capital exists between people who share (a number of) common characteristics, such as class, ethnicity or economic position. Bridging capital, in turn, is formed between people who connect despite a lack of such common characteristics. Therefore, in our analysis, we will be referring to bonding capital as that existing between Polish migrants by virtue of shared nationality, language and other characteristics, such as their position in the UK labour market; bridging capital would encompass social networks established for instance with British people (Ryan, Sales, Tilki and Siara 2008). Significantly, it has been recognised that having bonding capital exclusively can have detrimental effects on the migrants' position in the receiving society, as it may limit their access to certain employment opportunities (cf. Trevena 2013; McGhee, Trevena and Heath 2015) and, for instance, 'insider knowledge' of the education system (Lopez Rodriguez 2010).

Generally, as our own and others' research has shown, for Polish parents living in the UK, their children's schooling is a matter of great importance and expectations of academic achievement are generally high (Lopez

Rodriguez 2010; Moskal 2013; Trevena 2014) – as are the educational aspirations of Polish parents in general (Kozłowski and Matczak 2014). At the same time, however, they have limited social and cultural capital upon moving to the UK, especially as certain forms of capital cannot be easily transferred (Moskal 2013: 283). Meanwhile, as explained in the previous section, the education systems of Poland and the UK and the way they operate differ considerably, and this also impacts on how Polish parents understand and exercise school choice.

So far, the literatures dealing with Polish migrants' social and cultural capital in the context of schooling have focused on how this capital may be applied by parents and young people to support their educational success in the UK (Lopez Rodriguez 2010; Moskal 2013). These literatures have stressed the role of acquisition of new capital over time (Lopez Rodriguez 2010; Moskal 2013). For example, Lopez Rodriguez (2010) argues on the basis of her research on Polish mothers living in or around London that in the case of Polish migrants, even working-class parents display an almost 'middle-class involvement' (when evaluated in relation to UK findings relating to parental involvement) in their children's education, which may enable them to surpass their (at least initial) lack of social and cultural capital. In this paper, however, we focus on how these capitals play out at the initial point of engagement with the British system, namely school choice/enrolment.

The research participants

The analysis presented in this paper is based on the ESRC-funded 'Polish migrants' project carried out by the Centre for Population Change, University of Southampton (2009–2012). The project covered a wide range of topics, one of which was children's schooling. The research involved 83 in-depth interviews with Polish migrants living in four different locations in England and Scotland, both urban and rural: Southampton and Dorset in Southern England, and Glasgow and Perth and Kinross/Angus in Scotland.

The material presented in this paper is based exclusively on interviews with parents whose children attended schools in the UK: 25 people altogether – 12 men and 13 women. They had arrived in the UK between 2004 and 2008. Two-thirds lived in a city or large town in the UK (N = 16), one-third in a small town or village/farm (N = 9); 16 in England and 9 in Scotland. At the time of the interview, the majority of the parents were in full- or part-time employment (N = 19) and the overwhelming majority were or previously had been carrying out unskilled work in the UK (21 out of 25) regardless of their level of education. In terms of the parents' educational background, 8 had basic vocational education, 13 (higher) secondary education (either general or vocational), 1 post-secondary education, and 3 master's degrees. The overwhelming majority (19 out of 25 persons) declared their level of earnings as low, i.e. at the level of the minimum wage. Significantly, at the point of arriving in the UK the overwhelming majority of the parents had no or little English, and at the time of the interview they generally declared a low rather than high command of English: 8 parents had elementary speaking ability, 15 communicative (but not good), and only 2 considered themselves to be fluent in English. With regard to migration channels, the majority of these parents had arrived in the UK either to join their partners (N = 7) or through networks of family and/or friends (N = 10); therefore, they already knew some other Poles living locally upon arrival (though the size of these networks varied; in some cases it was only their partner). Others had arrived through an agency (N = 7) or independently (e.g. found work on the internet; N = 1); these persons had no ties at all in the locations they had migrated to.

All in all, with regard to 'cultural capital', considering the parents' speaking ability in English, level of education, and nature of work carried out in the UK, this was overall lower rather than higher in our 'sample'. Levels of economic capital were also low. In terms of social capital, the majority (N = 17) had some 'bonding capital' as they had at least one contact, if not a network of family and/or friends on arrival, while some parents

(N = 8) had no ties with anyone in the UK at all, and therefore would need to build their social capital from scratch.

Exercising school choice in the UK

Generally speaking, the Polish parents we spoke to had little knowledge of the British education system when arriving in the UK, and would only acquire some understanding of how it operates with time and experience (Trevena 2014). Therefore, parents enrolling children in schools shortly after arrival faced the biggest challenge in making their choice of school, especially if their level of English was poor and they had no networks or contacts locally, i.e. very limited cultural and social capital. As mentioned earlier, the Polish education system is far less varied in terms of the range of schools available; especially at primary school level there is far less emphasis on 'choice' within the Polish system, with children typically attending their local (catchment) school. Therefore, following this practice (cf. D'Angelo and Ryan 2011), many Polish parents arriving in the UK simply tried to enrol their child in the school nearest home, without seeking information about the British education system, possible differences between (different types of) schools or the school itself; hence, essentially, they did not exercise informed school choice. Others, however, attempted to make an informed decision based on what they thought was best for their children, with different features of schools appealing to different people. We shall focus here on how parents who had no prior experience of the British education system chose schools for their children.

The Polish parents we spoke to looked for information on schools through personal networks; by approaching schools directly for information and advice; through consulting various institutions, organisations and designated advice services; and on the Internet.

Parents who had some 'bonding capital' upon arrival, i.e. ties with other Poles already living in the area (either people known to them before migrating or met after moving to the UK), and at the same time who did not speak much English, first and foremost asked these local contacts for advice and/or support. They sought information on where schools are through these social networks, and in many cases also practical support with enrolling their children in school, especially if they had little or no command of English. Thus, typically, other family members or friends/acquaintances accompanied our study participants to the schools, spoke on their behalf and helped with filling in paperwork:

> *[A] friend who has been here for a few years [helped me enrol my son in school]. Her son is a year younger than mine, but she already knew all about the schools, and helped me with getting the forms and completing them* (Dorota, Southampton).

In other cases, however, parents with limited English who could not count on personal networks for practical support tried to manage by themselves or with the help of their children:

> *[M]y two daughters came together, and then I asked a friend to help me arrange for school for them. But she said she didn't have time today and she didn't have time tomorrow and the day after tomorrow perhaps she would have some time. So I said to my oldest [14-year-old] daughter 'Listen, you have some English, I have some, we'll put our knowledge together and manage somehow'. And that's what we did. She didn't know that much English, but we went to a few schools together and managed to arrange for a place for both her and her younger, seven-year-old at the time, sister. (…) So that's how things were with the schools, and we managed to arrange everything without my friend's help* (Krystyna, Southampton).

Those parents who could speak English, in turn, would typically approach the nearest school directly and deal with enrolment independently.

Going to the nearest school in person and asking for information/advice directly (independently or with the help of other Poles who had more English) was hence the most popular strategy of school enrolment among the Polish parents we spoke to. Depending on the availability of places and/or the impression made by a given school, they would choose a school and enrol their children on the spot or continue their search. For example, Krystyna received a list of local schools from her nearest school (which did not have any free places) and she and her daughters carried out the search for a school place accordingly:

> *We found the school nearest our house and we went there to ask where we could go. We got addresses of other schools from them and a map with the locations. The first school we approached from this list (...) was a Catholic school* (Krystyna, Southampton).

Other parents, especially those who had both very limited (spoken) English and limited personal networks, would turn to other sources for information and advice. For example, Bartek had turned to a professional advice centre:

> *There's an education centre in the city centre, I don't remember the name of the organisation. And there they found the school nearest to us* (Bartek, Southampton).

Notably, however, Bartek was the only parent out of the 25 in our sample who used such a strategy; other parents seemed totally unaware of the existence of generally available (free) advice services at the point of choosing and enrolling their children in school:

> **So you didn't seek help with this [school enrolment] from some organisation or institution?**
>
> *No, I didn't even know you could. Now I know that there are various organisations where you can seek help, and practically speaking you can go to a governmental organisation with every problem you encounter. But at the time I didn't know that and wasn't even interested, because she [a friend] had offered help straight away and she took me round all the schools* (Dorota, Southampton).

In contrast, some of the parents who did not have such networks tried to seek information through other sources, such as commonly known Polish institutions or the Internet:

> *Well, first we were looking for contacts through the Polish church* (Ernest, Dorset).

> *And with schools, someone had told me or I had heard somewhere that I should search for them by postcode. And everyone knows what school is in English. So that's how I managed. Quite well, actually.*
>
> **So you found the school through the internet?**
>
> *Yes* (Jowita, Glasgow).

Jowita – cited above – had come to the UK with her young son to join her husband. At the point of arrival she had little English and no one she could ask for help with enrolling her son in school. Hence, though she had

found information on the schools in the area independently, she had to look for support in order to contact them. She eventually turned to a private agency providing various services for Polish migrants:

When I was looking for schools I'd also approached one of these Polish agencies which help in dealing with different issues…

For money?

Yes, of course. But as one of those companies was looking for a school for three weeks and they weren't helping me at all I got annoyed with them and thanked them and found another company. This one dealt with the issue totally differently. (…) So in this second company the lady made this phone call straight away (Jowita, Glasgow).

As can be seen from the above quotation, even using a private paid service for help might not have been the best strategy in terms of practising informed school choice or efficient school enrolment. In general, parents who had bonding capital locally could tap into that resource and were best placed to enrol their child in school. Nevertheless, they might not have been equally well placed to exercise informed school choice.

We mentioned earlier that some Polish parents enrolled their children in the nearest (in these cases typically non-denominational) school. Significantly, Polish families in the UK are often based in the more deprived neighbourhoods (due to the availability of affordable rental accommodation or social housing there) (McGhee *et al.* 2013; Trevena, McGhee and Heath 2013), where schools often struggle with maintaining academic standards because of the greater proportions of disadvantaged pupils resulting in extra teaching and behavioural challenges (Lupton 2004). Meanwhile, pupil peer effects in particular are known to impact on pupil performance (Robertson and Symons 2003; Dills 2005; Ammermueller and Pischke 2009). Hence, simply enrolling one's child with the local school may have considerable impact on their educational (and later occupational) pathways in the long run. Polish parents are typically unaware of these implications; very rarely did those parents who enrolled their children in the nearest school make an informed choice. This was the case with a number of families we spoke to.

Notably, in terms of making educational choices in the UK, the Polish families tended to depend predominantly on the mother's initiative (cf. Lopez Rodriguez 2010). In the overwhelming majority of cases (and there were similar numbers of men and women in our sample), it was the mother who dealt with finding a school for the child and enrolment (except for one case of a father who was a single parent). Considering this, we could argue that the mother's social and cultural capital is of greater importance for children's educational trajectory than that of the father. Some of the fathers participating in our study were completely unaware even of the process involved in enrolling their child in school:

And how did you manage with enrolling her [daughter] in school?

My wife took care of that, normally, as people do, she went to school and enrolled her, I think (Dariusz, Southampton).

Generally, practising school choice was a difficult task for the Polish parents, most of whom, as mentioned earlier, had very limited knowledge of the British education system at the point when they enrolled their children in school. In these terms their position was similar to that of BME parents (Weekes-Bernard 2007). Nevertheless, some of the parents would endeavour to make an informed choice. In doing so, they looked at the

(religious and/or academic) profile of the school, available support networks, the ethnic composition of the school, the look of the school and how it was equipped, the geographical proximity of the school, and their children's preferences.

Significantly, the one feature of the British education system most Polish parents were very much aware of was the existence of Catholic schools. Notably, our interviewees were not quite certain about what other types of schools were available. Interestingly, in this respect the differences between Scotland and England in terms of the range of schools were apparent from the narratives of our interviewees. However, parents would make a number of false assumptions, mainly based on information they had heard from compatriots. For example, some of the parents living in Scotland would mistakenly assume that all of the non-Catholic schools were other denominational schools, either 'Protestant' or 'Evangelic', rather than non-denominational (as they in fact are):[16]

[H]ere, in Scotland, it's not like in England. Here you have only two types of schools: Catholic and Protestant. (…) The schooling system here generally differs a lot from the English system (Czesław, Glasgow).

Other parents would make false assumptions about the ratio of Catholic to non-Catholic schools in the UK:

[T]he majority of schools here are Catholic schools.

You mean here, in [the 'Polish' district of Southampton]?

No, I mean here in England, at least from what I've gathered (Krystyna, Southampton).

In reality, however, only 10 per cent of the national total of state-funded schools in England are Catholic.[17] Notwithstanding this fact, the awareness of the existence of Catholic schools was a crucial factor impacting on school choice, with some Polish parents specifically seeking out such schools for their children and others actively avoiding them. Parents who chose to place their children in a Catholic school would do so because they were Catholics (even if not practising) and/or because they had heard that these schools fared better in academic terms. For some parents both of these reasons were equally important:

[W]e'd only consider Catholic schools, no way would we send them to a Protestant school. (…) Because the level of teaching here [in the UK] is shit, excuse the word, but in the Catholic ones it's always higher than in the Protestant ones, so if you want your child to learn anything, it's better to get them into a Catholic school.

So when you were choosing schools this is what you paid attention to?

Yes. Especially as we're Catholics, how religious we are is another matter, but we are after all Catholics (Czesław, Glasgow).

Other Polish parents did not like the idea of their children attending a Catholic school, as they associated such schools with over-emphasis on religious instruction. This was typically (though by no means exclusively) a stance taken by people who would identify themselves as non-religious:

The first school [we approached] was a Catholic school. And this school was so Catholic that it was truly terrifying: the moment you entered there were plenty of crucifixes on the wall, and rosaries and holy pictures and what have you. And when this lady told us they're very sorry but they have no places I thought, 'Oh, thank God' [laughs] (Krystyna, Southampton).

[When we went to ask for information in the local Catholic school] we were told that children of Catholic faith have precedence over all others. (…) So I immediately… Even though opinions about this school are very good, and I wanted my child to go there, but we crossed it off the list instantly, because if there's such selection and emphasis on denomination, masses and so on… My child has never been brought up in faith, he knows all about it, knows all the symbols, but I didn't want him to have a problem at his age whether he should believe in God or not, so we let it go. Even though I've heard very good opinions about it (Dorota, Southampton).

In terms of academic standing, Catholic schools were generally believed to be of a higher level than non-Catholic schools. However, as mentioned above, some parents would not wish to send their children to a Catholic school because of expectations regarding what they denoted or because the specialist profile of a given school was more important for them than denomination/academic standing:

I was still considering the Catholic school at the time. But the lady [who was making an enquiry on my behalf] said that she'd had a bit of a strange conversation with the headmaster. She asked if there were any Polish children there and he said 'What difference does that make?' So I was under the impression that this headmaster wasn't exactly favourably disposed (…). And in the second school they seemed much more open and friendly, so… (Jowita, Glasgow).

[T]hey found the school nearest to us. It was a mathematics/computer school. And he's always liked computers, so he went to this school (Bartek, Southampton).

For some of the Polish parents who had (helpful) contacts locally, and especially if they had limited language knowledge, it was the presence of another parent whose child was in the school and who could provide support and 'insider knowledge' (Fischer, Martin and Straubhaar 1997) that determined the choice of a particular school. Usually, such support and knowledge would be provided by compatriots. Lidia provides a rare example within our sample of a parent who had some 'bridging capital' and was able to capitalise on it:

We chose this school because there was this [English] manager here [at work] at the time and he had a younger daughter (…) and she also went to that school. (…) It's not a big school and they were happy with the school and the teachers… And a taxi would come to pick up this girl every day, the parents had to contribute a little towards that. So I knew there wouldn't be a problem with taking the child to school and picking him up because the taxi would come right to their doorstep. So I thought it would be better for him to go with her and we enrolled him there. Because also if there was a need to go there and ask about something, this Martin [the manager] would go with us (Lidia, Dorset).

Other parents were thinking of the support their children would be able to count on in school from compatriots, and with a view to this, would – similarly to Jowita cited earlier – look for schools where there were other Polish children. In some cases, these would be children they already knew, including other family members:

[Kasia, my middle daughter, went to the same school as Ilona, her younger sister, who arrived in England earlier] and that was really good because by that time Ilona could speak English very well, and could help Kasia. Kasia in general isn't as quick a learner. This resulted from a number of factors (…). So she required more care (…). So the younger sister was taking care of the older one, Ilona is two years younger. Ilona was attending the fourth form and Kasia the sixth form. So they attended the same school for a whole year, and then Kasia went to secondary school and that was the same school that Renata [oldest daughter] was attending. So she was supported by her sisters for two years (Krystyna, Southampton).

I've found [a school] also not far from here. We've been to see the school and there are also some Poles there, including his friend from the other side of the road, also a little boy so they know each other, so I think things will be fine (Sylwia, Southampton).

Interestingly, while a number of Polish parents mentioned the importance of peer support from compatriots for the children and the role of ethnic composition in school choice, none of them mentioned other forms of in-school support for foreign-language children that might have been available, such as bilingual teaching assistants. However, this might have been due to the fact that at the time of making the choice of school our participants had little knowledge of the system, so might not have been aware that such support could also be offered.

Apart from those factors mentioned above, some parents would also pay attention to school facilities: whether the building was new or old, how well the school was equipped:

It's new, very well equipped and the teachers are brilliant. The atmosphere is very warm, unlike in other schools we looked at. They were mostly old and badly equipped. This one is in a new building, with a brand new heating system. That was an important factor for us because one school in [a small town in Dorset] we went to see had no central heating! There were only radiators (Żaneta, Dorset).

Moreover, Polish parents would (understandably) have a preference for schools that were near home. The strategy of enrolling a child in the local school is a common one in Poland, especially at the primary school stage, and in this respect the way Polish parents make their choices resembles that of the British working class. The strategy of moving into a particular area 'for the schools' was completely unknown to the parents in our sample. Only in exceptional cases would they consider sending their children to a non-local school, e.g. in the instance of their being bullied in the local school. Nevertheless, finding a school in the vicinity of the place of residence was not always possible. In general, parents living in urban areas of the UK and with children attending primary schools were usually able to place them in schools in the vicinity, while children living in rural areas and/or attending secondary schools (also in urban areas) would typically have to travel further to school. Still, in some cases choice of school was limited by lack of school places in the locality, or other reasons, such as a child's disability.

Notably, Polish parents whose children had some sort of disability were much more restricted in exercising school choice. Rather, they had to enrol their children in a school that could cater for their particular needs. For Dominika, who lives in a rural area in Southern England and whose young son had been diagnosed with autism, it was necessary to send him to the nearest town, as only there could he receive the needed specialist care:

Adam [has] a type of autism. It's not a very severe autism but it is there and he needs a little more time and a little more care. That's why Adam doesn't go to school here but goes to school in [a bigger town].

(…) And Adam was referred there because of speech difficulties. The only thing that worries me in all this is that he's tired because he has to get up just after 6 and he comes back around 5 p.m., so this is a very long day for him and he's only 5 years old. But he's made such progress in that school, he speaks totally differently now and he is developing so much that for now, for as long as we can, we'll try to keep him there because it's better for him (Dominika, Dorset).

Jerzy, whose teenage son is severely autistic, was even more restricted in terms of exercising school choice as there were very few schools in the region catering for children with such specific needs. Jerzy had made an informed choice to live in Glasgow, a large city, as he was aware of the fact that considering his severely disabled son it would be impossible to live in a small town with restricted access to specialist services. However, even in Glasgow Jerzy struggled to find a (suitable) school for his son and to gain access to education:

Did you have any problems with enrolling Piotrek in school?

Yes, I did, to be honest with you… because of all sorts of procedures involved. It took us half a year to find out about this school, to start with. He should have been able to start attending the school as soon as he got enrolled. But although I enrolled him two weeks after we came over, he only started attending in June the following year (Jerzy, Glasgow).

Piotrek started attending school eventually, but Jerzy soon realised that his son was not happy at school, and in effect was suffering from increased levels of stress. Therefore, at the time of the interview Jerzy was searching for an alternative, yet this was proving to be very hard:

We're trying to find him a place. We don't have much time because most schools won't admit him when he's over 18 and he's 16 already. But we'll keep trying. If not here… I can't think of anywhere else in Scotland… it's only Glasgow or Edinburgh, really… (Jerzy, Glasgow).

For Jerzy, therefore, whose son will never be able to achieve academically or even be able to live an independent life, the most important factor in exercising school choice was that his son felt comfortable at school. Still, such an attitude was by no means particular to his family situation.

Similarly, for many other parents the most important thing was for their children to feel happy at school. Hence, in the case of older children, parents would ultimately leave the choice of school to them. Interestingly, while, as mentioned earlier, many Polish parents saw having other Polish children at school as an advantage, this opinion was not necessarily shared by their children:

[W]hen [my son] arrived he could choose between going to school with other Poles or only with English children. We went to [a small town in Dorset], had a look around a few schools but didn't want to attend any of them. And then a friend of ours told us we might like to check out the local village school. We went there and straight away Szymon said 'I want to go to this school, I don't want to go to school with other Poles'. So he himself chose this school here, in [a village in Dorset], and he went there (Angelika, Dorset).

Other 'older' children would also express clear preferences for some schools over others. For instance, Krystyna's daughter, Renata (aged 14 at the time) did not like the first school she went to see:

The first school [we went to see] for Renata was an all-girls school, and she didn't want to go there because she said she didn't want to go to school with a bunch of 'little lesbians' and she wanted to go to an ordinary school (Krystyna, Southampton).

Therefore, in the case of older children, choice of school was typically left to them. Naturally, these young people would not think in terms of the academic level of the school, but rather whether they liked what they had seen or heard about the school. In consequence, they would not be in the position to make a fully informed decision either, and, like their parents, would essentially be 'disconnected choosers' (Gewirtz *et al.* 1995).

Ultimately, initial school choice was guided by a set of individual beliefs as to what was most important for the child's education: whether it was convenience and the school being near home, the religious and/or subject profile of the school, the academic level of the school or its 'friendliness'. How these beliefs played out in reality is a different matter, and often parents remain unaware of whether they have made a 'good' or 'bad' choice for their child. As one mother reflected when asked about her opinion of her daughter's first school in the UK (which was a primary school; her daughter had moved to secondary school by the time of the interview):

I think it wasn't bad, I can't really compare it to anything because I don't know how other schools here operate. Don't really have that many acquaintances who have their children in other schools. But I think it's OK, it's a small school, 200 pupils, there's only one class in each year, the headmistress knows all the children by name and the atmosphere in this school is quite good. I think Zuza was taken good care of, that she had a good start (Elżbieta, Southampton).

Summary and conclusions

This article focuses on the initial stages of Polish parents' engagement with the British education system, and how parents who have low degrees of cultural and social capital and do not have 'insider knowledge' of the system make initial educational choices for their children. The British education system is a highly complex and nuanced one, very much different from the Polish education system. Moreover, the system is not uniform across the UK, with education (as well as other local delivery mechanisms such as health and local government) devolved in Scotland and Wales. Meanwhile, Polish parents arriving in the UK with school-age children typically have very low awareness of the ins and outs of the British schooling system. At the same time, their cultural capital might not be easily transferable (e.g. due to poor knowledge of English) and their social capital after arrival may be highly limited and mainly in the form of 'bonding capital' (social networks consisting of other Poles), which rarely allows them to access 'insider knowledge' of the system. Moreover, the English system is substantially more complex to navigate than the Scottish system, possibly putting Polish parents living in England at an even greater disadvantage in terms of making an informed school choice. In consequence, when faced with the task of finding a school for their children, some parents do not make informed decisions but follow the same strategy as they typically would in Poland, i.e. enrol their children in the local school.

Those parents attempting to make an informed decision about schools would typically seek information through their ethnic networks, hence following other Poles' largely unverified opinions rather than 'facts'. Nevertheless, the one feature of the British system that Polish parents in our sample were very much aware of was the existence of Catholic schools in the UK; issues of faith would largely impact on Polish parents' choice of school in the UK, with some parents (both believers and non-believers) expressing a clear preference for Catholic schools and others deliberately avoiding them. Importantly, Catholic schools were commonly known

to be academically superior to non-denominational schools, yet many misconceptions about them also appeared in the parents' narratives, e.g. much exaggerated numbers of Catholic schools in the UK and the belief that non-denominational schools are essentially 'Protestant'. Other features taken into consideration in choosing a school were atmosphere (perceived friendliness of the school; first impressions) and/or more tangible characteristics such as school profile (specialisation), available facilities, or ethnic mix. With regard to ethnicity, Polish parents who had low levels of English themselves (as did their children on entering schools) often chose schools where there were other Polish children – with a view to the in-school support their child could receive from their Polish peers. Nevertheless, such a strategy might ultimately lead to slower language acquisition, ethnic segregation, and limiting the child's networks – hence reproducing one's own, largely bonding (co-ethnic) capital in the longer run (cf. Wierzbicki 2004; Griffiths, Sigona, Zetter and Sigona 2005). Parents of (more severely) disabled children were most restricted in exercising school choice: this was often 'made for them', as the parents would have to place their children in schools likely to best cater for their specific needs. Finally, parents of older children arriving in the UK would typically leave choosing schools to their discretion, as they believed that the most important thing was for their children to simply like their school. Significantly, at the stage of initial engagement with the British schooling system the Polish parents were generally unaware that school choice, especially at secondary level, may have serious implications for their children's' future educational opportunities as 'bad' choices could lead, for example, to limiting later opportunities for taking a given academic route.

As follows from our analysis, with regards to school choice Polish parents with little previous engagement with the UK system are, similarly to BME parents, largely limited in exercising actual choice predominantly due to lack of knowledge of the system and/or living in the more deprived neighbourhoods. Moreover, their strategies for selecting schools resemble those of the British working class (e.g. choosing school by proximity to home or perceived friendliness rather than academic standing; letting children make their own choices) rather than those of the middle class; therefore, Polish parents are not well positioned to secure educational success for their children through targeting 'better' schools. Nevertheless, one factor that may work to their advantage in relation to BME and (White) British working-class parents is their rather common preference for Catholic schools, as these are indeed generally superior to non-denominational schools in terms of academic standards and pupil achievement.

Polish parents coming to the UK typically do so *for the sake of the children* and believe a *better life* for them can be achieved through education. At the same time, however, the initial (bad) school choices made by parents might have a negative impact on their children's future educational opportunities. On the other hand, research has shown that home background – rather than what school a child attends – is by far the most important factor in predicting how well a child will do at school (Allen *et al.* 2014). Meanwhile, Lopez Rodriguez (2010) notes that even working-class Poles display an 'almost middle-class involvement' (when judged in relation to UK findings relating to parental involvement) in their children's education, and expectations of academic achievement are generally high. She argues that these characteristics might ultimately put them at an advantage over British working-class families in terms of their children's educational trajectories. Indeed, many – though not all – of the (working-class) parents in our sample also declared high educational ambitions for their children. Arguably, however, although further knowledge and a better understanding of the system may be acquired over time, its 'quality' will largely depend on the degree of parental engagement with the system, and the development of their social and cultural capital (e.g. improving English language skills, widening social networks, forming bridging capital). Polish parents coming to the UK typically do so *for the sake of the children* and often see their children's education as key to achieving the *better life* they migrated for. However, it remains to be seen to what extent this is an achievable ambition for the children and their parents, as this young generation of Poles in Britain progresses through the schooling system and enters the labour market.

Notes

[1] This observation follows directly from data collection for a research project on Eastern European migration to Scotland on which the first author is currently working (noted: April 2015).

[2] *International Labour Mobility and Its Impact on Family and Household Formation Among Polish Migrants Living in England and Scotland*. This project was funded by the European and Social Research Council, award number RES-625-28-0001.

[3] For the sake of simplicity, we shall use the term 'British education system' in this paper. In fact, however, there are also internal differences between the education systems of the countries comprising the United Kingdom, i.e. England, Wales, Northern Ireland and Scotland. Despite these differences, the philosophy of education and organisation of education are fairly similar across the UK, although the Scottish system is most different from the other three systems, in that it has traditionally emphasised breadth across a range of subjects, while the English, Welsh and Northern Irish systems have emphasised greater depth of education over a smaller range of subjects at secondary school level (http://www.gtcs.org.uk/education-in-scotland/scotlands-education-system.aspx; accessed: 20 April 2015). Moreover, the Scottish system aims to provide a more comprehensive and equal education. In this article we will be focusing on Polish migrants living in England and Scotland, which follow different curriculums. Discussing the differences between the English and Scottish education systems in depth is beyond the scope of this paper; nevertheless, wherever they are important for our analysis, they will be explained.

[4] For a more detailed description of the differences between the education systems of Poland and the UK (England), see Lopez Rodriguez *et al.* 2010; Trevena 2014.

[5] Currently, following the educational reform of 2004, the age of starting school in Poland is being lowered to 6. In the transition stage parents were able to send their children to school either at the age of 6 or 7, but from 2015/2016 primary schooling in Poland is obligatory from the age of 6 (IBE 2011).

[6] Interestingly, our interviewees who lived in Scotland would sometimes mention that their child was put down a year in relation to their age group in order to facilitate acquisition of English. This was mentioned specifically for primary-school children. In general, at the time of the research Scotland had different language support than England, while in England some in-school support (language training or translation by a specialist teaching assistant or teacher) was provided for both primary- and secondary-school children (the amount of support received would depend on resources, but it was usually a couple of hours per week).

[7] In both England and Scotland primary school starts at the age of 4–5 and lasts for 7 years, yet there are some differences in terms of organisation. In England primary school starts with so-called Year R ('reception') and then Years 1–6; some primary schools are divided into two levels: infant (4/5–6/7) and junior (7/8–10/11). In Scotland all primary schools are 7-year schools, with classes named Primary 1 to 7.

[8] In England and Poland young people above the age of 16 who complete the compulsory stage of education are obliged to participate in some form of further education: up till the age of 18 in Poland, and up till the age of 17 in the UK (since 2013; and from 2015 up to the age of 18). The main difference at this stage of education is that in Poland it is the parents' responsibility to ensure their children are in education up till the age of 18, while in Britain it is the responsibility of the young person. However, in Scotland young people can leave school at the age of 16 and are not obliged to further participate in any form of education (https://www.gov.uk/know-when-you-can-leave-school; accessed: 20 April 2015).

[9] https://www.gov.uk/types-of-school (accessed: 23 April 2015); http://www.independent.co.uk/news/education/education-news/experts-uk-has-too-many-types-of-school-2352191.html (accessed: 23 April 2015).

[10]   http://www.scotsman.com/news/education/english-schools-best-not-scottish-1-760750 (accessed: 21 April 2015).

[11] http://wystap.pl/wp-content/uploads/2012/12/Rocznik-Statystyczny-2012-o-wyznaniach.pdf (accessed: 8 September 2015).

[12] http://www.rownoscwyznania.org/wyznania-w-polsce/articles/nauczanie-religii-w-szkolach-a-rozno-rodnosc-wyznaniowa-w-polsce.html (accessed: 8 September 2015).

[13] https://men.gov.pl/ministerstwo/informacje/informacja-w-sprawie-zasad-organizowania-nauki-religii-i-etyki-w-roku-szkolnym-2014-2015.html (accessed: 8 September 2015).

[14] http://www.telegraph.co.uk/education/secondaryeducation/3852653/Faith-school-pupils-outperforming-others-at-every-age.html (accessed: 14 September 2015).

[15] Bourdieu (1986) also distinguished one more type of capital, which he named 'symbolic'. This may be seen as the resources available to an individual on the basis of honour, prestige or recognition. However, symbolic capital cannot be converted to other forms of capital (economic, cultural, social). Rather, these three can also have symbolic value.

[16] There are also a few (altogether four) other denominational schools in Scotland, namely Jewish and Episcopalian ones. Nevertheless, most non-denominational schools in Scotland are indeed linked to the Church of Scotland (e.g. have a church minister), which is a Protestant church. Nevertheless, though certain celebrations might take place in church (e.g. Christmas mass), these schools do not focus on teaching Protestant religion in school.

[17] http://www.catholiceducation.org.uk/about-us/faqs (accessed: 24 April 2015).

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The Invisible Immigrant Child in the Norwegian Classroom: Losing Sight of Polish Children's Immigrant Status Through Unarticulated Differences and Behind Good Intentions

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Poles are today the largest group of family immigrants to Norway. Since Polish immigration is an intra-European movement of labour, there are no specific laws or regulations, apart from labour regulations, pertaining to the introduction of Polish families to Norway and their settlement there. Consequently, there are few guidelines in schools and local authorities on dealing with Polish children in school. They receive the same introduction to school as immigrants from any other background, with no consideration of the specific characteristics of Poles. Equally, their parents are not eligible for the orientation courses and language classes that are offered to adult asylum seekers or refugees. As these are expensive, many Polish parents postpone language classes until they can afford them or find alternative ways of learning language and culture. In this article, I explore the inclusion of Polish children in Norwegian schools through the voices of teachers receiving Polish children in their classrooms and Polish mothers of children attending school in Norway. Interviews with both teachers and mothers reveal inadequate understandings of each other's conceptions of school, education and the roles of home and school in the education of children. They also demonstrate a limited understanding of culturally bound interpretations of each other's actions. Although both sides are committed to the idea of effective integration, we risk overlooking the social and academic challenges that Polish children face in Norwegian schools unless conceptions and expectations of school and education are articulated and actions are explained and contextualised. There is also a risk that cultural differences will be perceived as individual problems, while real individual problems may be overlooked due to poor communication between schools and families. The data is drawn from an extended case study including classroom observations, interviews with teachers and Polish mothers in Norway, and focus groups of educators and researchers in the field of social work.

Keywords: school integration; home–school collaboration; egalitarianism; Polish–Norwegian migration; invisibility

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Third-wave Polish migration to Norway: the Polish family

Polish migration to Norway can be described as a three-stage movement; from the political refugee in the 1980s, to the seasonal worker in the 1990s and then the Polish family after Poland's 2004 accession to the EU with the European free movement of labour (Friberg 2013). Although many thousands of new Polish migrants initially register as temporary workers, their temporality can soon become long term, once they decide to settle down with a family in Norway. Moreover, those who have registered as permanent settlers may decide to move on, or back to Poland. This implies that in addition to being a relatively new group of immigrants, and the largest single migratory flow to Norway in the country's history (Friberg 2013), they are also a group where individuals remain or leave of their own free will. Polish migrants also differ from the earlier large labour migrant groups who predominantly sought to live in the cities and larger urban areas. They settle in any city, town or country village where they can find work.

The Polish in general are 'wanted immigrants', but there have not been sufficient studies of Polish migrant families to determine their particular characteristics and needs with regard to transition to Norwegian society and effective integration into the country's institutions.

The broader study and the focus and structure of this article

The objective of the broader study[1] is to identify the challenges arising from the arrival of substantial numbers of Polish children in Norwegian classrooms. In this article, we look beyond the challenges posed by different curricula and pedagogy, and organisational issues of second-language children in school. The study had difficulty recruiting informants. There was a reluctance to participate both in the communities and among Polish immigrants, as well as reluctance in some circles to acknowledge the issue as interesting or worthy of research. In this paper we pursue this invisibility and take a particular look at how the two actors in the home–school relationship perceive the inclusion of Polish children in Norwegian schools. From the schools we will hear the voices of teachers, bilingual teachers and teaching assistants, and from the families we will hear the voices of Polish mothers.

Before proceeding to the empirical analysis, I describe how I first discovered the importance of the issue of invisibility for understanding the situation of the Polish child in Norwegian schools, and how invisibility went from being a descriptive to an analytical concept for the study. What is it that makes Polish children blend in and become invisible as immigrant children in school? Is it the result of conscious efforts, or is it just happening of its own accord? Given that it really is so, what are the possible consequences of this missing immigrant status, and should we be at all concerned about it?

In the analysis, we focus on attempts to make Polish children resemble children of the majority population, how the attempts at integration appear through the lens of home–school collaboration and finally, examples of differences that are obvious and incontrovertible. To create a framework of understanding, we present differences between the Polish education system and the Norwegian Unitarian School, which may be a source of diverging understandings. We suggest that Norwegian egalitarianism may be one possible explanation for the invisibility of the children's immigrant status. Finally, we discuss some of the potential consequences of teachers and Polish parents having different views and understandings in light of a theory of culture that allows us to see culture as agency – something that is not 'only in our mind' but takes place in strategic actions to realise values. Here, I suggest Ann Swidler's (1986) understanding of culture as a resource for action as one possible framework for understanding this connection.

Polish children's invisibility in public records and the lack of knowledge and regulation

The terms 'visible' and 'invisible' have been employed in the study of migrants and minorities since the early 1970s, especially among North American scholars. An early example is Charlotte Erickson's 1972 study of how English and Scottish immigrants in the nineteenth-century United States 'melted' into mainstream society (Erickson 1972). While the terms have continued to be used in a descriptive manner in the US scholarly tradition, European and Nordic scholars have been more careful to use the term 'in-visibility' due to its context sensibility as an analytical concept (Leinonen and Toivanen 2014). In my case, the idea of invisibility began as a way of describing not being able to find the Polish children in statistics, not being able to access them as a researcher and the fact that they seemed to be overlooked in school as well. Later, I came to realise that this apparent invisibility was also an analytical point, addressing these children's positioning in a context.

Our[2] first attempts to get an overview of Polish children in Norwegian schools – where they were, how schools received them and what kind of support they were offered – proved challenging. Polish immigration is an intra-European movement of labour, there are no specific laws or regulations apart from the labour regulations pertaining to the introduction of Polish families to Norway and their settlement in the country (Friberg 2013). Polish families also settle all over the country, and there are few guidelines in schools and local authorities on dealing with Polish children. The adults are not eligible for the same free orientation courses and language classes as immigrants from refugee backgrounds. As the immigration authorities do not register them, Polish families are registered similarly to Norwegian families and consequently 'disappear' in official statistics.

Children with a foreign mother tongue go through a reception school or reception class, where Polish children are classed as immigrant children, before beginning Norwegian school. Once they transfer to ordinary classes, they statistically become unspecified second-language children. All in all, there are few systems or regulations that capture the specific challenges emerging with these new groups of Polish immigrants: the Polish child, and the Polish parent.

The fact that Poles have become the largest migrant group in Norway over a relatively short period, and that we now see settlement of families on a larger scale than only a few years back, makes this lack of regulation a cause for concern. This is not to say that local authorities and schools do not have a systematic approach to the challenge, or that they avoid dealing with it. In our search for communities willing to take part in our study, we found a wide range of local arrangements for receiving this particular group of migrants. However, the lack of standardisation means that there is a great deal of variation in the way Polish children and their parents are enrolled in school and received in the community.

Restricted access to informants in the Polish population

For our study, we wanted an approach where we could get close to the Polish children's daily experience of school by involving teachers and school staff, parents and the children themselves. In our search for informants, we first tried a traditional sampling approach and identified four communities in different parts of Norway where we knew there were Polish immigrants: two towns, a metropolitan industrial area, and one rural community. Several formal letters of introduction, telephone calls and requests later, we had no luck in getting access to schools in three of these communities. Only Kristiansand had given us access at municipal level, and the go-ahead to recruit among schools. We then chose to limit our study geographically to the region of Southern Norway (Sørlandet), expanding our request to the communities surrounding Kristiansand. We already knew that the region had a fair amount of Polish immigration and that many and varied municipalities and

communities host Polish families, so Sørlandet should ideally be able to provide the variety we were looking for.

We contacted Kristiansand Reception School for more information about the Polish children in the region. According to their website:

> *The Reception School is the first meeting with the Norwegian school system for children and teenagers that have moved to Kristiansand and do not speak the Norwegian language. The school provides an intensive training in the Norwegian language in addition to other basic school subjects. The pupils stay at the Reception School until they are able to speak and write sufficiently well in Norwegian language. After that they will be transferred to a public school in their neighbourhood* (our translation).

The headmaster told us that the Polish children are not concentrated in particular schools, but spread thinly across the townships of Kristiansand and its neighbours. Thus, we chose to approach schools that we were informed had the most Polish pupils, across a socio-economic range of communities.

Our intentions were to interview teachers, parents and children, and to carry out participant observation in these selected schools. The Polish community, however, was resistant to having Norwegian researchers doing research on and with their children or interviewing parents. We managed to overcome scepticism about interviewing adults by using Polish interviewers. However, we still had no access to the children. Classroom observations also stopped after two sessions due to parents not being willing to sign the consent form. We extended the investigation beyond the jurisdiction of Kristiansand Reception School, and found that other parts of the region had adopted different models for receiving new children within ordinary state schools, but this new strategy only yielded a couple more teachers for our sample.

Analytically, it seemed that not only had the Polish children 'disappeared' from statistics, they were also 'hidden' from our view in their daily lives.

Invisibility: from a descriptive to an analytical concept

In designing the case study, we had planned to use mixed methodology. Constructing a case study entails gathering many types of data from individuals in many roles through conversation or observation, as well as using texts and records related to the topic under investigation. The topic should, however, be limited to a bounded system, a process, an activity, an event or a programme (Creswell 2013). Our frame of reference was 'what the process of including Polish children in the Norwegian school system entails', and anyone with any connection to this issue would be a welcome informant.

By the end of the formal data collection period we had completed three classroom observations in 1st, 4th and 6th grades, two interviews with bilingual teachers, interviews with one teaching assistant, two 'home-room' teachers and one liaison teacher between the Receiving School and the local schools. By using Polish interviewers, we obtained individual interviews with three mothers of young children, one group interview with mothers of young children, two interviews with mothers of young people and one interview with a 19-year-old who has first-hand experience of the Norwegian school system.[3] A collaboration agreement with another Norway Grant project gave us access to two anonymous interviews with mothers of two young children each, as well as one interview with a couple who had teenage children.[4] The last three interviews were focusing primarily on work–life balance in families with children, but also contained sections on school and home–school relations. These interviewees were from the Oslo region.

We still had no access to younger children, which is a great loss for the project. No fathers were represented. Despite the lack of children as informants, we did at this point have enough voices representing different points of view to reveal the characteristics of the case, and move on to the analytical phase of the project.[5]

However, as an afterthought, I accepted an invitation to include the case in a 'research café' event[6] which was part of the annual seminar of the Department of Social Work, Child Welfare and Social policy at Oslo and Akershus University College of Applied Sciences (HiOA). In addition to the regular staff of teachers and lecturers in social work, child welfare and social policy, a group of skilled researchers into issues such as children, youth, marginalisation and labour who had recently joined the HiOA organisation were present. At the event, we had the opportunity to submit our research question to six different groups of randomly selected researchers, lecturers and professionals. It was a comment from one of these sessions that showed me how invisibility is not just a descriptive issue, but an analytical one. Presented with the title of the case presentation, a social work teacher exclaimed:

Integration of Polish children in Norwegian schools? Since when did that become a problem? I mean, they are just like us in the first place, so why do they need to be 'integrated'? (Norwegian teacher of social work in seminar).

It was at this revelatory moment that I asked myself: why are Polish children so invisible? Are we making them invisible in school? Are they not sufficiently different to receive special attention? Given that they blend in so well, is there indeed any reason to regard their integration as a 'problem'?

In what follows, three analytical questions are applied to the data: 1) in what instances are efforts made to make Polish children similar to Norwegian children?; 2) in what instances are difference in opinions and perceptions not articulated?; and 3) when does this become problematic?

Levelling the playing field by making children similar

When the observation starts, I do not know who the Polish children are. (…) After ten minutes of observation I still have no idea who the two Polish children are. There are no obvious signs to tell me who they are (notes from observation in a first-grade classroom, early morning before the class settled down).

The first and obvious answer to why these children blend in is that Polish children have similar skin, hair and complexion to Norwegian children. Before they start to speak or act, they look the same. Some people argue that they can 'spot the difference', but no one can really describe what that difference is. In the absence of those characteristics, we simply conclude that looking 'European' makes Polish children blend into the background of a Norwegian classroom.

Clothing and equipment is another area where uniformity can be created, but also where difference can be signalled (Bodine 2003; Wærdahl 2003). Some of the Polish mothers in our sample talk about what it takes to make sure that their children look like the Norwegian children and have the same equipment so that they fit into everyday school reality. Apparently, it takes both skill and resources to 'keep up with the Normanns'. Two mothers in a group interview, expanding on this issue, discuss how to balance the expense and what they consider necessities. The basics are clearly something they would spend money on, such as a rucksack and books. But they discuss the things that are fashionable among their children's peers, and what they feel their children need to avoid being singled out.

You know, in Poland our children do not have these [things], but because of their peers (…) you know like a child here… Norwegian children have everything, so you always want to (…) match them in some sense. We wanted our daughter to match the Norwegian children. (…) I had an example of a Polish family where the child was using the same Polish clothes from the bazaar, so unfortunate, the girls laughed. And she had no friends here because she did not match them (Polish mother of two).

The things seen as 'needed' to fit in with the Norwegian children in school are substantial and costly. Yet parents seem to be stretched to meet those demands. This resonates well with the findings in Norwegian studies of the material constructions of childhood, and the cost of being a 'proper child' in Norway. Families that have less sacrifice adult needs so their children can have what 'the others have' (Wærdahl 2003, 2005). By meeting the normative material demands of a Norwegian childhood, Polish parents also contribute to a level playing field for their children. In consequence, their children become increasingly invisible as immigrant children in everyday contexts.

Another aspect that often differentiates the immigrant child from the majority child is their religious affiliation. The Polish communities are predominantly Catholic, and since the Catholic congregations in Norway are generally small, Polish people soon become a majority in the Catholic churches. One would think that religion is an issue that could divide people and families, but this does not seem to be the case. Even if the majority of Norwegians belong to the Norwegian Lutheran Church, a very large proportion of the Norwegian public is very secular in their practices and cannot really recognise the difference between a Catholic and a Protestant. None of the teachers or representatives of the schools mention the church or religion as something associated with the Polish children. Interestingly, neither of the mothers discusses the 'education for life' in Norwegian schools and only one says she thinks education about all religions is a good idea. But when we interviewed Nina, an interesting assimilation strategy appeared.

For children in school, religion does not seem to be important until it is time for confirmation at the age of fourteen. This is the time when Norwegian children choose whether to confirm their baptism, or if not baptised in the first place, maybe choose to have a Humanist coming-of-age ceremony. This is also the time when being a Catholic makes you stand out as different in school, and young Polish people may be conflicted about their religion. For some, this issue becomes very important as an identity marker, a marker of belonging in Norway or in Poland, of where your loyalties lie. In the case of Nina's daughter, Emilia, choosing a Christian denomination was a question of fitting in with your friends, but also a conscious choice of assimilation.

It was a long time to discuss about this issue. (…) We gave her a choice of how she wants to go. We were in Poland a year before her [own] communion for [someone else's] communion, where she saw how it looks like, she had dealing with this and she had to make a decision whether she wants to go to Poland, or if she wants to do as the Norwegian children do here. Due to this, with regard to her school here, she does not know anyone in Poland (…), mostly has Norwegian friends, Emilia decided that she wants to go here, as her peers. She will have a confirmation in the Protestant church (Nina, mother of Emilia).

I am guessing that this is not as easy for Emilia's family as Nina makes it sound, but fitting in with the others in school is in this case more important than which church you attend. This is a very poignant example of an assimilation strategy where cultural values are stretched and assembled in new ways to accommodate an acceptable strategy of action (Swidler 1986).

There is a shared belief among our informants that children who stay for a while assimilate and 'become' Norwegian first and Polish second. There is also a shared understanding that boys make friends more easily, while Polish girls need help to make friends. Parents address this issue in interviews, explaining how they have

struggled to create opportunities for their child to interact with other children and make friends, yet they describe with frustration that pre-arranged play dates have limited long-term effects in terms of turning into friendships. A bilingual teacher also tells us that she sees the Polish children expending a lot of energy on making friends, and that this effort at times takes precedence over their school work. In a summary of an observation in a first-grade classroom, the observer notes how the Polish girl seems to 'underplay her academic skills' in order to become more accepted by the others.

> *The Polish boy participates both in the academic work and in the social scene between boys in the class-room. The girl however, is part of the scene when the teacher sets the seating arrangement or the activities are pre-defined. As soon as there is a choice of seating or activities, the Polish girl sits alone, chooses not to participate or underplays her academic skills to let the other girls shine. Not a conscious act of exclusion by the other girls, as we also observed situations where the preoccupied Norwegian girls 'notice' the Polish girl being alone, and make efforts to include her. Since the conversation between the girls was about things that happened in the leisure scene, the Polish girl did not have anything to contribute* (from a summary of an observation in a 1st-grade classroom).

The notion that friends are important is shared by mothers, teachers and children alike, and there seems to be an agreement that blending in and assimilating, being as similar as possible to the other children, is the best strategy to gain friendships and inclusion in the group. Olga sums up the sentiment quite well, describing how she reacted when she saw her daughter walking alone in the playground:

> *It was a break, all the children were flying, about and she was walking alone. And my 'blood went to the throat', and to the brain [and I thought]: 'Oh no, my kid is alone, this does not make sense!' I told the teacher that she should pay more attention... that I do not want her to walk alone [during breaks]. (...) At this time I did not know the language very well. I went to the school and I started to cry out to this teacher. 'Come on!' We went outside, so I could show her: 'Look'! I had tears in my eyes. I told her: 'The kid is alone! What are you doing about it? You promised! You told me... that you will take care of my child, and you do not... The other children were in a group, and she was alone. (...) She started to apologise. The next time I went to the school, I see that she is playing with other girls. I was so happy, happy. (...) Later she [the teacher] says; 'Sign her up for SFO [after-school programme], and things will improve for her'. It costs some money, but I prefer to deny myself something. (...) She [daughter] wanted to be there, it was important. I asked her: 'Do you want to go to SFO', and she said 'Yes, I want to!' With a regard to this, you need to listen to the child and what she wants. Because studying is really not so important. Knowledge will come with time* (related by Olga in a group interview with Polish mothers).

Incontrovertible differences

In general, Polish parents share a belief that the Norwegian schools are 'of a lower standard than Polish schools'. Teachers as well as Polish parents repeat this idea so often that it appears to have become a 'fact'. This fact is reinforced by statements about children not bringing home enough homework; there are no proper knowledge tests; there are no grades or other proof that their children are actually learning anything. Overall, the Norwegian way of teaching does not add up to much in the eyes of these Polish mothers.

> *It is hard to understand, because it is such backwardness... they do not teach a lot of things. My Oliwia, for example, has such great shortcomings* (Oliwia's mother in a personal interview).

Polish parents expect that in return for your hard work and application, the school will provide an evaluation of your ability and development. A school without a formal grading system fails to meet this expectation. It seems hard to accept that there is no formal grading system below 7th grade.

The mother of Agata, for example, said she was worried about her daughter in school once she transferred to the ordinary school system in second grade after the reception class. Once the teacher had told her that her daughter had done so well that 'she would not know that Agata was from another country' and later also that 'she exceeds the knowledge of other peers in the classroom', she was confident that her child could survive and compete in this system. However, she is still convinced that the Norwegian school demands less from the children, and her worries may reappear as Agata moves up through the education system. Or maybe she will be like Agnieszka who, after seven years in Norway, has come to the conclusion that she is happy about the school for her daughter:

> *I'm happy... The level of teaching may be lower than in Poland, they teach these children less than in Poland, but they have 'life' knowledge and this is probably the most important.*

> **What do you think about the curriculum?**

> *I think that it is adjusted to the age of the child. They go gradually, [pupils] have no broad readings [pupils] have also tests every week, of which you can also see that they must learn something if they can write the test. It seems to me that it is quite good.*

> **And what about the shared responsibilities between home and school?**

> *Children have much less homework. In classes 1 to 4, they had very little homework, in comparison to what I remember of Polish school. I really like the fact, for example children have no homework on the weekend. The weekend for child is to have a rest. There is no such thing as it used to be in Poland that when Friday came teachers told us (…) they can give us twice as much [homework], because we have more time [over the week-end]* (Agnieszka, mother of two daughters, in a personal interview).

Agnieszka points out that social integration has never been a problem for her daughters. They had been joining in with other children since Kindergarten, and regarded Norway as their homeland and Polish as a second language. Having made the fundamental move, and also in terms of planning for a *future* in Norway, seem to make integration easier. Her worries that Norwegian schooling does not meet Polish standards are not valid as long as the children's future is in Norway.

Both parents and teachers acknowledge that there is a difference in teaching style and in what kind of knowledge schools in Norway and Poland teach. Polish parents worry that their children do not learn enough maths and hard sciences while Norwegian teachers worry that the Polish children fall short not only in learning languages, but also in maths and science due to their lack of proficiency in Norwegian.

> *The older children think maths and natural sciences are easy, because they introduce that syllabus earlier in Poland. But once there is text involved, they have problems. And there is a lot of text involved even in maths once the level goes up* (bilingual teacher, primary school).

There are also diverging views on how children should learn the language.

Some parents do not agree with our language training style for children in school. I think language is better learned by talking, but Polish parents do not seem to understand how much learning that happens in play. They think learning happens when you stick your head into a book. In Poland children have to read huge amounts of curriculum that they have to read and write already in the lower classes (experienced Polish teaching assistant).

Learning the language is an articulated challenge, agreed upon by parents and teachers. Along with learning and teaching styles, the fundamental role of language in learning other school subjects is seemingly more often acknowledged by the school than by parents.

Polish pupils struggle with conceptualisation, which is common with minority-language pupils. Bilingual teachers are absolutely necessary, as well as the children being more socially active in their spare time (teacher 5th grade).

When Norwegian teachers suggest that the Polish children should be more socially active in their spare time and participate more in leisure activities, they really mean they should be more sociable and spend time with peers rather than family. This is part of the approach to learning that emphasises that leisure activities are good learning arenas for all children and for most *social* qualifications (Frønes 1995). The school would be most likely to regard it as the responsibility of the parents to provide such arenas. Interestingly, this expectation is not expressed explicitly in any of the interviews, but it comes across in the form of complaints or concerns.

Collaboration with parents in the child's learning journey is crucial, and home–school collaboration is strongly emphasised both in Norway and Poland. However, there is no clearly articulated expectation of what this contract between parents and school entails. Norwegian teachers seem to take it for granted that a parent's educational duty extends to providing leisure activities and opportunities for their children. For one school, the Polish children's lack of participation in organised activities caused such concern that they decided to allocate a budget for it.

It often happens that this insults the parents, but be that as it may, we spend a lot of time trying to explain the importance of social participation to the Polish parents ('home-room' teacher).

While home–school collaboration can become a battle of priorities, it often fails to address the fact that parents and teachers do not share the same basic ideas on pedagogy and education, nor do they agree on areas of collaboration in children's everyday lives. In effect, the Polish child is recognised less for their high level of academic ability in school, but particularly for their lack of social interaction and interpersonal skills. At home, the child is not judged by their progress in social skills and critical thinking, but by their lack of academic progress. Either way, the child's skills fail to be appreciated, and the double skill set that could be a particular advantage for the immigrant child becomes invisible.

When being an immigrant child in school is an asset, even the Polish children are counted. It appears that in schools with a high share of immigrant children, the Polish children are more likely to fall into the category 'immigrant child', a group defined by its lack of proficiency in the Norwegian language. In these contexts, the Polish child is similar to 'the other children' – those that are not Norwegian. These children as a group are often assessed and described from a resource perspective. For example, they all need extra language classes, a recourse that is 'unlocked' if the child has a low test score on the annual TOSP test.[7] This leads to an interesting double standard, where you want the child to learn the language as much and as soon as possible, but

not be too good for the test. Being a key to more resources for the school and for the child makes it important to emphasise their immigrant status.

Two frameworks for understanding why immigrant status becomes invisible

From the interviews we have learned that the immigrant status of Polish children becomes invisible in part because they are so similar to Norwegian children in appearance that they blend into the normal diversity of a group. Also, conscious efforts on the part of both parents and teachers make the children blend in with their peer group, rather than accentuating their immigrant status, unless this status provides access to resources for the child.

We have also heard from the interviews that teachers and other school personnel have different views from mothers about what should be learned in school, how it should be taught and learned, and the roles of school and home in these issues. Yet, these differences are not addressed explicitly. Discovering what the Norwegian school can offer is a slow and gradual process for the parent.

Below I suggest, first, a framework for understanding what causes these differences, and second, a framework for understanding why they are not articulated. The first suggests that expectations of Polish children from their family on one hand and from schools on the other stem from two pedagogical systems with contradictory assumptions about what it takes to succeed in the education system. The framework for understanding why these differences are not articulated is anchored in what Hagelund describes as Norwegian inclination to 'contain diversity' in order to uphold a sense of egalitarianism (Hagelund 2002). In effect, not articulating important differences in pedagogical views, combined with the inclination to contain diversity, disguises significant cultural differences that are important to understand the specific challenges for Polish children in Norwegian schools.

Competitive Polish education meets the Unitarian school of Norway

Froestad and Ravneberg (2006) argue that the Norwegian idea of an egalitarian society is strongly related to the notion of equality in the Norwegian education system. Since the final decades of the 19th century, the unitary school has been regarded as an important way of reducing social and economic differences between people. In addition, state schools have been used to construct and maintain ideas about national values and community, a function reinforced by the education policies of the 1990s. The exclusion of the unknown (the dissimilar) has been a prominent feature of egalitarian Norwegian culture, especially up to the 1970s (Froestad and Ravneberg 2006: 121).

Even if there is a concern that the unitary school does not have the same equalising effects as first intended, the core values of a common social, academic and cultural community as a democratic ideal, still holds strong in the Norwegian school mission statement. Chapter 1, §1.1 of the Norwegian law on education includes the mission statement for all state education in Norway, from 1st to 13th grades. Only one of its seven set goals explicitly contains the word *knowledge*; even here it is used in a non-specific way, emphasising competence for learning, rather than knowledge. In our translation, this section of the paragraph reads:

Pupils and apprentices will develop such knowledge, skills and attitudes as will enable them to be in control of their own lives, and to participate in work and community in society. They should also open up their creativity, enthusiasm, commitment and desire to explore (Law on primary and high school education, Chapter 1, §1.1).

The unitary school is thus for all, as well as for the individual. Every step of learning is measured against your own development as a person, and not in comparison to others. One practical expression of this is that no grades are given out in the first seven years of primary school, as there should be no winners or losers at an early stage in life. This may be one of the main differences that seem unfamiliar to Polish parents as their children enter the Norwegian school.

The mission of Polish schools consists of 'supporting the educative role of the family' (Polish Act on Education, Art. 1, cl. 1, item 2), and 'exercising the right of each citizen of the Republic of Poland to education, and the right of children and young people to care and upbringing suitable for their age and development stage' (*ibidem*, cl. 1). In the preamble to the Act on Education, we see that the same 'rules of solidarity, democracy, tolerance, justice and freedom' apply to the Polish educational laws as to the Norwegian ones. However, the preamble of the Polish school mission statement, unlike the Norwegian, specifically mentions reading, writing and mathematical skills as something the school should provide:

> *The result of providing education and upbringing shall be equipping the child with the ability to read and write, with mathematical skills and knowledge required in everyday life, in school environment and in problem solving and finally equipping the child with foundations for further development of the personal characteristics which are necessary in order to play an active and ethical role in the social life* (see Journal of Laws [Dz. U.] of 2012, item 977) (quoted in Muchacka 2014).

Even if this is not binding legislation, schools usually follow these principles when drawing up their own mission statements. In Poland, the introduction of the free-market economy has changed people's access to the labour market (Wachowiak 2010: 105, in: Muchacka 2014), which in turn affects how the role of the school is perceived. The role of the school in preparing children for a more competitive labour market stresses the educative and competitive sides of a meritocratic school system.

Reflecting an ongoing public debate in Norway about the level of knowledge in Norwegian schools, and concern about poor ratings in international comparative tests, the Knowledge Promotion reform of 2006 (NDET 2006) highlighted how the five basic skills – reading, maths, oral and written communication, and the use of digital tools – should be explicitly integrated in all school activities. However, the basic skills are not singled out in the general section of the reform. In the general introduction, developing learning strategies, creativity, curiosity and critical thinking are still the central ideals. In addition, the general section now includes the co-responsibility of parents and local communities in the upbringing and education of children (NDET 2006).

This short comparison of the mission statements of the two school systems shows that there are indeed some differences at system level between the Polish school, which highlights knowledge and skills, and the Norwegian school, where supporting creativity, curiosity and critical thinking seems to be valued. Furthermore, the Polish school system seems to promote schooling as a preparation for the ability to compete for jobs and opportunities later in life; in other words, it has a selective function for society. The Norwegian school system, on the other hand, explicitly aims to reduce social and economic differences by creating equal opportunities for all, and thus has an equalising social effect.

Not articulating these differences in communication between school and home makes the Polish child the object of diverse and sometimes conflicting expectations.

Culture in action and the interpretation of equality

In most contexts, Norwegians are proud to be an egalitarian society, even if the definition of this may be unclear in every single instance. When Anniken Hagelund discusses whether issues of immigration and increasing cultural diversity threaten what we perceive as a homogeneous and egalitarian society, she finds that policy discourses and debates about multicultural Norway are as much about containing diversity as about cherishing it (Hagelund 2002: 415). Is this attempt to focus on similarities and create 'sameness' another way of containing diversity and maintaining the egalitarian Norwegian self-image?

Colloquially, 'culture' can explain or excuse all kinds of behaviour. I claim that the traditionally portrayed deterministic relationship between culture and action conceals how culture really is at play when actions are initiated. Traditions are usually explicit, and something you can relate to. Celebrating birthdays and attending church are traditions. Culture, on the other hand, is this larger and invisible cloak that values, traditions and everyday life are wrapped up in and intertwined with, and as such is almost impossible to grasp. Deterministic explanations of the relationship between culture and agency are therefore often used, yet they are not very helpful.

The new sociology of culture has offered new theories to challenge the traditional relationship between culture and agency, encompassing both values and symbolic meaning. In Ann Swidler's (1986) understanding, culture is the resources (traditions, rituals, symbols, myths, etc.) that individuals access to define their strategies of action and to activate their understanding of the world. According to Swidler, cultural causal explanations must be understood through human action strategies. This means that we cannot see culture as in itself a goal for action, but as chosen components in an action strategy of reaching another goal. People thus construct their strategies from different ensembles of values or different action repertoires. The total universe of cultural values is much larger than any one individual will put to use. We choose those values that we find most meaningful for a given situation.

In the Norwegian context one could say that equality has become a cultural value that is recognised and applied on different levels. Actions in pursuit of a highly regarded value – in this case, equality – are recognised as an expression of the value itself. Equality is thus first recognised, for example, in how society is organised: in politics and in welfare systems such as social security, universal child welfare, equal pay, free primary education (which is a requirement for all) and rights to free secondary education. Second, there are cultural ideals and interpretative frameworks for the individual: everyone should be involved; everyone shall have their share; there should be equal opportunities and equal participation; and everyone should be given a fair chance. Third, equality is recognised as a particularly central value in the upbringing and socialisation of children: not making differences between children visible; or actually ironing out the differences by providing what is missing for one child, or barring access to certain things for another (Wærdahl 2003, 2005). The Unitarian school in itself demonstrates that childhood is a stage of life where social differences should be evened out. It is important that all children are treated equally, at least in principle. Childhood is a time of life where ideally no social or economic rankings exist. School plays a crucial role in levelling this playing field for children (Bodine 2003; Wærdahl 2005).

With school playing such a key role in putting the values of equality into action, it is not surprising that a number of strategies employed by school agents are aimed at equalising. Levelling the playing field, making sure everyone gets a turn and not making differences too visible are all strategies that fit well with this value. And within this framework, why should we look for differences, when things appear to be similar, and as such, 'all in order'? Are Polish children not the same as Norwegian children?

Inclusion of Polish children in Norwegian schools: is this a problem?

When people meet and interact for their mutual benefit, there is an inherent propensity to look for similarities. What makes us the same? On what basis can we collaborate? As we have seen, when the setting is a Norwegian school, the inclination to look for similarities and to level out differences is even stronger than in Norwegian society in general. In Norway, childhood seems to be the epicentre of egalitarianism, expressed and actively pursued through different cultural practices.

Introducing Polish children to the Norwegian school accentuates the similarities between the children and their backgrounds. From the way they look to the familiarity of the European cultural background, Polish children are expected to make a smooth, unproblematic transition to Norwegian schools as soon as the language issues are resolved. However, there appear to be differences in the interpretations and understanding of school as an institution, in the expectations of the education system and of how children should behave or dress, or what they should do to succeed as a student, a friend, and a good son or daughter. Most of these expectations are not explicit, so there is plenty of room for failure in the game of fitting in, being acknowledged and succeeding.

Using Ann Swidler's definition of culture we can more easily identify how unspoken values and conceptualisations can create opposing practices in the effort to provide the best school and learning conditions for the child. Our analysis shows that one overarching cultural value applied to the inclusion of Polish children in Norwegian schools is embedded in the characteristics of the two educational systems. The dichotomy that stands out is competition *versus* egalitarianism. From this overarching dichotomy follow many other dichotomies. Competitive individualism resonates with what Mary Douglas (1996) calls a hierarchical thought style. In this thought style, a child is recognised by their place, and their ability to abide by the rules of this place. Being 'the good and obedient child' is a good thing. In an egalitarian thought style, your status is not defined by your place in the structure, or by who you are (characterised by age, gender and so on) but by what you do (Douglas 1996). The 'competent child' will be praised for being self-reliant and responsible. This is the child of the 'negotiating family' – a model that has been identified as the most common one for Norwegian families (Frønes 1995; Wærdahl and Haldar 2013).

The dichotomy of obedience *versus* negotiation is also an organising principle in other types of relations. This is where the expectation of following parental advice and being obedient to what parents think is good and true meets the importance of peer socialisation, where negotiation on equal terms is supposed to be the modus operandi. In present Norwegian society, the importance of friends and peers has become a paramount value in itself, as well as a value underscoring egalitarianism (Frønes 1995; Wærdahl 2003).

A 'European' background can easily provide a cover of sameness, which makes it harder to acknowledge differences. Europeans are supposed to share some set of common values, reference the same cultural and political history (however diverse) and in general be similar in the way we evaluate right and wrong. Of course, this is far from the truth when we look closely at it. It is still something people with an egalitarian orientation *like to think is true*. That kind of egalitarian inclusiveness entails feeling uncomfortable talking about 'cultural differences', because there is always a normative judgment of 'good' or 'bad' lurking behind such talk. This fear of not being accepting and tolerant leads to strategies that 'contain diversity' rather than celebrating the multicultural (Hagelund 2002).

Norwegian schools and Polish parents, although they are working towards the same goal – the effective inclusion of Polish children in Norwegian schools – miscommunicate their expectations of each other due to employing different values in their action repertoire. In as much as the immigrant status of the child becomes invisible because a value of not wanting to accentuate difference is at play, we risk making the inclusion process more difficult for the child. We also risk creating situations where the child is not recognised and

praised for their progress and development in significant social arenas such as family and school. Thus, we need to address the challenges presented by the invisibility of immigrant status.

Norwegian culture, pedagogical ideas and ideas of childhood are the majority rule in these children's lives. These values are also well anchored in the school as an educational system, as well as in everyday life. Thus, the Polish child lives their everyday life with an asymmetric value system: Norwegian interpretations and self-evident truths are the norm, Polish interpretations are the exceptions. Sometimes we call it differences in culture, at other times we blame the language. It is difficult to distinguish between value and culture since culture, values and structure reinforce each other. The real expectations of the immigrant child and the immigrant parent are taken for granted and thus not communicated. Polish parents, on the other hand, should be encouraged to turn their values into good action strategies in this new social context in order to ease their children's transition to a new school system.

Are we creating a problem by pointing out the differences? I believe we are doing the children a disservice by *not* pointing out these perceived differences of values, ideologies and pedagogy to the schools, teachers and parents. We interpret what we commonly call cultural differences as individual problems, just as easily as we ascribe individual problems to language challenges or cultural differences. We need to identify the individual needs and qualifications of the Polish child in Norwegian schools, as well as recognising the full set of cultural values that make up the structure of expectations towards their being. This starts with recognising the differences and contradictions that are there and acknowledging the Polish child as an immigrant child.

Notes

[1] This article is written under the auspices of Transfam, a Norway Grant-Funded, Polish–Norwegian Research Program. Transfam, or more specifically, *Doing Family in Transnational Context. Demographic Choices, Welfare Adaptions, School Integration, and Everyday Life of Polish Families Living in Polish–Norwegian Transnationality*, aims to analyse issues related to the recent intensification of human mobility between Poland and Norway, as well as problems encountered by migrants and institutions within the broader discourses of intra-European labour mobility and the specific field of transnational family studies. The Transfam project consists of several work packages focusing on a series of interrelated issues linked to transnational families. This article focuses on one of the findings from Work Package 7 (WP7), *Integration and Re-Integration of Polish Children in School*. The examples are from the set of data that comprises the Norwegian case, and deals predominantly with the understandings of Polish parents and Norwegian teachers, and less on those of the children. The data is however supported by observations of children in the classroom. The latter part of the work package, on the re-integration into Polish schools of Polish children with Scandinavian school experience, is still in the data collection phase.

[2] In the text, use of the pronouns 'I' and 'we', and the corresponding 'my' and 'our', reflects the fact that data collection, interviews and observations were carried out by a group of researchers, while the analysis for this article is the sole responsibility of the author.

[3] The mothers of young people and the 19-year-old were also to be interviewed for another project by Agderforskning with a strongly overlapping interview guide, and were thus useful to both projects.

[4] *EFFECT: Enhancing the Effectiveness of Work–Life Balance Initiatives Use*, cooperative research project between Norwegian Social Research (NOVA), Oslo and Akershus University College of Applied Sciences, Policy and Social Research (POLICY), and the Institute of Occupational Medicine, Lodz, Poland, funded by the Polish–Norwegian Research Programme under the Norway Grants funding scheme.

[5] The challenge of accessing the Polish community in Norway is an important aspect of this study's findings. Why this reluctance to participate in research within the Polish community in Norway? When our

Polish colleagues came to Oslo to do interviews in the Oslo region for WP2, *Migrant Families in Norway / Structure of Power Relations and Negotiating Values and Norms in Transnational Families*, and WP 5, *Children's Experience of Growing Up Transnationally*, we were able to meet and share on four occasions. The Polish team did not experience the same reluctance, and were able to get in touch with, visit and interview around 50 families within a limited period of time. Why Polish immigrant families will talk to Polish researchers, but decline to speak to Norwegian researchers, is a question we have debated at length. The language issue is one obvious explanation, but there is also a resistance rooted in being subjected to scrutiny from the Norwegian authorities, which the researcher may appear to represent. Polish researchers were offered further explanations of this reluctance to be interviewed by Norwegians, and there is evidently great anxiety associated with the Norwegian Child Protection Service (*Barnevernet*) and with news stories in Poland about how Polish children were removed from their parents and put in Norwegian foster homes, for reasons not apparent to the Polish. Similar stories are told about Russian, Indian, Thai and other families in Norway, and the Norwegian Child Protection Service has gained an international reputation for being very unreliable at best and downright cruel at worst. Whether it is justified or not, this fear of being checked out as good parents by the authorities is definitely something which makes the community alert. We can see that this fear also comes across in the interviews conducted by Polish interviewers, so this is an issue that must be investigated at a later stage of this project.

[6] For a research café you need a room with enough tables to divide the larger group present into smaller groups of five to six people. Each table has an anchorperson, who has prepared a short presentation of a project, subject or practice for 10 to 15 minutes of brainstorming. When a bell rings, people randomly choose another table and are subjected to a new question for discussion.

[7] TOSP tests are bilingual tests designed to distinguish if the level of language is due to language proficiency or due to level of understanding theoretical concepts.

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Transnational Motherhood and Forced Migration. Causes and Consequences of the Migration of Polish Working-Class Women 1989–2010

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This article discusses and expands on two related issues. The first is the unexplored reasons for the departure of Polish migrant women: the forced migration phenomenon. The author describes the system behind forced migration as created at the intersections not only of care, gender and migration regimes but also of legal regimes. Second, the author points out that the close relation between forced migration and the process of 'unbecoming a wife in the transnational context' creates a distinctive type of transnational motherhood experience. In order to explain the specificity of these types of experiences better the author introduces a new typology of transnational motherhood biographies. The case study of Aldona is representative of the experiences of some Polish women in the period under study, 1989–2010.

Keywords: transnational mothers; (un)becoming a mother/wife in the transnational context; domestic violence; forced migration; working-class families from Poland

Introduction

One of the two main aims of the article, and at the same time its novel contribution to the debate on gendered migration and transnational motherhood, is to show the unexplored reasons for the departures of Polish working-class migrant women: the forced migration phenomenon. This perspective can bridge the gap in the source literature. Non-economic motives for migration – forcing someone to leave or having to deal with domestic violence – appear only on the margins of the literature on Polish migration. The literature often assumes that it is the gendered labour markets in receiving/sending countries that pull women's migration. It is indeed the first and foremost economic cause of migration, due to the discrimination in the Polish labour market (Pustułka 2015), and also for a vast array of cultural reasons (e.g. Cieślińska 2012; Kronenberg, in press). Where the issue of forced migration is addressed, it is primarily in the refugee context (Niżyńska 2014) or in relation to trafficking in the sex industry (e.g. Slany and Krzystek 2010), but rarely in relation to inequalities and power in conjugal and family relations – supported by conservative Polish state gender politics and the attitude of the law towards women. Therefore, the novel contribution of this text to the debate is the theoretical analysis of

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female Poles' forced migrations at the intersection of various regimes. My argument broadens Helma Lutz's (2008) conceptual framework of the intersection of care, gender and migration regimes. Lutz successfully introduced that framework to analyse both migrant care work and certain aspects of transnational motherhood. I propose broadening this framework, and expanding on the legal regimes in Poland and Europe to better analyse specific aspects of forced migration, and its relation to transnational motherhood and to the class dimension.

The second aim of the article is to show how the forced migration phenomenon relates to transnational motherhood at the intersection of various regimes. To better situate and explain the specifics of this type of migrant-mother experience, I introduce a new typology of the biographical trajectories of transnational mothers: 1) transnational mothers; 2) mothers who actually abandon their children; and 3) in-between transnational mothers. To demonstrate the theoretical importance of this distinction I explain here some details of the proposed typology.

Two oppositional points on the continuum of migrant mothers' relations with their children left in the care of others can be identified. On the one hand there are migrant mothers who break all ties with their children and families. These mothers live among migrant communities, but it is still difficult to find any cases, which have been analysed in the literature about migration and families. On the other hand there are transnational mothers. A great deal of research exists describing the variants and contexts of this type of engaged care relationship. But between these extremes – mothers who actually abandon *versus* transnational mothers – there is another category, even if liminal and hybrid. It covers those migrant mothers who, despite the struggle to engage transnationally in the lives of their children, have lost contact with them for some time or for many years, not of their own volition. This category includes some elements of the other two. What makes it similar to the situation of 'mothers who actually abandon' is the temporary or permanent loss of contact with the children; what relates to the transnational mothers is the unceasing effort to keep in touch and restore the relationship. The novelty of this typology therefore lies in its greater diversification of the biographical trajectories of transnational mothers. This typology also makes it possible to identify the systemic causes of the mothers' different experiences, and so to avoid much confusion over involvement and abandonment.

I found many of the 'mother in-between' cases while pursuing ethnographical research in the working-class Polish migrant communities in Belgium and in their places of origin in Poland.[1] I also discovered that these women migrate for similar reasons. They went abroad either because they were forced against their will into economic migration by exploitative husbands and families or as a way of dealing with domestic violence (economic, sexual, psychological and physical). In Poland they could not obtain effective support either from traditional local communities or from conservative state institutions. Their forced migration was therefore the result of violence, or was an act of opposition to violence (see Parson 2010) at the intersection of various regimes. The abuse was not only individual in nature, but it was also structural – it occurred as a result of the low status of women within the family, the politics of the state and patriarchal power relations. I identified these types of migration patterns in 29 out of 54 narrative interviews, and I heard about them many times during the ethnographic research (33 additional cases), showing that this is a collective phenomenon with distinctive push factors. The discussion of these two phenomena – the biographical trajectories of transnational mothers and unexplored reasons for migration – shows how they intersect with each other.

I also propose and develop a conceptual framework linking forced migration to the transnational mothering, which follows. Forced migration starts two processes affecting the distinctive specificity of the motherhood experience. The first process is 'unbecoming a wife in the transnational context', as for these women, migration opens up the possibility of leaving the marriage, which had been blocked structurally in Poland. I use the term 'unbecoming a wife in the transnational context' to define the individual and collective unstructured change of status from the category of a wife to the delegitimated category of a non-wife. I develop the latter term based

on the interactionistic theory of status passage developed by Barney Glaser and Anselm Strauss (1971) and the theory of 'becoming an ex' (Ebaugh 1988). These catalytic processes are closely intertwined with the second process of '(un)becoming a mother in the transnational context'. I developed the latter term from Diana Gustafson's term 'unbecoming mothers', which 'captures the socially constructed process of moving from an authentic state of mother to a deligitimated category of bad mother or nonmother' and 'characterises both the process and the quality of many women's experiences of living apart from their birth children on a long-term or permanent basis' (Gustafson (2005:1). I adapted this term to the experiences of transnational migrant mothers at the intersections of care, gender, migration and legal regimes, analysing the 'structural process of cumulative disorder' (Riemann and Schütze 1991) that is embedded in their biographical trajectories.

The first part of the text discusses the research perspective and methodology. Polish and international source literature is reviewed to confirm that it does not take into sufficient account the variety of transnational motherhood experiences and the causes of Polish migration. Background information on the Polish socio-economic and political context is also provided. The next section explains why Aldona's experiences are described as a theoretical representative pattern among Polish women migrants' collective experience during 1989–2010. Aldona, a 36-year-old migrant from Poland and transnational mother of two children working as a domestic help in Belgium, against her will completely loses contact with her child. The dynamics of her relationship with the family are reconstructed, together with the effects of an abusive marriage, forced migration and the process of unbecoming a wife on her maternal experiences.

What is known about conjugal relations and transnational mothering: literature review

In recent years, issues concerning the identity and status of women, other than those related to reproduction (care, motherhood) and labour, are beginning to be raised on the margins of transnational motherhood research. As Mirjana Morokvasič and Christine Catarino explained in their evaluation of migration and gender research, 'when focusing on a new form of migration, there is a reproduction of stereotypes – women are seen primarily, if not solely, in their reproductive role' (Morokvasič and Catarino 2010: 61). Furthermore, in various areas of transnational research, transnational mothers have mostly been depicted as devoted to the care of others and implicitly constructed as subjects without their own needs and interests. Thus, the most important questions in the study of transnational motherhood concern new maternity practices and identities, care relationships with children and other caretakers, and the gender regimes in which they operate. Prevailing explanations are set in the study of the direction of gender-contract change between spouses and caregivers of children (Carling and Schmalzbauer 2012). Many researchers show that the frustration of those left behind is caused by resident male caretakers failing to take on caring responsibilities, and female relatives and girls (transnational daughters) being overwhelmed by household chores previously performed by the mother (e.g. Parreñas 2001, 2005; Lutz and Pallenga-Mollenbeck 2012a, 2012b). In other types of explanations, researchers refer, *inter alia*, to dominant normative gender patterns (e.g. Slany 2008; Ryan, Sales, Tilki and Siara 2009; White 2009; Małek 2011; Pustułka 2013; Lutz and Pallenga-Mollenbeck 2012a, 2012b; Krzyżowski 2013; Muszel 2013; Szczygielska 2013). What is revealed is, for example: gender in the circulation of care (Baldassar and Merla 2014); gendered patterns in public discourse, or in moral panics (e.g. Parreñas 2001, 2005; Urbańska 2010; Lutz and Pallenga-Mollenbeck 2012a, 2010b); gendered activities of institutional experts and local support organisations, such as churches; and the role of relatives, caretakers and teachers (e.g. Parreñas 2001, 2005). These approaches give an insight into the living conditions of transnational families and to a large extent explain the source of family crises, but some knowledge gaps remain. These include the complex biographical stories and the trajectories of mothers' marital/intimate relationships, their biographical plans, struggles and choices long before and

post-migration, and finally the intersection of the complex causes of migration and the trajectories of the marital relationships of the mothers.

Such findings are still found on the margins of reports relating to female migrants, despite the insights of Morokvasič (1983), Phizacklea (1998), Kofman, Phizacklea, Raghuram and Sales (2000), and Anthias and Lazardis (2000), who mention that women see migration in terms of opportunities to overcome violent or oppressive marital or familial relations, gendered normative expectations, the impossibility of divorce, and the prevalence of conservative social legislation. This is because the majority of applied migration theories and research focus on the purely economic factors behind women's decisions to migrate (Anthias and Cederberg 2010: 24). References to such non-economic motives for migration can be found in works describing female migrants and refugees from different parts of the world, but apart from noting these reasons for forced migration, far fewer works analyse them systematically and systemically. There is not enough analysis covering the periods long before and after migration, and recording changes in the relationship with the partner/husband towards motherhood. Works that address this problem more systematically recognise that women/mothers migrate to escape from domestic violence (e.g. Gamburd 2000; Parreñas 2001, 2005; Keough 2006, Dreby 2010; Illanes 2010; Parson 2010; Fedyuk 2011), from the macho culture (Hondagneu-Sotelo 1994; Lauser 2008), to obtain divorces that are not legally available (Gamburd 2000; Constable 2003; Lauser 2008), to protect their children from violence and alcoholism (Fedyuk 2011), and to escape from wars and conflicts as refugees (Kofman 2004; Madziva 2010; Merla 2012; Zontini 2010. They also migrate because they are forced into labour migration by their husbands or families (Schütze 2003).

It is much harder to find such cases in analyses of Polish migration. Motives for migration other than economic ones appear mostly on the margins of research (see Slany and Małek 2005; Krasnodębska 2008; Święćkowska 2008; Ryan, Sales, Tilki and Siara 2009; Siara 2009; White 2009; Lutz and Pallenga-Mollenbeck 2012a, 2012b; Krzyżowski 2013; Muszel 2013; Szczygielska 2013) and/or have not been analysed in an in-depth and systematic manner. An exception is the pioneering work of Wioletta Danilewicz (2010), which discusses transnational families mostly from a psychological/pedagogical perspective. The author identifies the factors which must be in place in order to foster any intimate-care transnational relations between different family members, including parents and children. These include, *inter alia*, an appropriate level of ties between the spouses (family bonds), commitment, and migration occurring in the early stages of family formation.[2]

Reviewing the research, which consistently shows the intersections of the conjugal relation trajectory and the motherhood trajectory, we see that most of the studies have been done with reference to the period after the departure. Here conflicts between spouses and difficulties in re-adapting upon return are attributed to the length of separation (Menjívar 2006). One consequence of long-term separation, it is noted, is the formation of new families, with combinations of step-parents and step-siblings who barely resemble the families whom other family members can imagine (Bernhard, Landolt and Goldring 2005; Menjívar 2006). Other works focus on the relationship between transnational divorce and parenthood, and the challenges for gender patterns. Reserchers have found that gender norms persist throughout and following the process of divorce (Dreby 2010; Contreras and Griffith 2012). For example, mothers who have ended abusive or dysfunctional relationships with partners or husbands, despite new forms of independence, continue to mother from afar in ways that attempt to 'make up for' their disruption of their traditional roles (Contreras and Griffith 2012: 79). Dreby points to the same process. Despite the gender shift, she found that 'in cases of divorce, transnational fathers were likely to use their change in status as an opportunity to strengthen their bonds with their children, whereas mothers were more likely to respond by temporarily distancing themselves. (…) Men were still the most stressed about their role as economic provider, while women bore the brunt of resentment from their children' (Carling *et al.* 2012: 5, quotes Dreby 2010). So, even though these studies show some gendered patterns of changes, there is a need for more studies which encompass all the biographical, intersected trajectories of the

mothers' marital/intimate relationships, and the trajectories of migration and motherhood analysed in various socio-political and economic contexts, in the pre- and post-migration periods. This conclusion applies especially to studies on Polish migration, where there has been no analysis of forced migration, domestic violence, divorces and separations in the migration process and at the intersection of different types of regimes.

In this article the above perspective is used in the analysis of the intersectional processes of forced migration: 'unbecoming a wife in the transnational context' and the subsequent process of '(un)becoming a mother in the transnational context'. I propose to analyse these phenomena by adapting the conceptual framework for studies of 'migrant domestic work' in Europe as introduced by Helma Lutz (2008). Lutz argues that migration of domestic workers in Europe occurs at the intersection of gender, care and migration regimes. She uses the Esping-Andersen's (1990) term 'regimes', 'refers it to the organisation and the corresponding cultural codes of social policy and social practice in which the relationship between social actors (state, (labour) market and family) is articulated and negotiated' (Lutz 2008: 2). Her conceptual framework includes analysis of cultural scripts, which organise household and care work (gender regimes); various regulations and allocation of responsibility for national citizens' wellbeing between the state, the family and the market (care regimes); and a multitude of regulations and practices responsible for migration regimes (Lutz 2008: 2). Inspired by this concept I present the system behind forced migration and transnational motherhood as created at the intersection not only of care, gender and migration regimes but also of legal regimes. I argue that it is worth differentiating legal regimes especially in the Polish contexts of conservative gendered state politics, practices and attitudes to domestic violence. I define legal regimes as not only legal regulations but also daily applications of the law which are termed 'street-level bureaucracy' (Lipsky 1980). In the next section I present the gendered and class-divided socio-economic and legal contexts that constitute these regimes and their intersections.

Working-class mothers and domestic violence in Poland, 1989–2010

The emergence of a new political and socio-economic reality in Poland after the collapse of the communist regime in Central and Eastern Europe in 1989 added new dimensions to the class peculiarities of migration from Poland. Factory closures, rising unemployment, and a series of financial crises (such as the 1998 Russian market crisis) forced about 60 per cent of the Polish population below the breadline (Tarkowska 2007, cited by Skóra 2012: 30). This deprivation process was influenced especially by gender and class. The neoliberal economic policies imposed externally on the post-communist countries, as well as spending cuts prompted by the EU accession requirements, hit women disproportionately, increasing the feminisation of poverty. As pointed out by Ewa Charkiewicz (2010: 7–8), the feminisation of poverty does not concern all Polish women, but is mediated by class, age, work and family status. The post-communist transformation particularly affected working-class women employed as factory workers and farmers, and women from villages, small towns and peripheral regions of Poland, mostly in the Eastern and in particular South-eastern parts of Poland – the so-called 'Eastern Wall'. It also affected low-skilled women, women under 24 and those over 50, single mothers and mothers of large families.[3] These groups faced prolonged structural unemployment, comparatively lower wages than men, with no state support for their children. They lacked any economic perspectives that could allow them to escape from poverty. Even full-time jobs were no protection against poverty because the minimum wage in Poland is still one of the lowest in Europe, and the majority of minimum-wage workers are women; the working poor phenomenon is highly feminised in Poland (Zachorowska-Mazurkiewicz 2012: 9–10).[4] Therefore, post-communist migration is characterised by new features – the intensified migration of women (Slany and Małek 2005) and people from lower social classes (Jaźwińska and Okólski 2001) – both groups that are drastically affected by the transition to the market economy. Migration as a way of ensuring

the economic survival of one's family has become a strategy to escape from poverty, but sometimes poverty intersects with other primary motives.

The desire to escape oppressive or violent environments must be added to the diversity of motives for migration. About 29 out of the 54 migrant women I interviewed were working-class women who migrated to work abroad in order to escape various types of domestic violence. As shown in the analysis of particular trajectories of migrant biographies, other ways of dealing with domestic violence had been blocked by several micro and macro structural constraints. A combination of biographical, economic, socio-cultural (gender, class, religion, and local community traditions) and political circumstances, and the absence of policies to tackle domestic violence in Poland, forces women to resort to migration.

For women who are victims of violence or abuse, emigration is a kind of 'informal service of social assistance'. Poland lacks actual policies to help victims of domestic violence, and those that exist were still at the formative, initial stage in the period 1989–2010. For almost the entire period of transformation, important reform projects and the ratification of the Council of Europe's 2011 Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence were blocked. This was because the conservative parties and the Catholic hierarchy interpreted it not in terms of care for the family, but as a threat to traditional patriarchal family values (Hryciuk and Korolczuk 2015). Only six years ago, in 2010, a few basic formal procedures to protect victims of domestic violence were introduced in Poland: an order for the perpetrator to leave the place of cohabitation, a restraining order, free medical examination, prohibition of corporal punishment of children, and mandatory treatment for perpetrators of violence. The Convention itself was ratified by Poland as late as 2015.[5] It is worth pointing out that in Poland there is only one welfare centre per million inhabitants offering refuge to wives and mothers – victims of domestic violence (The Centre for Women's Rights). For example in the Podlasie region, where I conducted fieldwork, such infrastructure is rarely available. The region has only one crisis intervention centre in Kolno (10 beds), and in 2012 its 24-hour assistance was able to help as few as 29 people (out of a total of 1.2 million inhabitants). It is worth adding that in Podlasie the practice of separating the perpetrators of violence from their victims takes place in only 4 per cent of cases (Dziekońska 2012: 74). Women with whom I conducted interviews drew attention to the fact that even the police officers intervening in family matters informally advised battered wives to emigrate as the only way to deal effectively with the problem.[6]

My research shows that in the period under study it was still easier for Polish women to adapt to an abusive husband/family than to move house. I discovered that during this time (1989–2010), it was very difficult for women in Poland to get a separation or divorce, especially for those dealing with economic deprivation and/or from a traditional Catholic background, especially those from villages and small towns. These findings rather contradict recent sociological research (Sikorska 2009) concluding that marriage and family are becoming secularised and democratised in contemporary Poland. However, the interviewees' experiences are far from such optimistic interpretations, and my research shows that divorce in smaller villages and in the Polish countryside still carries a social stigma. Traditional family values, strongly influenced by Catholicism, function as adaptative patterns. For example, persevering in an abusive marriage is presented as a way of saving one's soul in a very influential pre-marital instruction authored by Pope John Paul II (1994). Such contradictory findings are most probably due to the fact that recent sociological research into the family mostly investigates middle-class families (e.g. Sikorska 2009).

The argumentative normalisation of domestic violence is clearly visible not only in the biographical interviews I conducted, but also in other quantitative research. Although it is estimated that one in five women in Poland have been raped, most of them by a closely related person – a partner (22 per cent) or an ex-partner (63 per cent) – in their own home (55 per cent), only 5 per cent of the women report the matter to the police or the prosecutor's office. The voices of the remaining 95 per cent remain unheard, and no one is talking about their

experiences (Fundacja na Rzecz Równości i Emancypacji STER 2015). Violence is part of everyday life; for example in 2012, more than one in four Polish respondents (28 cent) declared they knew either personally or in their neighbourhood a woman experiencing physical violence from a male partner (CBOS 2012: 3).

Against this background, with no institutional support for women experiencing violence in the absence of social consent to a divorce, and when leaving an abusive husband or family is often prevented by the scarcity of economic resources, migration remains the only way to deal with the problem. Since the collapse of the communist regime in Poland, migration has become a much more accessible strategy. For Polish women, and in particular for poorer women from working-class and traditional backgrounds, it has become a way to escape from domestic violence and/or to exit a traditional marriage (Urbańska 2010, 2015). This is both an individual and a collective change of status. However, this pattern did not emerge only with the post-2004 mass migration, as has been thought. Among the women from Podlasie, it was as early as the 1990s, or even earlier in the communist regime, that these migration patterns became the route to divorce or its substitute in the form of informal, sometimes implicit, separation. This pattern would be transmitted to relatives and friends in case of marital problems, such as domestic violence.

All these phenomena generate a more difficult gendered context for the interaction of transnational mothers with their children and provide resources which, in the patriarchal hierarchies of power and family conflicts, can be used negatively against them.

Research methodology

The results presented are drawn from my doctoral project, which focused on the biographical experiences of Polish transnational mothers, spanning two decades of post-socialist transformation (1989–2010).[7] Between 2005 and 2010 I conducted 54 biographical narrative interviews with various types of transnational mothers, mostly from the working class, as well as numerous ethnographic observations/interviews with migrant families (children, fathers, various types of carers), neighbours, local officials and activists, Catholic and Orthodox priests. This multi-sited, participant ethnographic research was conducted in rural areas of Poland (villages and small towns in Podlasie, the north-eastern agricultural region) and in the Polish migrant communities in Belgium, mainly in Brussels. I was interested in the dynamics of the process of becoming a transnational mother and how these inter-relate with the dynamics of family relationships, local and national cultures, and the gender and care regimes embedded therein. The biographical experiences and reasons for migration were also investigated in relation to the 1989–2010 post-socialist transformation in Poland.

The aim was to collect the greatest possible diversity of patterns of transnational motherhood. I looked for mothers who had at least one year's experience of separation from their child. At the time of the interview the vast majority of women were aged 35–60 and had at least two children, and the experience of being a transnational mother ranged from 2 to 23 years. In the case of most women the raising of their children coincided with at least 10 to 15 years of migration (including visits to Poland two or three times a year for a few weeks' holiday) or with several-years' circulation periods between countries, at different intervals. The interviewees came from all over Poland, apart from a group of 22 women from the Podlasie region. Only a few women from the sample of 54 had higher education; it was very difficult to find labourers with higher education. Almost all of the interviewees came from the working class and had graduated from vocational schools or technical colleges. The majority of the mothers interviewed worked in Belgium illegally or during their career had experienced a long period of illegality, because Belgium did not fully open its labour markets to Poles until as late as 2009. Some of the women had already been working legally in the *titres-service* coupon system, which was gradually introduced in Belgium from 2006.

In theoretical terms, Aldona's case study represents the experiences of a proportion of migrant Polish females. What does this mean? And what other types of experiences are we dealing with?

In qualitative research, theoretical representativeness and theoretical sampling are much more important than statistical representativeness. Theoretical sampling entails a classification of phenomena into sets of types, in such a way that what is observed can be classified as one type or another (Gomm 2008: 285). Any generalisation based on a study would be a theoretical generalisation. This is the kind of generalisation that attempts to specify the circumstances under which the processes of migration and unbecoming mothers/wives in the transnational context appear. In such research, certainty as to whether the phenomenon is an important theoretical pattern is obtained through theoretical saturation. It is supported by the strategy of seeking varied cases and by an analysis based on the principle of maximising and minimising the contrast, which is the basis of theoretical quality sampling and analysis (Glaser and Strauss 1967).

The variants of the causes of migration (recognised as procesual phenomena) which I was able to decode from the 54 interviews were divided into three main categories: 1) economic (13 narratives); 2) socio-economic (41 narratives); 3) other cases (mothers who actually abandoned) (7 observations).

Aldona's case study belongs to category no. 2 – socio-economic conditions. Within this category were narratives where the central themes were marital and family problems being dealt with in a traditional, patriarchal culture in a context of economic deprivation. The economic causes of leaving are crucial for the interviewees, but nevertheless secondary to the dominant problem. The variants of socio-economic category migrations are internally diverse. I have distinguished several types of the sources of migratory coercion and the resourcefulness presented by the narrators: a) migration as a plan for separation/divorce (12 narratives); b) migration as an escape from violence (9 narratives and 33 observations); c) migration as a forced 'nomination' by exploitative husband/family (5 narrations including Aldona's case); d) migration as a consequence of being abandoned (mothers without alimony payments, 15 narrations).

Categories are ideal types, but they are not mutually exclusive. First of all, c) and d) types of migration can be classified as linked to experiences of domestic violence. The difference is that the migration is not a planned escape. Second, one biography can pertain to many categories at the same time and there are different stages of biography and migration.

The analysis of the narrativeson transnational motherhood (and family biography from the pre- and post-migration periods, because this is what those narratives in fact are) together with multi-sited ethnography makes it possible to capture the dynamics of three inter-related biographical trajectories: 1) trajectory of family/conjugal relations from the pre- and post-migration period; 2) trajectory of mother's relation with children from the pre- and post-migration period; 3) trajectory of migration itself.

Outlining these processes was possible due to the open formula of the biographical narrative interview, based on Fritz Schütze's (1983) methodology. In the first part the researcher asks the interviewee to tell a story; questions and hypothesis only arise in the second and third phases. In their biographical accounts, the mothers frequently recall scenes of interaction with the children and with significant others. These provide an insight, although filtered through the mothers' accounts, into the perspectives of the individuals entering into relationships. Not only the mothers and their children, but also the caregivers, friends of the family, relatives, the local and the migration communities, as well as institutional actors (such as teachers, clergy, experts). Data presented in such a way shows the range of agency and the processes of loss of control ('trajectories of suffering, structural process of cumulative disorder' – Riemann and Schütze 1991). They also give an insight into the specific social and structural contexts in which these interactions occur. Analytical notions applied here are derived from symbolic interactionism, ethnomethodology, phenomenology, hermeneutics and dramaturgical perspectives, and through the use of qualitative analysis tools such as conversational analysis. Such is the theoretical and methodological research strategy that is proposed in the interpretative paradigm.

Biographical analysis of Aldona's forced migration

The case study of Aldona's biographical narrative presented here will serve as a theoretically representative pattern of the phenomena related to the processes of unbecoming a mother and wife in the transnational context of forced migration and various regimes. Aldona's case will be discussed in terms of the significance of her pre- and post-migration family and conjugal relations – rooted in gendered local/national cultural patterns and socio-economic contexts – for her relations with her children.

The interview with Aldona, a 36-year-old Polish migrant working in Brussels as a maid, was conducted in 2009. We spoke in her apartment, a small rented studio with a kitchenette, which she was sharing with her young daughter, brought from Poland three years earlier. At the time she had been trying for three years to establish any form of contact with her teenage son, brought up by his father and her parents-in-law. Originally, Aldona's solitary migration to Belgium in 1997, twelve years earlier, was forced on her by her husband and the in-laws. She had a weak negotiating position in a violent, hierarchical, patriarchal system of marriage and family-in-law. Aldona, who before migration ran the house and worked in agriculture on the farm of her husband and the in-laws, admits that she was persuaded against her will to migrate, then forced to constantly extend the length of her stay abroad and to be separated from her children. The pressure to make money abroad was exerted on her by the husband and the in-laws. It was not her first experience of subordination and exploitation. Long before migration, the burden of the housework and farm work was imposed primarily on her (e.g. preparing animal feed, feeding them, cleaning the barn, preparing products such as milk and eggs for sale, buying fertiliser, managing fieldwork and harvest, cleaning the farmyard, and carrying heavy goods). The husband delegated all the tasks to his wife – not just the household tasks, but also those heavy, physical, production jobs on the farm. He himself was not working nor looking for a job, and granted himself the exclusive right to manage the substantial 'pocket money' that came in the form of remittances sent by his parents working abroad. When the money stopped flowing in, as the parents returned to Poland, the role of maintaining the family was handed over to Aldona. This pattern of exploitation and forced migration contradicts the New Economic Migration Theory (Stark and Bloom 1985), which predominates in the literature on Polish migration. This theory explains that members of families cooperate harmoniously to nominate one of them to take on the burden of migration.

The twelve years of Aldona's work abroad is a typical example of a history of exploitation (economic violence) and a loss of control over some dimension of her life, but also a history of resistance and identity change, which altogether I have called the process of 'unbecoming a wife in the transnational context'. The resistance that she finally showed was undoubtedly possible only because of her economic independence and the more liberal space acquired through migration. Aldona took her daughter with her, but lost contact with her teenage son, who totally broke off the relationship with his mother and refused any contact with her. Aldona's narrative, saturated with factual details and numerous scenes of interaction with the children and the family in the transnational context, vividly portrays the dynamics of the loss of the relationship with a child.

The analysis of Aldona's biographical experience will be preceded by an extensive fragment of her narrative (see Appendix 1). The presentation of such large fragments and even entire interviews is often a standard procedure in certain variants of biographical analyses (Schütze 2003).

Forced migration and the first stage of resistance

The initial asymmetries of power in Aldona's family relations with the dyad of husband/in-laws are built on the wife's position in terms of patriarchal dependence. This position is reinforced by Aldona's relatively lower economic status before marriage. From other parts of the narrative we learn that her husband's family had fully

covered the wedding expenses and had built a house with the money earned by the in-laws while migrating abroad. The farm, livestock and land were also his property. These facts weakened the wife's negotiating position in the family system from the start. Even after the wedding, the traditional agrarian hierarchies that are still present in the habitus of the rural communities in Podlasie are reproduced in the relationship between the spouses. In the case of Aldona, these are differences between the poorer and the wealthier peasants. This kind of status gradation within which the relationships develop bears a striking resemblance to feudal dependence, which still survives in the mind and in the fabric of social relations. In the narratives of female farmers from the region it is not uncommon to find other people's identities represented in terms of their economic status. Terms like 'noblemen' and 'the gentry' are usually used in the pejorative sense, when talking about the manifest superiority of a given person in relation to others.[8]

Indicators of such patriarchal post-serfdom relations can be seen in these fragments of the narrative, in which the narrator evokes the interpretation frame of the nobleman–farmhand, using terms such as 'Mr/Mrs in-laws' (i.e. the husband); from other excerpts: 'I can be a servant here [in Belgium], cos after all there I was a farmhand all the time'; to a cousin who was hired at the in-laws' farm as an assistant for grooming animals: 'You, as much as I, serve as a farmhand here'. Aldona also recalls her husband's interpretative tactics confirming her low economic status in the family: 'He called me "HOMELESS" a few times, or "GET THE FUCK OUT OF HERE, IT'S NOT YOUR HOUSE!" (…) He was banishing me, was telling me that I was ALREADY homeless'. Aldona's dowry could only have been her hard work and dedication, but this did not improve her position in the family hierarchy.

In Podlasie the *longue-durée* structures are still functioning, and gender regimes are one component of the patriarchal post-serfdom model. These initial family asymmetries deepen during migration. Aldona is forcibly nominated by her husband and the in-laws to migrate economically, and to send more and more remittances, as well as to continually extend her stay. The narrator tries to put up determined resistance to the in-laws' requirements and to the claims of her husband, whom she describes as a sponger. She wants to return to Poland permanently and gain control over her family life and motherhood. In spite of living in a structure of economic violence she still believes that her husband will change.

In the first stage of migration, the strategic resistance of the interviewee lies in her secret plan for another pregnancy. She associates with it the hope of improving her position in the family negotiations. Aldona expects that the status of a pregnant woman will gain her the consent of her in-laws and husband to a break in her physical work abroad, and even to her permanent return to Poland. Therefore she is planning to actively use elements of a traditional pattern of femininity to leave the trajectory of disorder/loss of control over her life. Aldona manages to get pregnant and returns to Poland. However, this strategy of gender bargaining is not effective in the long term. She also doesn't manage to escape the typical expectations of Polish agricultural families with strong traditions of women's migration. In their eyes, intensive work abroad is perceived as an obligation to the family and a proof of the woman's virtues – her resourcefulness, diligence and dedication to the family or to the community. Therefore, the space of the household/farm expands transnationally to the country of migration, and consequently the expectations and obligations of women increase. In such families, where you can usually find extensive chains of migrant workers, going abroad becomes a duty. During the period of our research, 1989–2010, when a woman returns to Poland, usually to give birth, breastfeed a child, get medical treatment or undergo surgery, she expects a cousin to take over and maintain her 'hours' during her stay in the native country. Such patterns are revealed in the present story. Aldona is expected to travel as a substitute: 'I remember his [the husband's] sister was pregnant, they [the in-laws] told me to go. Wandusia was three, and it was my son's First Communion, and after the Communion I had to go again, take Mrs mother-in-law's hours'. A failure to fulfill such specific, locally defined duties of a wife and mother, or losing a job while acting as a substitute, is the source of many serious conflicts in families. It is worth adding that some jobs have been

passed on to friends since the 1980s, and families from Podlasie have often served the same employers for several decades. Hence, any potential refusal to migrate creates a conflict, which can be seen in the reactions of Aldona's in-laws. In other parts of her account the narrator evokes the comments of the mother-in-law and the husband regarding her refusal to depart after giving birth: 'A couch potato, she does not want to work'. Thus, three years after the birth, having finished feeding her second child, a daughter, Aldona must return to work in Belgium as a replacement for her mother-in-law. The economic pressure also plays an important role here. The husband still does not want to work on the farm, but at the same time is not looking for another job. The spouses are therefore economically dependent on the in-laws. Ultimately her strategy for returning to Poland in order to raise a small child is not effective.

Turning points in the conjugal/family-in-law relationships

However, in the second stage of migration Aldona individualises and begins to change. The turning point is determined by several processes. After some time, she realises (without rationalisations and excuses) that her husband – the sponger – and her parents-in-law exploit her financially and do not properly care for and feed the children. In this identity work and conception of gender-contract work, important help is provided by the significant others who define the behaviour of Aldona's husband and in-laws as exploitation. Following the advice of her female migrant friends and liberal Belgian female employers – who suggest that she divorces and brings the children over to Belgium – Aldona starts to control the remittances and the ways her husband spends the money. She also starts to manage the budget in detail and care from a distance. She hires a neighbour/friend, who comes over to the house in Poland to clean, wash, iron and cook dinner, and to additionally oversee the childcare. She pays the baker to deliver fresh bread and dairy products for breakfast every other morning. During short visits home Aldona cooks and freezes food for the next couple of weeks of her absence, irons clothes and prepares sets of outfits for every day of school. However, despite her involvement in transnational childcare, despite maintaining her family, it turns out that her resistance to the exploitation and her attempt to gain control over the management of the family finances meet with covert reactions from the in-laws and the husband. They use conservative gender norms – they start to accuse Aldona of behaving immorally and of cheating on her husband abroad. In the initial phase of her resistance Aldona still tries to rationalise her husband's behaviour, blaming her in-laws for the deterioration of the relationship, but she soon abandons the idea of protecting her husband's image. The catalyst for change is the accidental discovery of how the in-laws and the husband are altering her image for her children. They regularly distort the image of Aldona as a good mother and try to manipulate her good relations with the children.

The process of unbecoming a wife and unbecoming a mother in the transnational context

Stigmatising labels are regularly addressed to the children of the 'absent' mother by those who are looking after them, despite the fact that the mother is involved in the care and upbringing of her children 'at a distance', and all this time is in fact the only breadwinner of the family. These strategies are effective. The 12-year-old son begins to stigmatise his mother and eventually breaks off contact with her. Therefore, the experiences of the 36-year-old Aldona show not only the situation of being forced into migration by the family, but also the process of unbecoming a mother – the systematic loss of control over the relationship with the children, mediated by patriarchal and violent power hierarchies at the intersection of severe regimes.

The conflicts in the relationship with the in-laws and husband, deepening with time, become the reason for the introduction of 'awareness contexts of suspicion' by the people caring for the children, on the basis of which the children construct their image of the mother.[9] Although earlier they themselves forced the daughter-in-law to

migrate to Belgium for work purposes, in a conversation witnessed by the grandson Dominic, they skilfully use elements of the 'The Polish Mother' pattern to depreciate Aldona as a good mother. 'The Polish Mother' ideal is defined as a woman sacrificing herself for her children and the family, asexual (see Hryciuk and Korolczuk 2015 and resident (looking after the children at home). First, to assess her activity as a mother they apply the categories pertaining to the normative pattern of a mother who is present at home. They argue that the mother did not meet these expectations during her stay in Poland: 'Cause she said to me like this, over this phone: "YOU ARE STAYING THERE! THE CHILDREN DON'T NEED A MOTHER LIKE YOU. THEY GO HUNGRY, DIRTY, **AND YOU LEFT THEM HOME ALONE** WHEN YOU WERE IN POLAND'. Second, when the narrator begins to put up determined resistance by sending less money and controlling the shopping, the in-laws take revenge by adding categories relating to the sexual morality of a wife and mother into the image of the mother. The effect of this stigmatising strategy on the son is shown in the following fragment:

He [the son] called me names, went to my friend and started calling me names. (...) HOW CAN A GRANDMA INCITE HER GRANDSON TO CALL HIS MOTHER THAT? And so... he had such a... COME ON, HE HAD SUCH STORIES ABOUT THE MOTHER. After all, when he went over to my friend, then she said to him: 'WHAT ARE YOU SAYING?! WHAT ARE YOU SAYING?! THIS IS YOUR MOTHER. Remember that no one loves you as much as she loves you'.

And what was he saying?

'SHE IS A WHORE!... WHAT CAN ONE DO WITH SUCH A WHORE?... WITH SUCH A FUCKING ONE!' [the narrator is crying]. Well just... These, these, these... these are the words of Mr and Mrs in-laws. When I rebelled and was controlling the money so that [the husband] did not blow it all, they were saying there all the time that 'SHE IS HANGING AROUND WITH NIGGERS'. Once, after the mass at Chapelle [a Polish church in Brussels] I was standing in front of the church with Irek, my friend's husband, and we were talking, come on, just like people normally talk... They [the in-laws] rushed to her [Irek's wife] and told her that we were sleeping together, that I am his lover. So now tell me, how can you not be afraid?! Come on, tell me!

The use of gendered categories relating to the sexuality of a wife and a mother by the in-laws and the husband in her new context of becoming independent from the patriarchal authority and power control of the family is typical in migrant communities (see Kempadoo 2005). During ethnography I observed that migration space becomes identified with immorality space, which is the result of the disintegration of the traditional symbolic universe accompanying the gendered social change processes that are taking place during post-1989 migration from Poland (e.g. separation, divorce). It is worth recalling other examples from my field observation in the Podlasie region, where I was regularly told the local 'jokes', usually referring to the sexuality of the migrating wives and mothers. The content of one of the most popular ones reads as follows: 'Two boys are insulting each other's mothers. The first insults his friend's mother by saying: "Your mother is a whore!" The other one replies: "And your mother is in Belgium!"'. I heard this joke several times from different people, men and women, both in the Podlasie region and in Belgium from the migrants. It was always told to illustrate convictions of the moral decay of Polish women abroad. This context with its gendered sexualised stigmatisations and moral panics concerning female migrants successfully supports family strategies of blaming the mothers.

Aldona, having made the shocking discovery about her in-laws and husband's actions regarding the children, decides to take her daughter to Belgium and informally separate from her husband. Eight-year-old Wanda

joins her mother in 2006, after Poland's accession to the European Union, and is enrolled in a public school. This is the point where the power of the (il)legal context of migration for the quality of relations with children is visible. In 2009 she has already decided to file for divorce. However, she delays this moment for three years, until her son turns 18, because she's afraid that as a transnational mother, she will be stigmatised in court and labeled as a mother who abandoned her own child. She does not want to become a legally non-custodial mother because of the taboo and stigma linked with this status in Poland. This is also the point where the power of gendered legal regimes is visible – Aldona cannot count on state support in the fight against domestic violence, and her status of illegal migrant or transnational mother makes it impossible to win the battle for custody. Meanwhile, the narrator's son Dominic does not want to go to Belgium with his sister Wanda. He completely breaks off contact with his mother. The strategy of his grandparents and father, depreciating the image of the mother, has proved effective. Aldona suffers greatly, all the while trying to rebuild the relationship with her son. She writes him letters, texts him, asks friends and teachers to help her explain her perspective to her son. She believes that one day Dominic will understand and come back to her.

Aldona's efforts to return to her children and home in Poland, but also her attempt to abolish the patriarchal relations, provoke resistance and revanchism. During the process of migration the family asymmetries of power from the pre-migration period conspire against Aldona. In the transnational context the power structure inherent in the husband-and-in-laws system is mediated by the gendered expectations regarding family roles, the lower economic status of the narrator in her marriage, lack of support in her fight against domestic violence, living with a child as a condition of the right to custody, and the illegality of migration and work – all of which weaken Aldona's position. She realises that it is necessary to break the ties with her husband and the in-laws and start living abroad on her own, but the price she pays is the loss of control, contacts and relationship with one of the children. Thanks to migration she gains independence and undergoes a process of change, the process of unbecoming a wife in the transnational context. Although it is successful, it results in another change – the process of (un)becoming a mother in the transnational context. Aldona's case illustrates the experience of women who may have migrated away from patriarchal and violent relationships, but while achieving separation/divorce across borders have lost their children.

Conclusions

The dynamics of Aldona's relationship with her children and the patriarchal family have been explained intersectionally, against the background of the wider phenomenona in which working-class women have been included since the end of the 1980s in Poland. And also against the background of the socio-cultural transformation processes of the state and the local community which Aldona comes from. What conclusions can be drawn from the analysis of Aldona's case in relation to existing empirical studies?

Polish empirical research on transnational motherhood is devoted to economic migrants and the very term refers to a situation when the mother involved in looking after her child is temporarily living in another country. However, these studies often focus only on the description of the continuity of the mother–child relationship under the new circumstances. If relations with her husband or other caregivers are analysed, it is only in relation to the changes in the gendered division of household care work caused by the woman's migration. In fact, little attention has been paid to the impact of the often turbulent relationship changes between migrant women and their partners (and therefore, to the different causes of migration) on motherhood. The complications that a divorce or informal separation cause for transnational motherhood when the child remains with the father but the mother works abroad, have not been sufficiently studied. As a result, despite the already substantial achievements in this area, the widespread image of transnational motherhood has become too simplistic and often idealised. The condemnation of transnational mothers depicted in opposition to the neoliberal, normative

discourse nevertheless does not fully convey the situation and problems of women whose relationship/marriage and motherhood status is more complex. These women gain liminal, in-between status located between 'mothers who indeed abandon' and transnational mothers.

I have therefore pointed out non-economic reasons for the emigration of Polish women – domestic violence, conservative state politics and forced migration (so far not fully described in the literature about Poland) and their gendered individual and collective consequences. The intersected processes of 'unbecoming a wife and unbecoming a mother in the transnational context' are examples of these sorts of experiences/consequences. They pertain especially to working-class wives and mothers in patriarchal families in a subordinate position within the family power hierarchy, without the support of patriarchal state politics. These consequences, as the case of Aldona shows, have a strong impact on the processes of reconstructing the mothers' practices and identities, and on their relations with the children. Aldona became, in fact, a non-custodial mother, though without a legal judgment. The process of 'unbecoming a mother in the transnational context' is not simply the consequence of distance, it is being created at the intersection of gender, care, migration and legal regimes.

Notes

[1] The experiences of mothers whom I researched concerned the years 1989–2010. Although after the fall of the communist system in Poland in 1989 the borders were opened, this did not translate into the opening of the labour markets for Poles. Belgium opened its border as late as 2009, so the experiences analysed here relate largely to illegal work.

[2] This insightful work introduces transnational issues primarily to the area of conservative Polish pedagogy, which perceives split families as dysfunctional and incomplete. However, its limitation for gendered, sociological analysis is that the research focuses on the psychological area of intimate relationships in the analyses of the nuclear family. The author does not set her analyses in a broader context of social relationships with the extended family and relatives, neighbours, local and migration community, and relations with employers. There is also no gender perspective – the experiences of family members are discussed in generalised manner from the perspective of those who remained in Poland. However, the pioneering strength of the study is the attention it draws to the psychology of conjugal conflict.

[3] See Tarkowska (2008); Charkiewicz (2010): 7–8, Zachorowska-Mazurkiewicz (2012): 9–10; Skóra (2012): 20.

[4] Women constitute more than half of all the unemployed in Poland: 51–58 per cent in 2003–2009 (Zachorowska-Mazurkiewicz 2012: 30). Women's earnings are about 20–25 per cent lower than those of men in the same sectors (Sztanderska 2006, cited by Skóra 2012: 25). Polish single mothers' high poverty rates are partly due to the 2003–2008 liquidation of the public fund providing financial help to lone parents when the co-parent was not paying alimony (Desperak 2010).

[5] Law amending the Law on preventing domestic violence and some other laws (Journal of Laws of 13.07.2010, no. 125 125, item 842).

[6] It is worth noting that even if national statistics show a relatively low percentage of divorces in the Podlasie region in comparison to Poland as a whole, such data should be interpreted extremely carefully in the context of migration, because significant changes may occur without officially registered statutory changes.

[7] The PhD thesis was defended in 2011. On its basis a book was written and published in 2015: *Matka Polka na odległość. Z doświadczeń migracyjnych robotnic 1989–2010* [*The Mother Pole from a Distance. Experiences of Women Migrant Workers 1989–2010*].

[8] The data and its interpretation come from different types of observation: not only from the ethnographic research which I conducted in Podlasie between 2005 and 2010, but also from observations rooted in my experience of growing up in rural communities of Podlasie.

[9] The concept of awareness contexts is rarely used in Poland (see Kaźmierska1999). Its creators are symbolic interactionists Barney Glaser and Anselm Strauss (1980), who in the work Awareness of Dying developed the concept of dying awareness context. This concept refers not only to the situation of dying, but also to other social situations in which a specific course of interaction between people depends on the type of their mutual knowledge about each other. We distinguish four basic awareness contexts: closed awareness, suspicion context, mutual pretending and open awareness. Suspicion context means, *inter alia*, competition for control over the knowledge of someone, tactics and counter-tactics of secrecy, both verbal and non-verbal.

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Appendix 1. Excerpt from the Aldona's narration

It was not my choice to come here [to Belgium]. I remember his [the husband's] sister was pregnant, they [the in-laws] told me to go. They told me to go, they told me to go and I went. And I came here… May, it was the end of May, I don't want to lie. It was the end of May. Dominic wasn't four then… He wasn't four, and I came here. May, June I worked, July. And something like the end of July, till half June I worked every day of the week, like on a treadmill, from dawn till dusk. And I wanted to go to Poland [after three months of working], cause I wanted to go to my kid, and to my husband, cause we were married for only five years. And then Mrs mother-in-law told me [the narrator starts yelling, imitating the mother-in-law] 'WHAT THE HELL FOR?! ONLY WASTING MONEY! YOU'LL SEE, YOU'LL COME FOR CHRISTMAS!' And I didn't see my child for seven months. And then she saw that she can order me around, cause I was afraid of her. (...) I cried terribly, cause for me not seeing the child for a month, two, three was… [the narrator is crying] And I remember that when I was going to Poland, I bought him, to make it up, so that he just, I don't know, so I just went with this thoughts, that maybe I will stay in this Poland, that I won't have to go back. I DID NOT WANT TO GO [to Belgium]! I DID NOT WANT TO GO! I REALLY DIDN'T!... IT WAS A SHOCK… I went [to Poland] the first time after seven months [in December], then for Easter, I don't remember if I went later in the summer, to be honest. I can't remember it now, after so many years [12 years of work in Belgium, with a 4-year break for having another child and maternity leave]. And just in the second year of my leaving [to Belgium] he [Dominic, the son] came over for Christmas, because I was already living with Mr and Mrs in-laws here in Belgium [the in-laws are also working in Belgium]. He [the husband and the son] came over and I really wanted to go back to Poland, and in order to come back to Poland, I just had Wandusia [a daughter], [in another part of the narration I learn that the interviewee had planned to get pregnant without having consulted it with her husband, in order to return to Poland]. This way I could go back for some time to Poland [for four years] and stay in Poland. Oh, and Mrs mother-in-law had a good go at me! That she [the daughter] is on her way. [the narrator starts yelling] CAUSE IT WAS A GRUDGE THAT SHE IS COMING, AND THAT'S THE EEEEND. And later [for four years the narrator stays at home, in Poland] Wandusia was three, and it was my son's First Communion, and after the Communion I had to go again, take Mrs mother-in-law's hours [she had to substitute for her mother in law in the houses where she worked as a housekeeper]. And then I came here [to Belgium] for two months, it was supposed to be just for the summer. We had a deal that I'd work over the summer and that in September I'm back home. And I remember, it was somewhere in mid-August. Mr in-law came to me from 'the telephone' from 'the cabin' [it means the phone service for migrants], and says to me: [the narrator reports the conversation in a very imperative manner] 'YOU ARE STAYING FOR SEPTEMBER TOO!'. So just imagine, how you are feeling, when someone tells you 'YOU ARE STAYING!', and you have no influence on this decision. I remember that I broke down and cried. And I called Mrs mother-in-law [in Poland]. And then, and then I saw how she's… how she's manipulating my kid, I realised this only now. She was all the time inciting him against me, ever since he was nine. Cause the words he used were… Cause she

[the mother-in-law] said to me like this, over this phone: 'YOU ARE STAYING THERE! THE CHILDREN DON'T NEED A MOTHER LIKE YOU. THEY GO HUNGRY, DIRTY, AND YOU LEFT THEM HOME ALONE WHEN YOU WERE IN POLAND'. These are her very words, God trust me. I can swear to God, that these are her words. She said it herself. And then she passed the phone to Dominic [the son] and he says to me, hear this: 'Yeah, it's true what grandma said. WE DON'T NEED YOU!' Can you imagine how I felt hearing this? I called Mr [the husband]. Everything was good between us back then. He wasn't home, the kid wasn't in. And I think to myself, I must get on the first camionette [the popular name for the mini-buses which take the migrants back home] and I go back. AND FUCK THE HOURS! [this is the way that the migrants in Belgium describe the workplaces] I WILL NOT… I called one more time, it was four or five [p.m.]. Both he [the husband] and the kid were home. He had taken him over to his grandma. So I ask him: 'Sonny, why did you speak to me like that? Why? Did mum really leave you hungry, when she was with you for those four years in Poland? [the son:] 'No, but grandma said, that if I say so she will buy me nice trainers, and I really wanted to have them'. [the narrator's voice breaks down, she starts stuttering]. This is, this is, this this, yyyy… cause, cause I was just afraid of her, afraid. I was PETRIFIED. In the way you can be afraid of, and so I… I am still SOMETIMES, I AM STILL AFRAID OF HER! I AM STILL AFRAID OF THIS PERSON, BECAUSE HER TALKING CAN BE LIKE SCREAMING. And back then it was still good. For quite a long while it was good, but then she [the mother-in-law] started stirring and telling my husband that I don't send enough money, that if I sent five hundred euros per week then it would be enough. And someone gave me good advice: 'When you go back home, don't give him [the husband] any money, but just buy everything for the children, and don't give him cash, cause he will blow it'. And this is what I did, and this was the moment when automatically everything started falling apart. He called me 'HOMELESS' a few times, or 'GET THE FUCK OUT OF HERE, IT'S NOT YOUR HOUSE!'. (…) He was banishing me, was telling me that I was ALREADY homeless. IN FRONT OF THE CHILDREN… Really, I don't know… Once… [the narrator is crying] I was just… talking to a friend and she goes: 'You should take the kids. Cause he won't do anything [i.e. work]… He will be doing backyard politics [the husband belonged to the Self-Defense party, didn't work, and wasn't even looking for a job], and you or his mother will just carry on working for him. You should take the kids'. And I REALLY REGRET THIS. I should have done it maybe four year ago, maybe five, when it all started falling apart. I was thinking that maybe things will somehow work out, but later on I realised that this will all come to nothing, cause this… I was fooling myself that it will be good, that maybe…. But when I found a substitute for me and went to Poland for three months, and… IT WAS A SHOCK… The first month things were quite good, but then the grudges started, that I don't do anything, that I have no money, that I don't… But later I was just telling him, that it is a man's job to support the family, and the wife is to help in the care. And that's where it all started.

— RESEARCH REPORTS —

Selected Aspects of Norwegian Immigration Policy Towards Children

Karolina Nikielska-Sekuła*

This article, through the prism of immigration policy models proposed by Stephen Castles (1995), Steven Weldon (2005) and Liah Greenfeld (1998), discusses those aspects of Norwegian immigration policy that refer directly to children. Areas such as employment, education, housing and health care influence the situation of an immigrant family, which in turn affects the wellbeing of a child. However, it is the education system and the work of Child Welfare Services that most directly influence a child's position. Analysis presented in this article is based on the White Paper to the Norwegian Parliament, and data that were obtained in expert interviews and ethnographic observation in Akershus and Buskerud area in Norway, conducted between 2012 and 2014. The article raises the question whether the tools of immigration policy used by social workers and teachers lead to integration understood as an outcome of a pluralist or individualistic-civic model of immigration policy or are rather aimed at assimilation into Norwegian society, attempting to impose the effect of assimilation or the collectivistic-civic policy model.

Keywords: immigration policy; Norway; child welfare

Introduction

Migration processes in Norway have a long history dating back to the year 900 (Brochmann and Kjeldstadli 2008). Despite the common belief that immigration is a new phenomenon in Norway, the country has received incomers many times in the past, and was relatively homogeneous only in the post-war period (*ibidem*: 13–14). However, migration to Norway, as we have become accustomed to think of it today, refers to the flow of a 'new immigration' that began during the 1960s and 1970s. Currently, immigrants represent 13 per cent of Norwegian society and Norwegians born to immigrant parents amount to 2.6 per cent (SSB 2015b). They originate from 222 countries and independent regions (SSB 2015a) with the biggest groups coming from Poland, Sweden and Lithuania, while among Norwegians born to immigrant parents, the majority are of Pakistani, Somali and Iraqi origin. People of immigrant backgrounds inhabit all the municipalities in the country, but the biggest concentration of them has been observed in the capital city, Oslo (where 32 per cent of the population has a foreign background) and the city of Drammen (27 per cent) (*ibidem*).

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Mobility processes affect not only adults but also children. 13.6 per cent of all children living in Norway are immigrants themselves or have an immigrant background. 96 100 children and youths aged 0–22 are migrants themselves and 101 800 were born in the country to immigrant parents (Dyrhaug and Sky 2015: 4).

Enabling young people to gain language proficiency and a deep understanding of their new culture aids their successful integration into the new society and helps to avoid the common problems facing first-generation newcomers. For the state, from an economic point of view, it implies lower costs in terms of immigration policy and social benefits in the future, as well as higher income from taxes. As some studies show (Froy and Pyne 2011), well-educated youths with immigrant backgrounds are more likely to be successful in the labour market in the future than those with poor socio-cultural capital. Therefore, children and youths should be considered as an important target of immigration policy. This importance of children and youths as actors of mobility processes is reflected in the research on the subject. They are often discussed with reference to their health problems (Sam 1994; Sam and Berry 1995; Brunvand and Brunvatne 2001); the accompanying Child Welfare Services (Kalve 2001); the work of Norwegian immigration officials and their cultural blindness (Engebrigtsen 2003); the political alienation of non-Western students (Solhaug 2012); school achievements and education (Lauglo 1999; Bratsberg, Raaum and Røed 2012); housing conditions (Løwe 2008); and identity issues, including a sense of belonging and gender construction among immigrant youths (Andersson 2002; Prieur 2002; Mainsah 2011). With regard to the adaptation of immigrant children and youths to Norwegian society, some excellent research was conducted by Iduun Seland (2011) in her PhD thesis in which she discusses the role of primary school in creating national identity and its impact on how well immigrant youths adapt to the new society.

However, the existing studies, especially those published in English, focus either on official recommendations or on the effects of immigrant youth acculturation in Norway. Little has been said about the actual practices of teachers, municipalities and Child Welfare Services officers aimed at immigrant children and youths, even if the teaching plans and governmental recommendations are thoroughly analysed (see Seland 2011). Recognising the significance of existing works on the subject, this article aims to bridge the gap between theoretical discussion of immigration policy[1] and analysis of that policy's results, such as immigrant pupils' school achievements, challenges and identity construction, as well as their later adaptation to the labour market. The article seeks to contribute to a better understanding of the adaptation of youths in Norway by presenting declared practices of the teachers and officers in schools, Child Welfare Services and municipalities, which are aimed at facilitating immigrant youths' functioning in the host society. The aim is thus to provide the missing link between the assumptions of the immigration policy and its results. The practices are discussed with regard to academic models of immigration policies that are described broadly in the following section. The article seeks to answer the question whether the tools used by the schools, municipalities and Child Welfare Services actually lead to integration or rather aim at the assimilation of immigrant youths into the host society. To avoid definitional inaccuracies, the author refers to adaptation as any kind of immigrant adjustment to the host society without indicating its features. Integration will be regarded as an outcome of adaptation to the host society within the pluralist or individualistic-civic model of immigration policy. Assimilation will be understood as a consequence of adaptation within the assimilation or collectivistic-civic model of immigration policy. The article is based on data obtained from an ethnographic observation in Drammen conducted between 2012–2014, semi-structured expert interviews with a bilingual teacher from Bærum municipality, an expert from the Norwegian Directorate for Children, Youth and Family Affairs in Oslo, an expert of minor language education based in Oslo, an expert from Drammen municipality, a school teacher from a school with low immigrant numbers in Akershus, and a school teacher from a school with high immigrant numbers in Buskerud. The interviews were conducted between 2012 and 2014[2] and interlocutors were chosen with the purpose

of representing a diversity of tasks, structural levels and work conditions. Additionally, besides available academic works and reports on the subject, the article makes use of the White Paper to the Norwegian Parliament issued on 26 October 2012 and entitled *A Comprehensive Integration Policy: Diversity and Community* (hereafter: *A Comprehensive...* 2012). A White Paper is a document that presents current government policy on a particular subject but, at the same time, it invites comments and reflection concerning the issues it covers. Regarding the ethnographic data, the interviews and the text of the White Paper itself, a content analysis has been conducted. The threads concerning immigrant youths were identified and analysed in the context of immigration policy models described below and they are presented in the third section.

Taking into account the qualitative nature of this study, the reader must understand certain limitations of this article. Particular practices may differ from municipality to municipality according to the actual needs of their population. Consequently, this article does not seek to provide a comprehensive policy review. Rather, it discusses, through the prism of theoretical models of immigration policies, chosen aspects of the official recommendations for immigrant children and youth adaptation and links these to the practices of social workers, teachers and experts working with immigrants, analysing how the recommendations have been implemented.

The first section of this article presents theoretical models of immigration policies drawn up by Stephen Castles (1995), Steven Weldon (2006) and Liah Greenfeld (1998), which form the framework of the discussion. The second section, based on the 2012 White Paper to the Norwegian Parliament and available academic works and reports, presents the main goals of Norwegian immigration policy. The third section discusses, through the prism of adaptation theories, elements of the policy aimed at children and youths, such as the education system and the work of Child Welfare Services, and links them to the practices of social workers, teachers and experts. In the final section, the author discusses whether the tools used by the practitioners lead to the integration or assimilation of immigrant children and youths, answering the question raised at the beginning of this article. This section also invites other researchers to engage in further discussion on the adequacy of these tools for the purposes of future immigration policy.

Three models of immigration policy: where does Norway fit in?

Immigration policies of Western European countries, as some scholars argue, are convergent, having similar solutions for dealing with growing immigration waves (Mahning and Wimmer 2000). Recent studies based upon the dimensions of the cultural and legal rights of immigrants have developed a general typology of citizenship regimes (Weldon 2006) which corresponds to the actual immigration policies of particular countries. Those ideal types, even if based on similar general assumptions, can be translated into the different actual conditions of an immigrant in a host society, and they influence among other things the social tolerance of that society and the acquisition of social capital by the immigrants themselves in the host country (Weldon 2006; Lupo 2010). Stephen Castles (1995) labels them as differential exclusionist, assimilation and pluralist models while Steven Weldon (2006: 334), after Liah Greenfeld (1998), puts them respectively as collectivistic-ethnic, collectivistic-civic and individualistic-civic regimes. Although the regimes refer to the ways citizenship is granted in particular countries, following other scholars (see Weldon 2006; Lupo 2010), the author treats them as a set of factors that influence the final model of an immigrant's adaptation to the host society.

The differential exclusionist or collectivistic-ethnic model assumes that citizenship is equivalent to ethnicity. One therefore cannot gain or lose citizenship (Weldon 2006: 334) and countries which follow that model aim to prevent permanent settlement and they treat immigrants as 'guest workers' (*ibidem*; Castles 1995: 293). This model does not provide any type of adaptation of immigrants to the host society. The assimilation or collectivistic-civic model is based on the idea of loyalty towards the national state which is understood as a political community (Weldon 2006: 334). Citizenship is not granted exclusively to people of a particular

ethnic background and immigrants are provided with instruments to facilitate assimilation into the host society and are expected to 'give up their distinctive cultural characteristics' (Weldon 2006: 334). The language of the native population is to be used by immigrants, and immigrant children are entitled to participate in the mainstream education system (Castles 1995). Any cultural traditions may only be maintained in private. The outcome of adaptation within the framework of this model is often referred to as assimilation and it does not provide a way of expressing the culture of origin in public. Countries following the third model of policy, pluralist or individualistic-civic, which is sometimes also called multicultural, grant *jus soli* citizenship upon birth and permit cultural diversity among its citizens by providing them with the right to express their cultural traditions publicly (Weldon 2006: 335). This model, out of the three described here, is according to Stephen Castles (1995) the most fruitful when it comes to successful adaptation of immigrants into the host society and its outcome has traditionally been referred as integration .

In the case of Norway, the assimilation model of immigration policy was officially rejected in 1980 (Hagelund 2002: 407) and the state decided to take responsibility for maintaining the cultures of minorities living in Norway. Some scholars (Akkerman and Hagelund 2007: 197–198) propose to call Norwegian immigration policy 'de facto multiculturalism'. This notion refers to the actual actions of the government which aims to include immigrants in society; however, this is without labelling the policy officially as multiculturalism. A similar belief is also present in a common discourse that assumes that the immigration policy of Scandinavian countries generally reflects multiculturalism and is aimed at *integration*. Nevertheless, the fact that the *jus soli* citizenship principle has never been given to children born to immigrant parents in Norway disqualifies the country from representing fully the pluralist or individualistic-civic model. To obtain citizenship a number of requirements must be fulfilled. Immigrants among others must reside in Norway for a minimum of seven years out of the last ten years; they have to acquire a good command of the Norwegian language and possess knowledge of Norwegian society.[3] In the case of children born to immigrant parents, citizenship is awarded together with the citizenship of the parents, unless a child applies for it themselves at age 12 or over.

The targets of Norwegian immigration policy are both the immigrants and the host population. Its goal is not only to facilitate the life of an immigrant but also to change attitudes in Norwegian society towards cultural diversity (Østberg 2008: 51). The policy recognises the right to diversity and the right to disagree which, in turn, fully reflects the principles of the pluralist or individualistic-civic model of adaptation. The policy attempts to prevent discrimination and solve the problem of high crime rates among young male immigrants through access to education. Immigrants in Norway are granted the right to express their cultural and religious traditions. All actions must, however, be in accordance with Norwegian law and central Norwegian values.

Traditionally Statistics Norway (SSB 2015b), and after it, many other reports and publications, follow the general division between so-called 'Western' and 'non-Western' immigrants, classifying them nowadays into these two main groups according to the country of origin: 'The EU28/EEA, USA, Canada, Australia and New Zealand' and 'Asia, Africa, Latin America, Oceania except Australia and New Zealand, and Europe except the EU28/EEA' (SSB 2015b). In a public discourse in Norway, members of these two groups are *implicitly* ascribed different characteristics and problems; 'non-Western' immigrants are considered to generate costs for the Norwegian state and to be culturally distinctive (see Storhaug 2013). Even though Norwegian immigration policy is aimed at all immigrants, the latter group from Asia, Africa, Latin America and Oceania, except Australia and New Zealand, might be seen as the policy's main target. This article discusses the problems of children and youths originating from different ethnic backgrounds, and from both immigrant groups. It should, however, be underlined that some of the problems described are relevant only for particular ethnic groups and there are groups of immigrants such as Swedes who might generally not have any adaptation problems, being rather irrelevant as a target of the immigration policy's actions.

The principal values of Norwegian immigration policy are the values widespread in Norwegian society, such as 'gender equality, equal rights, freedom of speech, freedom of religion and belief, solidarity, socio-economic equality, tolerance, participation in working life, democracy and civil society, protection of children's rights' (*A Comprehensive…* 2012: 12). Over the years the main goal of Norwegian immigration policy has been the participation and inclusion of immigrants into society, equality and providing rights and duties towards the society equal to the host population (Østberg 2008: 69–70). Today, besides these principles, another aspect has been added. As the 2012 White Paper to the Norwegian Parliament puts it, cultural diversity and multilingualism are treated as resources that contribute to the development of Norwegian society. Language competence and employment are seen as a basis for successful adaptation by the newcomers (Østberg 2008: 70). The White Paper underlines the fact that the presence of immigrants in Norway contributes to the economic growth of society, provided they are employed. It also outlines the negative consequences for the whole society that can arise as a result of the detrimental situation of immigrants, such as the increased costs of social benefits and loss of taxation revenue. The document calls everyone who is settled in Norway Norwegian, regardless of their ethnic background.

As Hagelund (2003) argues, Norway, like Denmark, has struggled with many questions concerning multicultural immigration policy, in contrast to Sweden that has declared multiculturalism to be official immigration policy.[4] Taking into account this statement, as well as the examples mentioned previously, it might be said that classifying Norwegian immigration policy as reflecting multiculturalism is not as simple as it might be regarded in common discourse. This article rejects the assumption according to which Norwegian immigration policy reflects multiculturalism or, following the terminology proposed at the beginning of this section, the pluralist or individualistic-civic model of immigration policy. Starting from this viewpoint, it seeks to analyse those aspects of immigration policy that refer to youths and to answer the question whether those aspects and their practical solutions lead to integration, understood in the way it is regarded in a pluralist or individualistic-civic policy model, or rather that they reflect the features of other models.

The framework of Norwegian immigration policy

We begin by sketching the overall framework of Norwegian immigration policy. The framework provided below is based mainly on the 2012 White Paper to the Norwegian Parliament (*Meld. St. 6…* 2012). The intention is to present the recent views of the government on the presence of immigrants and compare them to the practical solutions in the field.

One of the areas of interest of Norwegian immigration policy covered by the White Paper is employment. Norway recognises its own need for an immigrant workforce and aims to provide good employment conditions for newcomers, since having immigrants in labour market favourably affects the economic situation of the country. Moreover, 'employment is the key to participation, financial independence and equality' (*A Comprehensive…* 2012: 4) for immigrants and it contributes to their general wellbeing and that of their families. Access to job positions must not be limited by ethnic background or gender and all newcomers must be able to utilise their skills in employment. Women's participation in the labour market is especially underlined.

Another important area mentioned in the 2012 White Paper is education and equal opportunities for children with an immigrant background. Full access to education and provision of solutions fitting the particular needs of immigrant children are prioritised by the policy. Successful education can lead to a rewarding job or career. Immigrant children are provided with the necessary tools to reach language competence such as introductory classes where they can learn Norwegian before they start school, and they are encouraged to take part in extracurricular activities which contribute to their socialisation into the new environment. Children born in Norway to immigrant parents are invited to kindergartens which are seen as the best way to develop language

competence. Basic human rights of immigrant children and youths, such as the right to health care and housing, non-discrimination and the right to choose a livelihood are of high importance for the 2012 White Paper. This involves youths' participation in everyday activities of young people in Norway, such as meeting friends, taking part in sports activities and continuing education, as well as the right to decide about one's own body and the right to choose a spouse. No less important is recognising the specific health problems of particular ethnic groups and providing housing facilities for the arriving families that are located in different areas of the city so as to avoid ghettoisation of some districts and the consequent social exclusion of immigrants (see Eriksen 1997).

All the areas discussed above – employment, education, housing and health care – influence the situation of immigrant families[5] which consequently affects the wellbeing of children themselves. However, it is the education system and the focus on providing equal opportunities and specific freedoms that are the core issues of immigration policy aimed at children and youths. Therefore, the focus in this article will be the school system and the adaptation support given to immigrant children by municipalities and Child Welfare Services.

Children in Norwegian immigration policy

The education system

An important goal of the Norwegian government is to ensure that all children have a good command of Norwegian when they start school (*Meld. St. 23…* 2009). The education system is thus a crucial arena for immigration policy: '[I]n the first instance it is to prepare students for participation in society as adults and give them the knowledge they need to be independent and autonomous individuals' (Seland 2011: 60, author's translation). Norwegian schools, with Norwegian as the language of instruction, are known for their individualistic approach, where children are responsible for their own school achievements and development of their individual talents (see Ślusarczyk, Nikielska-Sekuła 2014). This individualism is also reflected in immigration policy, which encourages the adjustment of teaching methods to the needs of a particular pupil (*Meld. St. 6…* 2012: 56). It is in school where most children and youths with immigrant backgrounds who arrive later in their life meet the host society for the first time, and where children born to immigrant parents in Norway may gain full language competence and knowledge of the society their parents have chosen to bring them up in. There is a clear difference between the needs of the former and the latter group. Children who immigrated later in their life usually meet language barriers which affect their school achievements and social adaptation. In their case, help with learning Norwegian is necessary. Norwegian immigration policy recommends provision of language support for those who face language barriers:

> *From August 2012 the Education Law was introduced according to which municipalities and counties should be able to establish special training programmes for newcomer minority students*, such as *introductory classes. The purpose of the introductory offer is to enable students to learn Norwegian* quickly *so that they can participate in regular education. The training organised as an introductory offer canno*t last *longer than two years for an individual student* (Meld. St. 6… 2012: 56, author's translation).

Municipalities and counties are responsible for adjusting language support to the particular needs of children in their area. This is usually solved in two ways – either introductory classes (*innføringsklasser*) in Norwegian taught in a group, or bilingual teachers employed to support children individually. Sometimes both options may be used. The role of bilingual teachers is to explain the difficulties of the subjects discussed at school and

to help immigrants reach proficiency in Norwegian. Meeting with a teacher usually takes place after school. Introductory classes gather children from immigrant backgrounds who do not speak Norwegian, usually of a similar age, and they are taught Norwegian for the period of time that is necessary for a particular student to start at a regular school. Such language support, according to the 2012 White Paper, can be used by a child for no longer than two years. Sometimes, however, this period may be longer in some municipalities. As a school teacher from Akershus explains, in her school the help of a bilingual teacher is provided for much longer than stated in the 2012 White Paper: 'They [immigrant children] have that supporting teacher only for three years. And then they can prolong it up to five, I think, years but in very special cases' (School teacher 1).

Such language support is usually not necessary for children born in Norway to immigrant parents, thanks to their attending kindergartens. As the White Paper strongly underlines, immigrant children's participation in kindergartens must be prioritised because this is where they can socialise with Norwegian society and reach a level of language proficiency that enables them to start school with no fewer resources than native Norwegian children have: 'Participation in a qualified kindergarten has positive effects on children's language development and social skills, which is important for children of immigrant backgrounds, so that they can have the same resources for learning as other pupils when they start school'. (*Meld. St. 6…* 2012: 51, author's translation). The same conclusion drives an expert report: *Diversity and Mastery – Multilingual Children, Young People and Adults in the Education and Training System*:

> *There is a broad consensus that participation in kindergarten is positive for children's later participation and mastery of skills in education, employment and generally in society. The kindergarten is the most important arena for language stimulation for children of pre-school age. The linguistic foundation laid in early childhood is of fundamental importance for children's social skills and their later learning* (Østberg 2008: 74, author's translation).

From 2009, all children were granted a place at kindergarten as soon as they turned 1 (*Meld. St. 6…* 2012: 51). This applies also to children from immigrant backgrounds and it is the responsibility of municipalities and counties to provide as many places as needed. Immigrant children, however, are under-represented among all kindergarten participants and it applies especially to younger children. 95.1 per cent of all 3-year-old children living in Norway attend kindergarten compared to 83.7 per cent in the same age group of immigrant children. In the 2-year-old group, the differences are even greater – 88 per cent of the mainstream population compared to 59.4 per cent among the minority population (*ibidem*). The government's migration policy is aimed at encouraging immigrant parents to send their children to kindergarten in early childhood. It suggests, for example, that good information sheets should be provided and distributed in health care centres (*Meld. St. 6…* 2012: 52). Moreover, since 2006 some areas inhabited by a significant number of children from immigrant backgrounds have been given funds for free core time at kindergarten. In 2012, selected areas were provided with 20 free hours at kindergarten per week, per child from the area (*ibidem*: 53). The goal was to ensure that children from immigrant backgrounds start school with the same opportunities as native Norwegian children. As evaluation of the project has proved, the number of immigrant children in kindergartens has increased and girls who took part in such programmes in the past have had better grades at school than those who did not (*ibidem*).

Another option for parents who do not want to benefit from standard kindergartens is the so-called 'open kindergarten' designed for children aged 0–6. A child may attend an open kindergarten accompanied by a parent who takes care of him/her. No registration is needed and a small fee is required. Open kindergartens are also an opportunity to learn Norwegian for children from immigrant backgrounds.

The official recommendations in Norwegian immigration policy seek to create a positive environment of inclusion and equality in kindergartens and schools, reflecting the pluralist model of integration. Diversity and

multiculturalism are seen as a resource, not a limitation, and values such as democracy and tolerance should be intrinsic to the school and kindergarten systems. Everybody should feel included (*Meld. St. 6...* 2012: 48–49). However, to obtain those goals, staff at the kindergartens and schools must have the aptitude to stimulate multilingual development in the daily life of the kindergarten and school and share an enthusiasm for cultural diversity. Moreover, they need to understand what it means to be bilingual.[6] The government thus sees the need to increase the competences of school staff and the people responsible for the functioning of schools and kindergartens in the municipalities. It also proposes education of teachers in a multicultural pedagogy and notes that knowledge of central policy documents is a must in order to attain the goals of immigration policy (*ibidem*: 51). The responsibility for enforcing government recommendations is put on municipalities and counties. They are expected to follow general suggestions formulated in official policy guidelines and adjust them to the particular needs of children and youths living in the area. For that reason, actual solutions may differ from municipality to municipality according to the budgets available and the needs of their populations. These solutions, however, should be based on the same principles of equality and inclusion.

Migration studies indicate that language proficiency has proved to be a crucial tool for participation in society (see White 2011). For that reason, the quest for proficiency of immigrants in Norwegian should be seen positively. Equal access to education is without doubt a sign of a pluralistic model of immigration policy. However, a strong focus on Norwegian as a teaching language concedes the assumptions of an assimilation or collectivistic-civic model (Lupo 2010: 77). Let us look more closely at the role of cultural diversity in the education system in order to be able to draw conclusions as to which model of immigration policy drives the adaptation tools used by the staff of Norwegian educational institutions.

Cultural and language diversity at school

An example of a school where traditions relating to pupil background are marked and valued is a school[7] in Drammen attended by a significant number of immigrant children. On the facade of the school 52 foreign flags representing pupils' countries of origin are displayed. Such attitudes towards multiculturalism overlap with the goals of immigration policy according to which diversity should be seen as a resource for Norwegian society and this definitely reflects a pluralist model. It should, however, be underlined that this school may be seen as unique due to its location in an immigrant neighbourhood. Actions taken by the school are not only aimed at the immigrant population but they also promote immigrant traditions among the majority population, thus broadening native Norwegian knowledge of immigrant cultures. Such a mutual understanding is necessary in order to create an environment of real equal opportunities regardless of ethnic background.

Another aspect of pluralism in the Norwegian education system is the declared role of the mother tongue. Norwegian immigration policy recognises the mother tongue as an important tool in learning Norwegian (*Meld. St. 6...* 2012: 50). As one bilingual teacher says, a good command of the child's mother tongue facilitates an understanding of Norwegian by giving a child a reference point of learned concepts. That is why kindergartens are obliged to support the use of the mother tongue by their immigrant pupils (*ibidem*: 52). It is possible to take an exam in a foreign language at secondary school to gain proficiency in one's own mother tongue. There are 14 foreign languages available as an option and there are plans to extend this to other languages. In addition, there is the possibility of studying the mother tongue at school, and this usually happens through meetings with a bilingual teacher:

Usually a bilingual teacher teaches the mother tongue. This is how it works in other municipalities. Where I work, however, my task is to assist children in regular learning so the learning of their mother tongue takes place indirectly. (...) It has been changed here. After the adaptation class, when a child starts at the

seventh grade, his or her Norwegian is inadequate to the requirements and [is poor] in comparison to the Norwegian spoken by other children. These [immigrant] children lack the basic concepts required for learning! That is why it has been changed here and my task is to reach Norwegian through the mother tongue (bilingual teacher, author's translation).

Moreover, a number of online resources for teachers and parents in multicultural education have been developed. NAFO's[8] home page (www.nafo.hioa.no) contains general information and tips for multicultural education for parents and teachers. The Centre has also launched a website www.morsmål.no that consists of teaching resources for schools and parents in Norwegian and 13 other languages spoken among immigrants. Each language has its own sub-page where a set of subjects and information is displayed in both Norwegian and the mother tongue.[9]

The Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, with a view to minority needs, has designed online dictionaries (www.lexin.udir.no) of both varieties of Norwegian – Bokmål and Nynorsk. The offer contains translations into 16 languages spoken by minority groups in Norway. Resources in the mother tongue are also available in local libraries, especially in areas populated by a significant number of immigrants. For example, in Drammen, the libraries subscribe to the Turkish newspaper *Zaman*. Foreign books, movies and music, as well as resources to learn Norwegian are also available.

The crucial position of the child's mother tongue as a tool that helps to develop Norwegian among bilingual children and the role of kindergartens in the learning process is confirmed by the practitioners:

[I]t is believed that if the mother tongue is well developed then on the basis of its well-developed concepts second, third and fourth languages are quickly built. (...) This applies to children not born here [in Norway] even though immigrant children born here do not speak Norwegian either, because they are not sent to the kindergartens, and they do not integrate and hence grow up within co-national groups. Obviously, the mother tongue determines the successful learning of Norwegian (bilingual teacher, author's translation).

Parents are encouraged to discuss subjects covered at school with their children in their own language, since it contributes to a better understanding of new concepts in Norwegian introduced during the classes (Ślusarczyk and Nikielska-Sekuła 2014).

Recognising language diversity in schools and underlining the status of the mother tongue in learning Norwegian could not happen in a school system that is aimed at strict assimilation. The existence of bilingual teachers and the availability of teaching and reading resources in minority languages points to the pluralist model of immigration policy. However, as the experience of a bilingual teacher shows, the classes designed for developing the mother tongue usually take the form of tutoring in Norwegian. This opinion is reiterated by a minority education expert based in Oslo:

In my opinion, (...) teaching the mother tongue in schools in not fully respected in Norway. They call the form of class with a bilingual teacher tuition in the mother tongue. However, this has nothing to do with teaching the mother tongue in fact. The real form of mother tongue teaching appears and disappears all the time. It all depends on the financial state of the municipality (minor languages education expert, author's translation).

The Norwegian education system does recognise the cultural diversity of the pupils and allows for its maintenance as long as the prioritised goals of adaptation such as Norwegian language proficiency have been fulfilled.

As the statements of the bilingual teachers and the minor languages education expert show, in practice, some schools often do not take responsibility for mother tongue development in immigrant pupils, leaving that task to the individual or his/her family. What is provided is rather tuition in Norwegian or general school subjects that is done with use of mother tongue. But mother tongue classes *sensu stricto* are rarely provided, according to the experience of the above-mentioned experts. There is thus a divergence in some schools and municipalities between official recommendations that reflect the pluralist model of immigration policy and school practices that are aimed primarily at assimilation into the host school system, which is seen as a condition *sine qua non* for educational success.

Equal opportunities and freedom of choice

Norwegian immigration policy seeks to provide equal development and freedom of choice for all children and youths from immigrant backgrounds. Such freedom is seen as fundamental in a democratic system.

> *The government is committed to facilitating young girls and boys making independent decisions about their lives and their futures, for example when it comes to education, career and a choice of a spouse. Government provision that parents and caregivers support young people's independent life choices is central to young people's freedom of choice* (*Meld. St. 6…* 2012: 88, author's translation).

These goals are in the author's opinion consistent with the problem of multiculturalism raised by Unni Wikan in her book *Generous Betrayal: Politics of Culture in the New Europe* (2002). Wikan criticises Norway for not protecting its own citizens from immigrant backgrounds, in the name of political correctness, and maintaining their cultures of origin. Indeed, in many cases, there is a conflict between the right of a group to maintain its culture and the right of an individual to choose his/her own way of life. Immigration policy seems to attempt to resolve that conflict by stressing that children's and youths' freedom of choice must be prioritised. There are special programmes to limit forced marriage and genital mutilation.[10] Also, the situation of LGBT[11] youths is taken into consideration in the official policy guidelines. LGBT children with conservative relatives may experience abuse and exclusion from the family and therefore should be provided with help from trained personnel from Child Welfare Services (*Meld. St. 6…* 2012: 79).

Freedom applies also to more everyday situations such as participation in peer groups and attending extracurricular activities. These opportunities can be limited especially (but not exclusively) for girls of particular ethnic backgrounds who may not be allowed to meet friends after school or take part in sports activities together with boys. Some municipalities, such as Drammen, make special arrangements to solve this problem by organising activities for women only or providing 'female hours' at sports centres such as swimming pools. Findings obtained by the author from the interviews conducted in 2014 with first-, second- and third-generation immigrants in Drammen show that 'female hours' and the existence of female gyms contributes positively to the sporting activity of women.

All children, regardless of ethnic background, are granted access to help from Child Welfare Services. As an expert from the Norwegian Directorate for Children, Youth and Family Affairs in Oslo argues, some teenagers of particular ethnic background may become the wards of Child Welfare Services due to the difficult situation of maintaining their freedom within their families. They may be provided separate housing facilities where they can live without pressure from the family, even at the age of 15:

> *In some families, the parents want to have much more control of the children than Norwegian children have. And then we work a lot to see what kind of support we can give to those families. And not very often,*

but it happens, the child is taken from the family and social welfare gives the child another place to live. Not in another family or in the institution, but this was for a 15-year-old, and they got help to live in their own apartment or rather in their own room. (...) Depending on their age, they can live together with one or two other children [in the same situation] and they are in touch with a social welfare officer who looks after them (...). This can happen, from my own experience, if the family is very strong, if they don't allow a child to go out, if they put on a child very strong control. Also if they beat a child or put them in a forced marriage situation (...). Or if a child comes to school with no food or is beaten. But this is based on my experience (expert from Norwegian Directorate for Children, Youth and Family Affairs).

This expert claims that sometimes the power of the services is misused due to lack of understanding of cultural nuances:

There were some demonstrations in Norway against our Child Welfare System. People think that we lack competence to assist immigrants. That we use our Norwegian glasses and take children from immigrant families. Some of this is right. I think that the social welfare system in Norway lacks competence in dealing with immigrant families. We do. It is not as bad as they say, but yes. In many [regional] institutions the staff are white, Norwegian, middle class…and are not trained, they don't understand other cultures (expert from Norwegian Directorate for Children, Youth and Family Affairs).

As an answer to that problem, the government suggests introducing training aimed at a better understanding of other cultures (see Meld. St. 6… 2012: 77). This suggestion expresses the pluralist immigration policy model by recognising cultural differences in raising a child and, as Wikan (2002) argues, these pluralist ideas do not always provide the best solutions for vulnerable individuals. On the other hand, the assimilation model that is often reinforced by Child Welfare Services in their practical actions, as exemplified above, does not allow the family to raise the child in their own way. Presented practices of Child Welfare Services' workers show that the preferred upbringing model is based on Norwegian values and that it is expected to lead to assimilation into the host society by sharing those principles. The family is encouraged to maintain its ethnic traditions, provided they do not interfere with the widely held values of Norwegian society.

Extracurricular activities

Extracurricular activities are tools of socialisation into society and they are frequented by children in Norway. Unfortunately, participation in them is not free and not all families can afford it. For that reason and also because of different views within families as to how children should spend their free time, some children may feel excluded. This applies especially to children from immigrant backgrounds whose families are over-represented in low-income groups. The government seeks to ensure that all children have a chance to develop their interests and be engaged in different activities. 'It is interest, not social background, gender or an experience of discrimination, that will determine to what extent and where [and in which activities] children participate' (*Meld. St. 6...* 2012: 75, author's translation). In 2012, two counties introduced free cards for extracurricular activities for children. Expanding this project to the whole country could be of great help for many immigrant families. As one bilingual teacher notes, some children of Polish origin in Norway do not participate in extracurricular activities because their parents do not understand the importance of these activities to Norwegian society. Since the character of their migration was economic, they don't want to spend money on something they assume to be unnecessary. Another reason for skipping extracurricular activities frequented by ethnic

Norwegian children, as observed by a school teacher from Buskerud among some pupils of Turkish origin, is their participation in a time-consuming Qur'anic School:

> *Because many parents choose that children should attend Qur'anic School, they miss a lot of their free time and do not get an opportunity to participate in [extracurricular] activities together with others from the class. Qur'anic School takes the whole afternoon, because there is both teaching and homework there. It takes place four to five times per week. So there is no time left for socialisation.* (School teacher 2, author's translation)

As the statement above shows, activities referring to ethnic cultures of children from minority backgrounds are seen by some practitioners as a limitation, not an opportunity for socialisation. Immigrant children and youths are thus expected to share the interests of ethnic Norwegian youths by taking part in the same extracurricular activities. This is an attitude recognised in the assimilation model of adaptation of immigrants to the host country.

According to an expert from the Drammen municipality, having a meeting place after school hours where children from immigrant backgrounds can develop their talents and proficiency in Norwegian is crucial for successful adaptation. The municipality decided to launch a project called Fjell 2020 which is aimed at having more people from the Fjell area in Drammen at work in 2020 than there were in 2010. One of the goals is to build a hall which will be a meeting place providing opportunities to develop individual skills.

> *There will be a big hall (...) [b]ut additionally we will have a school close by. So some of the school's functions such as the school kitchen, music room, drawing room or others will perhaps be located in the hall. Moreover, the library will also be placed there (...). There will be a big library there and we are thinking about running a cafeteria around it, or the club that we already have with afternoon activities (...). This will become a meeting place for children, youths and elderly people* (expert from Drammen municipality – author's translation).

As an example of Drammen municipality, where the population of immigrants is high, shows government suggestions to try to meet the goals of immigration policy are treated seriously. According to the author's ethnographic observations conducted between 2012–2014 in Drammen, immigrant children benefit from their right to maintain their culture of origin by wearing traditional clothes during activities organised by local libraries and they have access to resources in their mother tongue. Simultaneously, they are provided with a cultural and sports option where they can participate in activities organised by the associations that represent their cultures of origin. However, as the example of the Qur'anic School shows, 'ethnic activities' are not seen by some teachers as a valuable platform for a child's adaptation where they can develop their identity and sense of belonging to a group of origin. As it has been argued in this article, some educational workers would prefer them to follow activities frequented by the majority population. Such an attitude reflects assumptions of the assimilation model of adaptation.

Conclusion

Through the prism of immigration policy models defined by Castles (1995), Weldon (2006) and Greenfeld (1998), this article has discussed certain aspects of Norwegian immigration policy directed at children, such as the education system, the work of Child Welfare Services, and children and youths' right to freedom of choice and access to extracurricular activities. It has been argued that the official recommendations of the

policy incorporate a pluralist model of adaptation, whereby immigrant children and youths should be provided with equal rights to education, Child Welfare Services and extracurricular activities. What is more, the government has declared that it will take on the responsibility of maintaining the mother tongue of minority pupils by suggesting the introduction of mother tongue classes in schools. It also gave minority pupils the right to express their culture of origin in public. However, the practice of teachers and social workers has proved that many of the adaptation tools that are in use are aimed at assimilation, not integration. The mother tongue classes often serve as a Norwegian language learning opportunity, extracurricular activities dedicated to some aspects of minority cultures are undervalued and the actions of Child Welfare Services are aimed at putting into effect the model of upbringing possibly closest to, or at least not interfering with, a Norwegian one. The right to maintain the cultural background is seen by the practitioners as a limitation rather than an opportunity and resource, and is welcomed only if the assimilationist goals have been reached and as long as it does not interfere with common Norwegian values. Such attitudes of teachers and social workers might stem from sceptical social attitudes towards immigrants and their cultures. As some scholars argue, discrimination against immigrants has been present in Norway (see Brox 1991; Wikan 1995, 2002; Andersson 2003; Alghasi, Eriksen and Ghorashi 2009). Traditionally, the discrimination debate which took place in Norway in the 1990s had two sides (Eriksen 1996). One side supported the idea that a strong maintenance of 'culture of origin' among immigrants limits or even prevents their successful adaptation. The other side blamed unsuccessful adaptation on ethnic discrimination against immigrants on the part of the host society. Attitudes observed among practitioners that underestimate the importance of pupils' cultural background and treat it as a limitation of adaptation would appear to echo the former side of the debate.

As Stephen Castles (1995) argues, integration is the most successful result of immigration policy. Taking that statement into account, this article invites scholars to engage in a discussion on the role of the adaptation tools being used in Norway at the present time. The question that arises here is whether the tools aimed at assimilation and attitudes of those practitioners who seem to value assimilation over integration, as it was argued in the third section of this article, may cause problems faced by immigrant pupils, such as poor school achievements.

As Marianne Gullestad (2002: 20) argues, the notion of integration is complex and requires caution while using it. It has recently made excellent headway in both academic discourse and in public debates concerning immigrants. Because of this, and in line with many other scientific notions that have been introduced to everyday use and are generally accepted, the concept of immigration has lost its original meaning whereby it was viewed as a pluralist adaptation to the host society, and has become a vague and problematic concept. Some scholars even argue (Ibanez 2015) that the notion of 'integration' often serves as a euphemism for assimilation masked as political correctness. This article has shown that the existing terminology is confusing and what is commonly called integration may express values traditionally assigned to assimilation. Consequently, it seems that Migration Studies, especially those studies focusing on immigration policies, either need a revision of their terminology or should use existing notions reflexively. The discussion of that problem, however, is beyond the scope of this article.

Notes

[1] For a comprehensive analysis of immigration policy discourse in Norway see Hagelund (2002, 2003).

[2] The fieldwork was conducted as part of the author's doctoral project financed by Telemark University College in Norway. Nevertheless, some expert interviews were conducted with the cooperation of Dr Magdalena Ślusarczyk as preparatory work to the project *Doing Family in Transnational Context. Demographic*

Choices, Welfare Adaptations, School Integration and Every-Day Life of Polish Families Living in Polish–Norwegian Transnationality held at the Department of Population Studies at Jagiellonian University in Poland. See also Ślusarczyk and Nikielska-Sekuła (2014).

[3] For citizens of other Nordic countries there are other requirements (see *Lov om norsk statsborgerskap*).

[4] For the discussion on immigration policies of three Scandinavian countries, Denmark, Sweden and Norway, see Brochmann and Hagelund (2010).

[5] The notion 'immigrant family' refers in this article to families where at least the parents have migrated to Norway. The notion 'immigrant children and youth' refers to both children who have migrated themselves, accompanied or not by adults, and children born in Norway to two immigrant parents.

[6] There is an observed tendency, supported by the immigration policy, of hiring people from immigrant backgrounds in kindergartens. This surely contributes to the multicultural environment of education, reaching a goal of 'mirroring the society' (see *Meld. St. 6...* 2012: 48). However, some of the hired staff have been living in Norway for a relatively short period and they lack full language competence, having learnt Norwegian from fellow staff members or native Norwegian pupils rather than being trained to teach it. The question that is raised here is how the presence of the staff that do not have proficiency in Norwegian may influence the language development of children in kindergartens.

[7] 44 per cent of the population in the school neighbourhood are of immigrant origin (Høydahl 2014).

[8] *Nasjonalt Senter for Flerkulturell Opplæring* (National Centre for Multicultural Learning).

[9] An example covers deciduous and coniferous trees, containing suggestions for teachers in Norwegian and Turkish, text on the subject and a task sheet with pictures. Another topic concerns acids and alkalis, comprising a set of facts on the subject in Norwegian and Polish.

[10] See for example: *Handlingsplan mot tvangsekteskap* (*Action Plan Against Forced Marriage*) (2008–2011); *Handlingsplan mot kjønnslemlestelse* (*Action Plan Against Genital Mutilation*) (2008–2011).

[11] Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender.

Acknowledgements

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— BOOK REVIEWS —

Caitríona Ní Laoire, Fina Carpena-Méndez, Naomi Tyrrell, Allen White (2011). ***Childhood and Migration in Europe. Portraits of Mobility, Identity and Belonging in Contemporary Ireland***. **Padstow, Cornwall, England: Ashgate, 212 pp.**

Childhood and Migration in Europe. Portraits of Mobility, Identity and Belonging in Contemporary Ireland paints a nuanced picture of the world, experiences and everyday lives of migrant children and young people who migrated to Ireland during the Celtic Tiger era (from the mid-1990s to the mid-2000s). The analyses show and explore the transnational lives of young migrants of different backgrounds and statuses, whose voices are usually not heard. In contrast to most other works on the subject, which tend to concentrate on the dominant adult-centric perspectives, consideration is given here instead to a child's viewpoint. The empirical grounding of this work stems from research with child participants.

Although the book was published in 2011, it may be inspirational for researchers today due to the current situation of migrants in Ireland and children-oriented methods presented in the research. The volume contains important and interesting material from the perspective of contemporary migration processes.

Different methods and techniques, such as ethnography, qualitative interviews, drawings, photo diaries, mapping, play and conversations were used to collect the accounts of 194 children and young people of various migratory backgrounds who participated in the research. The researchers visited children's homes in order to observe their surroundings. Under the methodological framework underlining children's agency, the child-respondents were considered active and competent participants. Thus the researchers spent a large amount of time with young people and built relationships based on trust. To ensure a wider perspective, the study also included interviews with some parents and, in the case of research

on migrants from Africa, workers of Direct Provision, which is a system of dealing with asylum seekers in Ireland. Observations were also done in schools, youth clubs, playgrounds and other places important for children and young migrants. The richness of the gathered material and the range of different methods adjusted to the age and needs of participants (children-centred methods) yielded a set of comprehensive conclusions.

The research, amounting to 194 accounts, was conducted in four strands by four different research teams and encompassed four distinct groups of migrants coming to Ireland: children and young people migrating from Africa; mobility from the 'New' Europe; flows from Latin America; and diaspora children who had 'returned' to Ireland. Across the seven chapters of the book the authors cover a wide range of issues connected to the migration of children's topics.

The first chapter is an introduction to the research approach to migration from a child's perspective and a summary of the main topics covered by *Childhood and Migration*. The authors briefly show recent data on childhood migration in Europe and prove that insufficient research has been conducted into the subject from a child's viewpoint. Generally, two main approaches for studying migrant children exist, reflecting a long-lasting debate on agency and structure in sociology. The children's vulnerability and passivity in the process are outlined and commented upon. Even though the tendency to present migrant children as dependent is dominant, research shows that children can also take an active role during migration. The authors are moving away from showing children as victims and passive followers, and avoid the trap of seeing children as being 'integrated' in a somewhat 'non-reflexive' or 'accidental' and 'smooth' manners. The aims of the book are listed, and mainly centred around an understanding of migrant children's lives and their surroundings from their own

perspective, which is an innovative and promising one. Despite the conditions in which the children live, their country of origin, and their parents' status and income, the most significant impact on their lives is bringing their own attitudes toward the surrounding world, sense of belonging and constructing their own identities.

The next chapter, *Migrant Childhoods in Ireland*, is dedicated to the particular context of migration to Ireland, and the history of migration, discourse and policy. Immigration is a relatively new phenomenon in contrast to emigration from Ireland, which notably has a long history. The processes of population inflows to Ireland started in the late 1990s as a result of the rapid economic expansion of this ethnically homogeneous country. The authors analyse in depth the public discourse about migrants, their integration, 'otherness' in the Irish society, as well as the changes in the Irish law concerning citizenship, asylum seeking and immigrants more broadly. Underlying these factors was the referendum in 2004, which changed the criterion for Irish citizenship from birth to blood rights and therefore had a direct impact on the migrants' situation. On page 27, the authors state: 'Migrants children/youth have tended to be viewed by policy-makers in terms of their <difference> and vulnerability, and as having different needs to Irish children/youth; indeed, often their very presence is viewed as a problematic itself'. From the very beginning, the authors emphasise the agency of children. The main line of argument is that the young members of all groups taken into consideration in the study have more complex identities and ways for developing their own strategies of belonging than is commonly assumed. These identities are not one-dimensional, solely inherited or unchanging, but constantly negotiated and constructed. It is argued that cultural differences and paradoxes cause tensions between children and their parents, extended family, peers, teachers and other important people in their lives. Additionally, the authors present interesting examples of this phenomenon and its consequences for their aspirations, desires and needs. The children underline their sense of separateness and not fitting in, both in the country of birth and in Ireland, which invariably centres on their feeling of being 'different'.

The following chapters deal with different groups of migrant children. Chapter 3, *Multiple Belongings: The Experiences of Children and Young People Migrating from Africa to Ireland*, is dedicated to African-Irish children (those who migrated from African countries, children born outside Africa to parents from African countries and children born to African parents specifically in Ireland). In most cases, they arrived as asylum seekers who lived in the Direct Provision Centre. There is no doubt that most representatives of this group have fewer opportunities than their peers from EU countries and Irish returnees, and that their status is significantly lower. Owing to the visible difference between them and their Irish peers, they are more often exposed to racialisation and actual acts of racism. The authors present many stories of black African children and young people as significant examples of 'absent present' in the discourse and debates. Even though these children live in Ireland, they do not participate in discussions that directly refer to them. This is why child-centred research in those communities is a valued contribution to the process of understanding their lives. It reveals 'the ways in which discourses of inclusion and exclusion organised around 'race' and ethnicity are deeply entrenched within structures of Irish society' (p. 46). An important part of these children's lives is the ongoing confrontation with their perception by the natives, who deem them 'Others'. At the same time most of the children were strongly connected with their extended family in their country of origin. The authors interpreted this as a reconstruction of their families within their new surroundings. The main conclusion was based on the multiple belongings of young African-Irish people.

Children's Experiences of Family Migration in the 'New' Europe is the title of the next chapter. The term 'New' Europe refers to new members of the EU. Conversely, the research looking at this group not only includes citizens of the EU member states, such as Poland, Lithuania, Latvia, Hungary, Cyprus, Malta, Czech Republic, Estonia, Slovakia and Slovenia, but also children from Georgia, Montenegro, the Republic of Macedonia, Serbia and Ukraine. This causes some doubts about the methodology used, as

respondents from CEE (Central and Eastern European) countries have different rights in Ireland. For example citizens of non-EU European countries are required to possess a work permit, which puts them in a totally different position to EU citizens. Parents of non-EU children have to struggle with different problems, and this has a direct influence on the children. In addition, the perception of EU passport-holders differs among the Irish. Even though the authors argue that the country of origin is not necessarily the crucial factor for children's agency, we cannot deny that this factor has an influence on children's legal rights, status and self-consciousness. Regardless of the authors' focus on EU members in this chapter, the reader is aware that non-EU members participated in the research, and their invisibility in the conclusions is conspicuous. It seems likely that, if the research had been conducted about these two groups separately, the conclusions might have been more complex and explanatory, offering more data about migrant children's sense of belonging. Exclusively showing the examples of EU migrants is insufficient and does not satisfy the reader's curiosity. It could be argued that with such a limited inclusion of non-EU migrant children's voices, their inclusion in the research might take away the focus, rather than contributing to the generally clear argumentation, which is well-contextualised for other groups.

Noteworthy is a commentary on the typology developed for Polish post-EU accession adult migrants in London, which entails migrant families being divided into metaphorical categories of 'storks', 'hamsters', 'searchers' and 'stayers' (Eade, Drinkwater and Garapich 2007) applied to the Irish context. This delineates the motivation, aspiration, and attitude towards the Ireland of migrants. The dominant motivation in this group was economic, which is underlined by both parents and children. However, better quality of life, wider employment prospects and fluency in English were also significant. In this group, as a foreground, children were underlining their original national identity within their experience in Ireland. The reader could get the impression that this was not foreseen by the authors: 'This is interesting to consider in the context of their migration in Ireland as European

citizens and supports the view that de-territorialisation does not necessarily equate with declining allegiance to a national identity' (p. 77).

Polish children are the most numerous group in this component of the research. According to the 2006 Census, they numbered 5 952, which was 5 per cent of all children living in Ireland and born outside of Ireland (p. 22). The number of Poles living in Ireland since then has increased significantly. The 2011 Census states that the number of Poles increased by 93.7 per cent between 2006 and 2011, from 63 276 to 122 585, making them the largest immigrant group ahead of UK nationals, with 112 259. Among them, the population aged 0–19 was 25 933. At that time there were 10 011 Polish children under four years old in Ireland – almost twice the number of all Polish children in 2006 in this country (www.cso.ie/census). This data shows the rising importance of Polish children in Irish society and the need for further research.

The feature that distinguishes Poles is a developed network of weekend schools supported by the Polish government. The majority of Polish children attend school at weekends in order to follow the educational system in Poland, as it is considered more difficult and demanding than the Irish one. Parents convince children to attend these classes, as they are afraid that if they were to return to Poland their children would have problems following the syllabus. The classes are taught in Polish. The authors emphasise that these children prefer to speak in their mother tongue and spend time with friends of the same nationality. Even though they do not stand out from the crowd, there are many examples of labelling shown. The chapter contains numerous interesting topics that might be developed in the future, including schooling, teachers' attitudes towards children, friendships, motivation and the effort that children have to make.

Chapter 5, *In and Out of Ireland: Latin American Migrant Families and their Children in Transnational Circulation*, is an interesting case study on migrant children from Latin America. The characteristic feature of this strand is the temporary nature of the migration and the frequent change in the destination/receiving country. Examples show that Ireland is usually not the first country to which the Latin Americans in the study

have migrated. In my opinion, this chapter is the least developed and does not fully explore the subject. Firstly, the quantitative data about migrant children from Latin America is missing. The general note that 5 per cent of children were born outside Ireland in other countries is not enough to get an idea about the scale of migration from Latin America, and thus does not give a clear picture of this phenomenon. Although it is a valid point that quantitative data is not crucial for qualitative research, it nevertheless supplies a specific context. For all other groups of migrant children this data is presented, thus the lack of it in this chapter is inconsistent. The author only states that Latin Americans in Ireland are an extremely socio-economically diverse group and represented in both the working and middle classes. The main line of categorisation is drawn in terms of a subdivision into two groups: those who are in Ireland to send remittances back home and those who do not (p. 106). Secondly, there is an absence of any description of the sample. Information is missing about the number of children and their parents participating in the research, their characteristics and the context. Based on the quotations, we might assume that the author focused on parents, which raises the question about the main concept of the research being child-centred. No methodology is presented in this chapter. The reader may suspect that this strand was similar to the other groups, though one cannot be sure. Thirdly, a relatively small number of examples are presented. On the plus side, those that are commented on are significant and show transnational migration projects of parents and their children. They underline the divided loyalties of children between their country of origin, Ireland and sometimes third countries of residence, and thereby uncover the formation of their identities.

An especially valuable contribution can be noted in the chapter *Children of the Diaspora: Coming Home to 'My Own Country'*, which is devoted to the situation of returning children. They are very often perceived as the same as the Irish, and not considered to be migrants. In the general discourse, children of the diaspora are seen as unproblematic, and research dedicated to them is limited. At the same time, the authors effectively demonstrate that this narrow concept does not take into account the complexity and the wide spectrum of issues that 'home-comers' have to deal with. In contrast, the work done in this volume proves that they have similar difficulties with negotiating their identities as those found across other migrant groups.

The book closes with the chapter *Conclusions: Migrant Children's Multiple Belongings*, which consists of a summary of all the chapters and presentation of the main results. To conclude, *Childhood and Migration* shows different perspectives of migrant children based on their country of origin. On the one hand, abundant evidence is presented on how migrant children are excluded from Irish society, but on the other, the data explains the complex process of their agency and negotiating their belonging and adjusting to the place where they live.

The work exhaustively covers a range of subjects important for migrant children in their everyday lives, such as schooling, relationships with peers, teachers, parents, extended families, privileges (like language) and experience of 'otherness', global consumer culture, identities and strategies of adaptation into their new realities.

Extending the groups examined to include Asians (8 per cent of all child migrants in Ireland in 2007), the influx from Northern Ireland (7 per cent), and division into EU members and non-EU European countries could enrich the research by supplying new insights into strategies of negotiating identities by children.

The book's advantage is the selection of child-centred methods, which might be useful for scientists planning this kind of research. These methods are universal and can be used with any group of migrant children in any country.

Childhood and Migration in Europe is a complex analysis of the situation of child migrants in Ireland. Especially the process of developing a sense of belonging (or not-belonging) among children is explained interestingly. Importantly, the central crux of this issue remains the family: 'Local belongings can exist as a part of multiple and fluid networked and translocal belongings for migrant children/youth.

Their connections are not necessarily to single or dual nationalities, but to family members, de-territorialised social networks and multiple localities in different countries' (p. 162).

The individual approach to the research participants is the strongest element of this analysis, and means that the voices of migrant children in Ireland are heard.

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Leisy J. Abrego (2014). *Sacrificing Families. Navigating Laws, Labor, and Love Across Borders*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 250 pp.

Leisy J. Abrego's book is a sociological study of Salvadoran labour migration to the United States, which focuses predominantly on life stories of migrant parents and their children who are left behind. By 2008, there were about 1 million Salvadoran immigrants in the USA. This makes Salvadorans one of the biggest immigrant groups in the USA.

The empirical material behind the findings presented in the book consists of 47 interviews with Salvadoran parents living in the USA and 80 accounts collected from children who remain in El Salvador. The research presented by Abrego in *Sacrificing Families. Navigating Laws, Labor, and Love Across Borders* gives readers insights into the complex situation of Salvadoran families divided by space as a result of international mobility.

Sacrificing Families foregrounds the voices of immigrants for whom labour migration offered the hope of better life chances for their children, and as such it is a first-hand account of Salvadoran transnational families' lives.

The book consists of eight chapters. In the first part, the author introduces case studies of Salvadoran transnational families, describing their reasons for migration and the initial issues they faced as regards job opportunities and their expectations about work and life. The second part of the book focuses on problems resulting from the separation of family members, the consequences of migration and the complex situation of children left in El Salvador.

Sacrificing Families examines the individual and societal impacts of Salvadoran families' migration as it relates to various dimensions of family life. Abrego describes different types of transnational families from El Salvador to aid readers' understanding of the issue from a variety of angles. She shows the social diversity in El Salvador, which goes some way towards explaining why some parents decide to migrate to the USA and leave their children in the care of family or friends. The author's interview data and analyses reveal the struggles of those families.

Abrego presents individual experiences of separation, mostly long term. For some families, this difficult separation is at the same time their sole survival strategy. For others, it is a way of ensuring their children's future prospects. Abrego concurs with other researchers who observe that global inequalities put pressure on parents from developing nations to strive for a better life and result in decisions to engage in labour migration.

The striking presentations of Salvadoran children and their parents, covering not only their social situation but also the emotions hidden behind outward appearances, demonstrate strongly that Salvadoran immigration problems in the USA are about much more than mere statistics. Abrego underlines this at the start of her book: '(…) debates about immigration and globalisation are not just about numbers; they are about human beings' (p. xiii). Abrego's analysis of the emotions is helpful for identifying the various reasons that push Salvadoran parents to migrate.

Abrego shows that the situation of Salvadoran immigrants and their families does not always change after migration. Parents' dreams of a well-paid job are

shattered by the sad reality of a difficult and complicated life in the USA. Efforts to overcome everyday problems, together with the impact of immigration policies and gender inequalities, constitute structural barriers which prevent Salvadoran immigrants from reaching their economic goals.

Abrego shows how unsuccessfully the American government has tried to regulate immigration in recent decades, with immigration policies regarding visas and other permits becoming stricter.

Salvadorans escaping from civil-war violence could not count on help from the US government, which only granted political asylum to 3 per cent of Salvadoran applicants. In 1990, organisations which support refugees were able to convince Congress to give Temporary Protected Status (TPS) to Salvadorans (p. 15). Unfortunately the programme was suspended. TPS was finally re-launched after a series of earthquakes in El Salvador in 2001. However, this status does not imply an easy route to American citizenship. TPS, according to Abrego, puts Salvadorans in 'a space of liminal legality' where immigrants have some benefits such as work permits and ID cards, but they cannot travel abroad as legal residents of the USA (p. 91).

The immigrants started to engage in illegal practices which seem to have made them feel unsafe in the USA. The 'game' between immigrants and the American government produces illegality with all kinds of consequences. Abrego describes these processes as the 'production of (il)legality'.

The historical and cultural complexities of migration from El Salvador to the United States are described in Chapters 1 and 2. Abrego's arguments are embedded in historically factual descriptions and discussions of the shape of this population flow, which is mostly linked to the 1979 civil war in El Salvador. By the end of the war in 1992, thousands of immigrants had already fled the country (pp. 12–14).

The author highlights the interdependencies of the USA – El Salvador flows, especially as regards the characteristics of those who leave, and the evolving immigration policies and regulations between the two nation-states. The law has either hindered or facilitated labour mobility at different points in time.

Abrego provides an analysis of the structure of gender production (p. 11). She examines the relationship between gender expectations and familial ties by analysing the construction of motherhood and fatherhood in El Salvador. The structure of gender production in El Salvador leads to inequalities of opportunity for immigrants in the US labour market, mostly for Salvadoran women. The majority of female migrants from El Salvador are in lower-status jobs, earning less money than men (pp. 112–113). Standards of living depend on the USA labour market situation, while all kinds of gender inequalities make daily survival even harder for Salvadoran immigrants.

The second part of the volume is devoted to findings from interviews with children left in El Salvador. Loneliness, feelings of abandonment, sadness and psychological problems are just some of the emotions found in the children's stories. At the same time, Abrego claims that those feelings are difficult to measure because of aspects specific to the individual and subjectivity. In her interviews, she focused on the words which children use to describe their situation. She attempts to identify the role played by long-time separation between parents and their children in the various kinds of consequences found across transnational families.

Abrego's conclusions are directly linked to her interview data. In seeking to discover what parents and children thought about labour migration to the USA after some time spent apart, she asked a provocative question: 'Is family separation worth it?'.

Children and their parents whose financial situation changed positively thanks to hard work in the USA are willing to say that separation is a fair price to pay for their new prospects in life. Families where limited change occurred take a different view. The most complex problems are to be found in those families where long-term separation has created psychological and physical problems. This question shows how hard it is to analyse Salvadoran transnational families.

Abrego's book fully answers the question of how those families function during a period of separation and why the decisions they make change their life chances.

Finally, Abrego asks why these families need to make so many sacrifices and why they have to experience separation across national borders. She points to global problem of 'limited economics [*sic*] opportunities (…) [that] drive parents to opt for migration as their last hope – despite the financial, physical and emotional risks' (p. 196). She emphasises that restrictive immigration policies can make people's lives unbearable, especially because of the limited opportunity for family reunification.

Abrego opens a debate in American society by asking: 'Are we comfortable being a country that legally enables human rights abuses of migrants? What are we willing to do to stop the sacrificing of those [Salvadoran] families?' (p. 196).

Leisy J. Abrego's *Sacrificing Families. Navigating Laws, Labor, and Love Across Borders* will be of particular interest toresearchers interested in compelling portrayals of transnational families and the issues they face in the twenty-first century.

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Post-Accession Emigration from Poland: A New or Old Kind of Emigration? Notes on the Book *A Decade of Poland's Membership in the European Union. The Social Consequences of Emigration from Poland After 2004*

Magdalena Lesińska, Marek Okólski, Krystyna Slany, Brygida Solga (eds) (2014). *Dekada członkostwa Polski w Unii Europejskiej. Społeczne skutki emigracji Polaków po 2004 roku.* **Warsaw: Wydawnictwa Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego, pp. 335.**

In 2014, ten years after Poland joined the European Union, numerous summaries were made on the impact of accession upon various dimensions of economic, political and social life; accession also had a significant impact upon Polish migration. The book *Dekada członkostwa Polski w Unii Europejskiej. Społeczne skutki emigracji Polaków po 2004 roku* [*A Decade of Poland's Membership in the European Union. The Social Consequences of Emigration from Poland After 2004*] (Lesińska, Okólski, Slany and Solga 2014) is an extended report by the Committee of Migration Studies of the Polish Academy of Sciences (2013), devoted to the impact of accession to the European Union upon foreign migration by Poles, and the consequences thereof. The publication focuses on two subjects: a description of post-accession migration and its impact on demography, the economy, and society at the national and regional level; and the influence of post-accession migration on transformations affecting Polish families and the Polish diaspora.

Let us begin with a description of post-accession migration from Poland (already the subject of a rather extensive literature, of which part was collected in the bibliography for the book's second chapter (Lesińska *et al.* 2014: 25–44). Accession to the EU and the consequent opening of the Union's job markets to Polish workers created a significant increase of the stream of migration from Poland, and this is certainly the most important consequence of accession in the area of migration. Estimates show that in the 2005–2012 period about 2.25 million people emigrated from Poland, over 5 perc ent of the country's population (*ibidem*: 48–51).

In addition to the significant growth in the number of emigrants, post-accession emigration differs from previous waves of migration in several important respects. First, the destinations of emigration: before EU accession, Polish emigrants mostly chose Germany as their destination; following accession, however, the UK and Ireland became the preferred destinations – whereas in 2002 there were 2,000 Poles in Ireland, this number grew to 200,000 in the next five years, which is mainly an effect of the opening of labour markets by those countries directly following accession. Second, the type of migration changed: before accession, emigration was mostly grounded in migrant social networks, while in the following period individual migration became dominant, at the same time leading to a more diverse geographical origin of emigrants – before accession, most emigrants originated from regions of Poland with a strong tradition of emigration, while after accession the geographical distribution of the origin of

emigrants became more balanced, when network-based migration ceased to dominate. And third, post-accession emigration differs in the age distribution of emigrants. Post-accession emigrants are predominantly young, even if slightly older on average than those who emigrated shortly before accession. Following 2004, the dominant age group among emigrants is 25–34 years old. And finally, fourth: post-accession emigration is notable for the change in the proportions of gender among migrants – after 2004, men and women emigrate in similar numbers, while before then the migrant stream consisted predominantly of males. The last difference is a change in emigrants' educational status: following accession, those leaving the country were mainly graduates of higher education, who began to be affected by unemployment in Poland; before accession, on the other hand, most emigrants had at most completed secondary school or vocational school education.

In 2016, signs appeared that the prevailing migration destinations for Poles might be changing again. According to the report *Migracje zarobkowe Polaków IV* published by Work Service in May 2016 (Work Service 2016: 13), Germany was again named most frequently by Poles as a potential emigration destination, and compared to 2014, interest in the UK, Netherlands and Norway was clearly waning (Work Service 2014: 5). Currently, intention to emigrate is declared mainly by people with only secondary or primary education, of young age, of rural and small-town origins, mainly from the eastern part of the country – a return to the pre-accession pattern. Time will show whether this is a transient fluctuation, or a more lasting trend in migration from Poland. It is clear that Polish migration is a variable phenomenon, perhaps entering into yet another stage – of post-post-accession migration.

We have described migration after 2004 using the term post-accession, perhaps suggesting a uniform character; however, as shown by the authors of the reviewed publication, the typical emigrant's profile varies, depending on the country of destination, the emigrant's region of origin, and whether emigration took place directly following accession or several years later. In view of such differences, the authors distinguish two types of post-2004 migration: first, the new-type emigration, to which the term 'post-accession' is usually applied. This is represented by young, well-educated people, who for the most part head for English-speaking countries, and have some degree of language skills relevant to their destination, but usually lack experience of migration. The second type, the old-type emigration, does not differ much from pre-accession emigration, and is represented mostly by people of a higher age and lower educational level in comparison to the former group, of rural or small-town origins, with low or non-existent foreign language skills, but often with prior experience of emigration; they choose traditional destinations, such as Italy, Germany, and the USA, where well-organised social networks of emigrants exist. It is apparent that after 2004, traditional emigration strategies did not fade away; however, alongside them a new type of emigration has appeared, making emigration from Poland more varied in cultural, ideological, cognitive and religious respects.

The above observations made by the authors are quite important, as in the Polish public debate one often encounters the unreflexive use of the term 'post-accession emigration' with the assumption that it is uniform in character. It remains a question whether the changes observed in 2016 in the destinations of migration and emigrant profiles indicate a return to the sort of migration that prevailed before accession? Answering this question will require more detailed studies over a longer period; however, one might suggest that the 'accession effect' (huge growth of migration and shift in destinations) is already wearing off.

The book makes no reference to post-accession emigration from other countries of Central and North-Eastern Europe; it is therefore difficult to determine to what extent post-2004 emigration from Poland is peculiar, conditioned by Poland's tradition of emigration and by living conditions particular to Poland, and to what extent its features are typical and equally present in the post-accession emigration from other countries, for instance Lithuania, where half a million people have left the country in the past quarter of a century – amounting to 15 per cent of the entire population. Comparison with post-accession emigration from other countries would allow one to distinguish features stemming from accession from those that are peculiar to a given country.

Post-accession migration has had an impact on the Polish diaspora, and this is analysed in the book using the example of the Polish diaspora in Great Britain (Lesińska *et al.* 2014: 283–305). The situation of the Polish diaspora in Great Britain is rather special for two reasons: first, due to its size, significance, and highly organised character following World War II; and second, because Great Britain has become the main destination for Polish emigrants during the past decade. These circumstances taken in conjunction have led to substantial changes in the diaspora's structures, its modes of self-organisation, and the aims and forms of its activity. Currently the main divide among Poles in the British Isles runs along the line of old *versus* new emigrants. The 'old' are post-war and post-Solidarity emigrants, who uphold an eloquent patriotic discourse, while the 'new' are post-accession emigrants, the majority of whom reject the narrative of 'national martyrdom', and who emigrated mainly due to economic (and sometimes educational) circumstances. The 'new' diaspora displays a preference for informal modes of association and self-organisation, and communicates *via* the internet, mainly through social networks. As observed by the author, some circles within both groups strive to underline their separation and distinctiveness, as a means to create a group identity (Garapich 2009: 61), leading in the case of the Polish diaspora in Britain to some unexpected consequences: the 'new' emigrant community from Poland tends to reinforce the traditionalism of old structures, which strive to stress their conservative character, in opposition to the 'new' emigrants. At the same time, it is not the case that the two communities function in complete separation and maintain no contacts – some of the 'youth' attend patriotic events held by the 'old' emigrants and partake in their social networking. Regrettably, in this interesting text the author does not provide a more detailed description of the contexts that cause generational differences among emigrants to be underlined, and those where they are blurred. What kind of circumstances mobilise the emigrant community as a whole? Does it only happen when emigrants as a group come under attack, or the government attempts to cut social benefits? Recently, the Polish community made a show

of unity when a Polish nobleman challenged the leader of the UK Independence Party to a duel for his vitriolic attacks on Polish emigrants – but is this the only kind of situation that could unite the Polish diaspora?

The situation among the Polish diaspora was compared to that of the Italian diaspora in Great Britain, a comparison which is of special value, as it allows for observation of similarities in the processes of migration. Among Italians in Britain one also observes a slow withering of traditional ethnic emigrant associations based on strong identity and common emigrant destiny, and an upsurge in new types of activity – based on horizontal networks supported through the Internet and social media. This evolution is conditioned by a generational change – the appearance of cosmopolitan, well-educated young Italians. Thus the changes observed within the Polish diaspora community would be a result of a generational shift among European immigrants rather than of Poland's EU accession, seeing the same transformations taking place in migrant communities originating from old EU member states.

A second subject discussed in detail in the book is the demographic and economic effects of post-accession migration at the national and regional level, and the impact of post-accession migration on the situation of Polish families. The part that touches upon economic effects and the influence on regional development is of most interest, as the authors refute several myths concerning the economic effects of post-accession migration. In their opinion, in the long term migration will definitely have an impact on the national economy, if only due to demographic effects. In the short and medium term, however, there has been little impact on the labour market, i.e. the level of employment and joblessness, although locally there may have been some influence (Lesińska *et al.* 2014: 109–139). They argue this based on the assumption that a shortage of labour in some branches of the economy due to emigration would manifest itself through wage increases, and such increases have not been observed in Poland. In their analysis of the impact of migration on the market the authors employ the liberal theory of supply and demand, but it is not clear that this theory actually applies, for example, in

the health service sector. Following EU accession, emigration of medical personnel became easier, due to the EU Directive of 7 September 2005 on the recognition of professional qualifications, and many physicians and nurses took advantage of this opportunity; however, the shortage of anaesthesiologists and nurses in Polish hospitals was not reflected in any major increase in their wages. Thus it seems that the theory of supply and demand does not apply in this case.

In another chapter, the authors themselves doubt that the theory of supply and demand is applicable in a situation of unbalanced development. In the section on the impact of remittances on the development of the Opole region they arrive at the conclusion that the influence of money from abroad on stimulating demand for services might not be balanced by the increase in the price of such services, even if said price approaches the German level, as workers qualified to provide these services are simply in short supply.

As for the influence of emigrant remittances, the authors state that in Poland they do not stimulate local development or contribute to investment in infrastructure. A major proportion of these remittances are spent on current consumption – which does have some positive effects, by raising living standards in households, diversifying their sources of income, and reducing poverty and inequality. However, there are also negative effects, which are difficult to quantify: families become dependent on income from abroad, lose incentive, and the increased demand for consumer goods fails to stimulate growth, because it is not directed at goods of local origin. Foreign remittances from emigrants lead to poor communities with wealthy inhabitants, as is the case in some parts of the Opole region (Berlińska 1999: 248).

In Poland, monetary remittances are important to the families that receive them, of lesser importance to the region, and of minor importance to the state budget – similarly to other European countries. It is interesting to look at recent data from the International Monetary Fund concerning foreign remittances by country (International Monetary Fund 2016). It turns out that in Europe, the largest amounts are received as remittances not by those countries that are the largest sources of emigration, but rather by those

with net immigration: France, Germany, Belgium, Spain and Italy. The absolute value of remittances to those countries is much larger than that of those coming into Poland, yet it still falls short of being a significant contribution to the GDP of those countries, and does not stimulate the development of local infrastructure – it is a contribution to the support of families of expat workers. It is a different case for some Asian and African nations, where monetary remittances from abroad are not only a significant contribution to the support of families that receive them, but also have an impact on local communities and the state as a whole. According to data from the IMF, foreign remittances contribute 10 per cent to the GDP of the Philippines; in Mexico, meanwhile, which is also known to receive significant foreign remittances, though the amount as a fraction of GDP is only 2 per cent, the influence on local development is still considerable (Legrain 2007: 161–178). Poland seems to be somewhat in between these two models: while the impact of foreign remittances on a national level is not strong, and nor are they of major significance at the regional level, at the same time the growth of outgoing remittances, mainly to Ukraine, is a similarity between Poland and the wealthier Western states; however, the incoming remittances come mainly from workers employed in so-called 3D occupations (dirty, dangerous, dull) – as in the Philippines – rather than from expat specialists.

As for the impact of migration on regional development, opinions among Polish researchers vary. Some claim that modernisation is hampered by brain drain (Iglicka 2008), while others consider it to be boosted by the 'dilution of the labour marke' through emigration, which removes excess manpower (Grabowska-Lesińska and Okólski 2009). The authors of this publication tend to share the latter opinion, summarised as *brain overflow* – that the structural misalignment between the professional makeup of human resources and the demands and needs of the market is corrected by outgoing migration, with a positive outcome.

The impact of post-accession migration at the regional level was described in the book using the example of three provinces with the highest indexes of emigration. Each of them represents a different tradition

of migration, but all are regions which tend to push out – due to high level of unemployment, peripheral character, depopulated rural areas, and a generally low population density. An interesting regularity was observed by the authors concerning emigration from the Opole province in southwestern Poland. The region always featured a high rate of migration to Germany, with most of those leaving being from the native Silesian population from the eastern part of the region – which was not affected by post-World War II resettling, while in the western part near the German border most ethnic Silesian and German people were deported at that time. Many of those leaving enjoyed the privilege of German citizenship on the grounds of Article 116 of the German Basic Law. Accession did not change the pattern of migration from this part of the province, which was that it was mostly males who left to work in Germany. Meanwhile, in the eastern part of the province, populated mainly by people resettled after World War II, the prevailing pattern was affected. Post-accession, the gender structure of migration became balanced, with roughly equal numbers of men and women emigrating, and the destinations became more varied (Lesińska *et al.* 2014: 235). Thus in a single province, following 2004 two completely different patterns of post-accession emigration prevailed in each of its two parts. Native Silesians mostly continued the traditional model of migration, and membership in the EU changed little in their migration opportunities. For the resettled population, on the other hand, EU membership was a turning point, as from there on they were able to seek employment abroad without needing invitations or permits. These differences between the eastern and western parts of the Opole province are reflected at the national level, in similar differences between regions with a strong tradition of migration and those that lack such a tradition.

The book is an attempt at a comprehensive description of Polish migration since 2004 and their economic, demographic and social effects, at the micro, meso and macro level. Its weakness is the exclusively Polish perspective of the analysis. The authors failed to place post-EU-accession migration from Poland in a wider context of post-accession migration from other countries that joined the EU in 2004 or later.

Such a comparison would make it possible to determine whether the features of the migration stream observed by the authors are of a general character, or whether they are specific to Polish post-accession migration. The same applies to transformations of the Polish diaspora. The impact of the new wave of migration was analysed only with reference to the Polish community in Great Britain; it remains an open question whether similar changes took place in Polish communities in Germany or France, or for instance, among the much younger Polish community in Norway. Is the divide between the 'old' community of political emigrants and the 'new' economic, post-accession emigrants present there as well? Old and new are relative concepts, and some claim that the time of arrival, rather than difference of features, is the main source of divisions in each such community – what Paul Scheffer describes as the syndrome of the new passenger in a train compartment (Scheffer 2010).

A second remark concerns the sources of changes in the rate and character of migration from Poland. The authors seem to make little distinction between changes that were a direct result of accession, those that were indirectly related to accession, and those that merely coincided with accession but were actually effects of other simultaneous processes. One direct consequence of accession and the opening of the labour markets by Great Britain, Ireland and Sweden was the growth in the rate of migration and a shift in the destinations of emigration from Poland, while the increase in the share of graduates of higher education among migrants had to do with the situation on Poland's labour market – growing unemployment among college graduates, whose number grew several times as a result of the expansion of higher education. Similarly, changing gender proportions were a result of the general growth of migration of women (Slany 2008) and, indirectly, of the structure of the labour markets of the destination countries. Accession helped to cushion negative developments in Poland's labour market, by enabling the emigration of a large number of 'surplus people' – a term introduced by Florian Znaniecki a hundred years ago – and contributed to reducing social inequality thanks to remittances from abroad, but not all changes in migratory processes can

be attributed to accession. It would help to make the direct consequences of accession more evident if a comparison were performed between post-accession emigration from Poland and emigration from other countries, of the so-called old EU. The only attempt at such a comparison was made by Michał Garapich (Lesińska *et al.* 2014: 283-305), who described transformations in the Polish and Italian diaspora communities in Great Britain – leading to the conclusion that these changes were quite similar between the two, and can be explained as due to general changes of civilisation and the appearance of a new type of emigrant rather than as a consequence of EU accession.

A third remark has to do with the lack of attention to the destination countries' policies towards migration and social policies. The authors carried out a detailed structural analysis of migration over the last decade, dividing it into two sub-periods: directly following accession, i.e. 2004–2006, and later, when migration entered a 'mature phase'. It seems correct to distinguish these two periods, as the successive opening of labour markets by further member states presumably influenced the rate of migration from Poland. However, the discussion of the stream of migration presented in the book is purely descriptive, and the authors make no attempt to relate the features of the migratory stream to the labour market situation in the countries of Western Europe and the level of social benefits available to emigrants.

The book is a collection of articles written by a large group of researchers, and, as is often the case with collective works, contains some repetitions, and cases where data and statistics derived from different sources are aggregated in different ways, making comparisons difficult, even across different parts of this book. In spite of such shortcomings, it is a good guide to post-accession emigration from Poland and is recommended reading for all those whose work concerns issues related to recent European migration – be they scholars, politicians, government officials or diaspora organisers.

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