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**Impact of family formation on Polish migrants' settlement
in the United Kingdom**

by

Barbara Janta

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for
the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Employment Research

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Józefinka, Feliks and Edmund – this thesis is dedicated to you.

Declaration

I confirm that this thesis is my own work and it has not been submitted for another degree.

Chapter 5 builds on my publication that was developed in the early stages of this PhD study. A full biographical record of this publication is as follows:

Janta, B. (2013), Polish migrants' reproductive behaviour in the United Kingdom, *Studia Migracyjne – Przegląd Polonijny*, Vol. 39(3), pp. 63-95.

All my other research papers that provided me with an understanding of issues relevant to this PhD study are cited in relevant chapters.

A full list of my publications is available on the following website:

https://www.rand.org/about/people/j/janta_barbara.html#overview

Signature: Barbara Janta

Abstract

The magnitude of Polish post-2004 migration to the United Kingdom has had a major impact on British and Polish societies. Arriving as predominantly young, single and without minor dependants, Polish migrants started forming partnerships and having children in Britain. However, uncertainty remains about the permanence of Polish migrant parents' stay in the UK, and the specific needs of this community. This thesis contributes to filling this gap in the research literature by investigating the migration and family formation patterns among Polish migrants, and the relationship between the two. This area of research has not yet been a major focus for researchers studying Polish migration.

In terms of methodology, a mixed methods approach is adopted which includes analyses of secondary administrative data and new primary data collected through an online survey of, and interviews with, Polish migrants living in the UK. The timeframe of this project covers the years since Poland's accession to the EU in 2004 until early 2016.

Applying theories related to migration and migrant fertility, the research evidence reveals a distinctive family formation behaviour among Polish migrants. The financial stability and ability to live a 'normal' life experienced by Polish migrant families have independently facilitated family formation and settlement, and these trends started reinforcing each other over time. The presence of children anchors Polish migrants in the UK through their education and enhanced sense of belonging. This, together with the intentional indecisiveness and the perceived and actual difficulties in transferring British labour market experience and skills into the Polish context, decreases the return potential of Polish migrant families. This finding has important implications for the demographic and labour market trends in Poland and the UK. It also indicates challenges for policy planning and the implementation of public services, and the importance of future research evidence to guide it.

Abbreviations

CEE	Central and Eastern European
ECEC	Early Childhood Education and Care
EU	European Union
EU-SILC	European Union Statistics on Income and Living Conditions survey
GFR	General Fertility Rate
LFS	Labour Force Survey
MS	Member States
NASA	National Aeronautics and Space Administration of the United States of America
NELM	New Economics of Labour Migration
NINo	National Insurance Number
NISRA	the Northern Ireland Statistics Research Agency
NRS	National Records of Scotland
ONS	Office for National Statistics
PPS	Purchasing Power Standard
TFR	Total Fertility Rate
UK	United Kingdom
WRS	Workers Registration Scheme

1 Introduction

Post-2004 migration from Poland to the United Kingdom (UK) has had a major impact on British and Polish societies. However, uncertainty remains about whether or not Polish entrants to the UK are a wave of temporary migrants, a new settled community with distinctive characteristics and needs, or a new type of migration within a wider European labour market. In order to shed light on these and other questions, this PhD thesis examines migration and family formation trends of Polish migrants, and migrants' intentions to stay in the UK as related to their family formation. The thesis also investigates the likely future implications of these decisions for demographic trends, labour market and public service provisions in both countries. This area of research has not yet been a major focus for researchers studying Polish migration (White *et al.* 2018).

1.1 Why research family formation of Polish migrants in the UK?

The magnitude of Polish post-2004 migration to the UK was largely unanticipated and of an unprecedented scale (Okólski 2012). Upon arrival Polish migrants were predominantly young, single and without minor dependants, after which they started forming partnerships and having children in Britain (Eade *et al.* 2007; Waller *et al.* 2012; Ryan *et al.* 2009; White 2011a).

Between 2003 (Poland's pre-EU accession year) and 2017, the Polish population in the UK increased rapidly, faltering only in 2018 (ONS 2019b). The population of Polish children, albeit still relatively small, has also grown rapidly over recent years.

The initial predictions of a much lower overall volume of Polish in-migration, its temporariness and the circularity of migration did not materialise. Many Polish migrants came with open-ended plans regarding their intended length of stay but decided to remain in the UK long-term, with a broad range of factors affecting their settlement/return decisions (Glorious *et al.* 2013; Grabowska-Lusińska 2013; Okólski 2012; Okólski & Salt 2014; Ryan 2015a).

The relationship between family formation and settlement/return is complex. In the case of Polish migrants, it is not clear whether settlement decisions follow family formation decisions or vice versa. As White (2011a:177) observed, the arrival of a

baby was a factor that further “enhanced a sense of being at home in the English home”, suggesting that starting a family could be an indication of plans to stay in the UK long-term. However, the large number of children born to Polish mothers in the UK could also simply be a consequence of the large number of Polish migrants being in a highly reproductive age group. In this case, the experience of becoming a parent abroad may precede and even prompt a decision to settle in the UK. As Orellana *et al.* (2001:587) observed (referring to migrant families in general), “the presence of the children is central to the families’ decision-making process” and families with children (in particular school-age children) are more intricately tied to the receiving community. It therefore “takes more to uproot them: factors encouraging return have to be strong and also multiple” (White 2011a:201). In addition, the experiences of Polish migrants able to combine professional and family responsibilities could further influence decisions of migrant parents to stay in the UK. Alternatively, the high cost of childcare provision and a lack of family networks in the UK can facilitate return migration (Barglowski & Pustulka 2018; Engbersen *et al.* 2013; Osipovič 2010).

While some of these aspects have been relatively well researched thus far, the family formation of Polish migrants and its impact on return migration has not attracted much academic and policy attention to date. Building on several theories and concepts from the migration, demography, employment and public policy literatures, this thesis aims to capture the dynamic picture behind the post-accession Polish migration cycle and tries to unfold the relationship between, and weight of, particular socio-economic and family-related factors for migration decisions.

1.2 Project aims and objectives

The broad aim of this research project is to explore the relationship between migration and family formation among Polish migrants in the UK, and to examine whether and how Polish migrant family formation has affected decisions to settle in the UK.

This broad aim translates into three main objectives for the study:

- to conduct a comprehensive analysis of the socio-economic characteristics of Polish migrants who decided to have a child in the UK;
- to examine the patterns of migration and family formation of Polish migrants in the UK;

- to explore the relationship between the migration and family formation behaviour of Polish migrants to the UK, and Polish migrants' settlement intentions and decisions.

The timeframe of this project covers the years from Poland's accession to the EU in 2004 until early 2016. As all data were collected before the Referendum vote on 23rd June 2016, Brexit was not considered one of the potential factors shaping Polish migrants' decision-making processes. Similarly, this project does not capture how return migration decisions have been influenced by the post-2016 Polish family support policies or the post-2016 British welfare system reforms. The thesis reports on findings from post-2016 sources where available, notably, recently released secondary data, but it would have extended the research process unduly to collect new post-2016 primary data in the case of the online survey and interviews. With the changing socio-economic and political landscape in both Poland and the UK, the research findings must be read with these caveats in mind.

1.3 Thesis outline

Chapter 2 contextualises Polish post-2004 migration by reference to wider migratory trends in Europe. It begins by outlining patterns of migration to the UK in the last 20 years under the free movement of workers in the EU, and the general trends in Polish migration within the EU. The chapter then explores Polish post-accession migration to the UK, its magnitude and the key socio-economic characteristics of the migrants. This is followed by a comparison of the labour market situations in Poland and the UK, focusing on aspects such as employment precariousness, levels of earnings, unemployment among the general population and young people in particular, and economic differences between regions in both countries. The chapter concludes with a comparison of each country's trends in family formation, family structures and child and family policies, and of the education systems in both countries.

Chapter 3 reviews the research literature in order to establish what is known about Polish migration to the UK, and to identify gaps in the evidence as to its magnitude and nature. The chapter starts by summarising the main approaches, factors covered and theories used in explaining migratory processes, and explores how they could be applied to Polish migration. It then summarises theories related to fertility and

migration, and considers their potential application to Polish migrants' family formation. This is followed by an analysis of the factors that drive and/or discourage Polish migration, and how they shape patterns and trends of Polish post-2004 migration in the EU. The chapter concludes by presenting typologies of Polish migrants.

Chapter 4 explains the methodological and analytical considerations that guided the selection of particular research approaches to conducting this study. It opens with the rationale for using a mixed methods approach, and describes how each research method contributes to answering the research questions. This is followed by a discussion on the quantitative and qualitative methodologies that supported data collection and analysis, and the triangulation/synthesis of findings. The chapter also surveys the practical issues encountered when using particular methodological approaches. The subsequent sections offer a reflective account of my positionality as a researcher, my role in the research process and the use of the Polish language in this study. The chapter concludes with an overview of the processes adopted to ensure that this project was conducted in a professional, transparent and ethical manner.

Chapters 5, 6, 7 and 8 provide analysis of the secondary and primary data sources.

Chapter 5 presents a secondary analysis of official birth registration statistics. It opens with an analysis of family formation trends among Polish migrants, focusing on aspects related to the number of births to Polish mothers across years, the proportion of children with two Polish parents, age-specific childbearing trends, and the propensity of births within versus outside marriage. The chapter concludes by comparing trends in Poland, UK and among Polish migrants in the UK, and a consideration of the possible relevance of these trends for return decisions of Polish migrants.

Chapters 6 and 7 offer an analysis of the online survey data. Chapter 6 outlines the demographic and socio-economic characteristics of the survey respondents, including aspects related to the patterns of family formation and family composition. It continues by analysing factors that influence Polish migrants' decisions to start a family and the relative importance of these factors for migrants' family building strategies.

Chapter 7 investigates whether return and settlement decisions change as a consequence of starting a family in the UK, and under what circumstances Polish migrants might move back to Poland. This chapter also estimates the likelihood of return for several family types through econometric analysis of how family composition and migration histories influence the permanence and length of stay in the UK.

Based on findings from the interviews, Chapter 8 continues the analysis of factors influencing return decisions and offers rich qualitative accounts of people representing different attitudes. The chapter starts by outlining Polish migrants' attitudes towards return and settlement, and then proceeds to discuss the impact of economic and work-related factors, child-related factors, aspects related to home and the feeling of belonging, and other wider socio-political and economic factors.

Finally, Chapter 9 summarises the main contributions and conclusions of the thesis, outlining how it advances our understanding of the relationship between family formation and migration among Polish migrants. The chapter also discusses how this work contributes to theoretical and methodological developments. The chapter concludes by assessing the policy implications of the research findings, and suggesting potential directions of future research into the relationship between family formation and migration.

The thesis is accompanied by Annexes 1-4 providing further detail about the research approaches, tools and strategies for data collection and analysis.

2 Contextualising Polish post-2004 migration

This chapter contextualises Polish post-2004 migration to the UK through a focus on the socio-economic and policy factors that broadly shaped migratory patterns in the period from Poland's accession to the EU (2004) until early 2016 (before the Brexit Referendum of 23 June 2016).

Section 2.1 provides a brief overview of intra-EU migration trends. Section 2.2 summarises the UK's situation as a migration destination country. The scale, dynamics and trends of Polish migration in the EU are examined in Section 2.3, while Section 2.4 provides a more detailed analysis of the socio-economic characteristics of Polish migrants in the UK. Section 2.5 offers a comparison of the situations in the UK and Polish labour markets, focusing on trends in unemployment, precarious and temporary employment, and earnings. Section 2.6 compares Polish and UK's child and family policies and trends in family formation, while Section 2.7 compares British and Polish school systems. Section 2.8 concludes by discussing key contextual aspects important to understand recent waves of Polish migration to the UK.

2.1 Migration in Europe

The movement of people between EU member states has been called “the world's best research laboratory on legal, transnational migration” (Koikkalainen 2011). The principle of intra-EU migration is based on the freedom of movement of workers within the EU, one of the four economic freedoms on which the EU's Single Market is based alongside the free movement of goods, services and capital. At the time of the 2004 EU expansion, the ‘old’ Member States (MS) were able to impose transitional measures and conditions¹ in order to mitigate the potential negative impact of labour migration from the ‘new’ MS. Only the UK, Ireland and Sweden did not apply transitional restriction and, as a consequence, experienced large inflows of migrant labour from the ‘new’ MS. The largest number of newcomers (in absolute numbers) was recorded in the UK (Eurofound 2014).

This sheer volume of East-West migration flows was largely unanticipated. Between 2004 and 2008, there was an increase of more than 1 million EU citizens with two

¹ Codified in the Directive 2004/38/EU.

main migration corridors: Polish and Baltic states citizens moved mainly to the UK and Ireland, while Romanian and Bulgarian migration flowed to Italy and Spain (Benton & Petrovic 2013).

Overall, however, the rate of migration within and between EU MS was low at around 3% (European Commission 2012). In terms of absolute numbers, Germany and the UK were the main destination countries whereas Poland and Romania were the main sending countries. There were several advantages of emigration as it enabled well-educated individuals to gain personal and professional experience, further expand knowledge and develop skills, as well as experience another culture. Migrant workers also brought economic benefits to the receiving countries by addressing labour market shortages, in particular in the labour-intensive sectors, and by bringing innovation by exchanging experiences and ideas. However, large scale migration was also a cause of concern for both the sending and receiving countries. (European Commission 2016).

2.2 UK as a migration destination country

At the time of the 2004 accession, the UK did not impose employment restrictions on nationals from ‘new’ EU MS,² and instead put limitations upon migrants' access to the welfare system.³ Pollard *et al.* (2008:7) assessed that the post-2004 migration flows “dramatically changed the scale, composition and characteristics of immigration to the UK”. Firstly, there was a significant increase in the number of migrants coming to the UK from the new accession countries, with Poles dominating the EU migration flows. Secondly, many migrants came with open-ended plans regarding their intended length of stay and subsequently decided to settle in the UK (see Chapter 3).

2 All migrants from 2004 accession countries (apart from Cyprus and Malta) that wanted to work in Britain for at least one month were required to register under the Workers Registration Scheme (WRS). The scheme, operated from 2004 until April 2011, gathered information on migrant's employment, intention to stay and dependants living in the UK at the time of application. The WRS scheme operated on an opt-in basis and was implemented without incentives or sanctions. For that reason, it is possible that some CEE nationals working in Britain did not register under this scheme due to the lack of enforcement and its cost (Janta *et al.* 2015). The analysis of the WRS data were published as government Accession Monitoring Reports, with the latest report covering years up to March 2009 only (see discussion in Janta 2013).

3 For instance, access to contributory benefits (dependent on National Insurance contributions) such as income-based jobseekers allowance or maternity allowance, and income-related benefits such as housing benefit and a council tax benefit was dependent upon remaining compliant with the conditions of the WRS. As a consequence, migrants who were not registered under WRS or those who lost their employment during the initial 12-months period, were not allowed to access state support. On the other hand, there were no eligibility conditions imposed on EU nationals to access non-contributory benefits, such as child benefit or disability living allowance. Employed EU migrants were also eligible to receive tax credits, for instance the Working Tax credit, the 'childcare element' of the Working Tax Credit, and the Child Tax Credit, with the same eligibility criteria applied as for the UK's nationals (HMRC 2016).

This resulted in marked changes in the UK's population structure. Between 2000 and 2016, the share of EU migrants in the total UK population increased from 2% to 5.5%, while the share of non-EU migrant groups increased from 5.7% to 8.7% (ONS 2017). The increasing numbers of migrants caused the re-emergence of migration as an important topic of political and public debate in the UK. These discussions often revolve around integration and social cohesion, and migrants' rights to access the labour market and the welfare system. Nevertheless, most research findings focusing on the economic impact of migration reveal that the UK benefits economically from EU migration. On average, EU migrants are more economically active and less likely to receive state benefits and other support than UK nationals, benefiting higher- and medium-skilled UK-born workers and having a small negative effect on the earnings of lower-skilled native UK workers (Dustmann & Frattini 2014; Janta *et al.* 2015,). However, more cautious views on the benefits of immigration are also present in the research debates (cf. Skidelsky 2017).

2.3 General trends in Polish migration

Migration is a socio-economic phenomenon ever present in the history of contemporary Poland. The EU accession had a considerable impact on the direction and the size of Polish migration flows. In the pre-accession period, the main migration destination countries for Poles were Germany and the USA, with relatively large numbers of Poles also migrating to Austria, Italy, France, Sweden and the UK.

Assessing the direction of potential migration flows following Poland's EU accession, Dustmann *et al.* (2003) concluded that Germany would remain the primary destination country due to its geographical proximity, stable labour market conditions, established Polish diaspora and Poles' capacity to speak German. However, this assessment did not account for the restrictions to the free movement of workers implemented by Germany, which limited the legal channels for migration. Furthermore, with the opening of the labour markets in EU countries, the US became a less attractive migration option due to the country's geographical location and the high costs associated with the move.⁴ As a consequence, the largest migration inflows from

4 Analysing the US visa application statistics, we note that there were 15 thousands immigration visas and 120 thousands of non-immigration visas (e.g. student, tourist, scholarship visas) issued to Poles in 2004. In 2012 these numbers were considerably smaller, with only 2.7 thousands of immigration and 73 thousands of non-immigration visas issued. Source PAP (2014).

Poland (at least in the early post-2004 years) were recorded in EU countries that did not implement the transition measures, such as the UK and Ireland.

It was estimated that over 2.3 million Poles resided in EU countries in 2016. At that time, the UK was still the leading destination for Polish migrants. However, there was also a growing number of Poles moving to Germany. Large numbers of Poles also lived in other European countries, notably Ireland, the Netherlands and Norway.⁵

Most Polish migration has been motivated by employment opportunities abroad, with around three quarters of Poles moving due to work-related factors. However, the share of economic migrants varies across countries, and represents 68% of all Polish migrants in Germany, 78% in the UK and 90% in the Netherlands (GUS 2016). Higher salaries abroad, difficulties in finding work in Poland and better opportunities to develop their careers were the main reasons cited by economic migrants. Around 16% of Poles moved to other EU MS for family-related reasons, either as moving with a partner or joining a partner who has been living abroad for some time. Other factors, such as studying, have played a less important role in migration trends among Polish nationals.

2.4 Polish migration to the UK

As noted above, the magnitude of EU migration to the UK was largely unanticipated. It had been estimated that between 5,000 and 13,000 of EU nationals would migrate to the UK per year post 2004 enlargement, instead there were more than 150,000 Polish workers registration between 2005 and 2008 (see Figure 2.1).

Among all EU migrants that came to the UK post-2004, Polish nationals constitute the largest group. Between 2003 and 2017 the Polish population in the UK increased continually from 75,000 to 1,025,000 (ONS 2012; ONS 2019b), faltering only in 2018 when it declined by 116,000 to 905,000. Despite the recent decline, Polish people still constituted the most common non-British nationality in 2019 (ONS 2019b),⁶

⁵ Norway is part of the European Economic Area and as such allows EU migration under the freedom of movement of workers.

⁶ An estimated 910,000 Polish-born residents in the UK had Polish nationality in 2016. Nevertheless, only 3.5% of them (just 32,000) are also British nationals. In contrast, 59% of UK residents from India are also British nationals.

It is also worth noting that British law stipulates that a child born in the UK to an EU national can acquire British citizenship by birth. This is conditional on EU nationals having gained permanent resident status in the UK by the time of the child's birth. Typically, the permanent resident status is gained after a period of five years residence during which the parent exercised treaty rights, e.g. was a worker, self-employed, student or a jobseeker. It is sufficient for one parent to meet the requirements at the time of birth for the child to be British. It is not necessary for an EU parent to acquire British citizenship in order for a child to acquire British citizenship by birth. Source: <https://www.gov.uk/check-british-citizenship/born-in-the-uk-on-30-april-2006-onwards>

accounting for 15% of the total non-British residents in the UK. Poland is also the most common non-UK country of birth (since 2015) with a population of 832,000⁷ (ONS 2019a), constituting about 1.3% of the UK's population (ONS 2017; ONS 2019a; ONS 2019b).⁸ Finally, the Polish population in the UK consists also of a large number of children born to Polish parents (see Chapter 5).

The National Insurance Number (NINo) registration data allows analysis of trends related to the economically active population⁹ of migrant populations in the UK, and by extension provides indication of in-migration (inflow) of economically active adult foreigners.¹⁰ In the years between 2002 and 2018, the overall number of Polish nationals registering for NINo was over 1.6 million. NINo allocations to Polish individuals peaked between 2006 and 2008, with a considerable decrease noted during the economic recession years. Another increase was recorded between 2013 and 2016, after which the number of Poles registering for NINo started to decrease (see Figure 2.1).

In addition, Polish citizenship law states that citizenship is passed through parents. It means that regardless of the country of birth, a child with a Polish parent would also automatically be granted Polish citizenship. As such, Polish children born in the UK can have dual citizenship: Polish - passed through parents, and British - if their parents' length and conditions of stay satisfy British citizenship requirements.

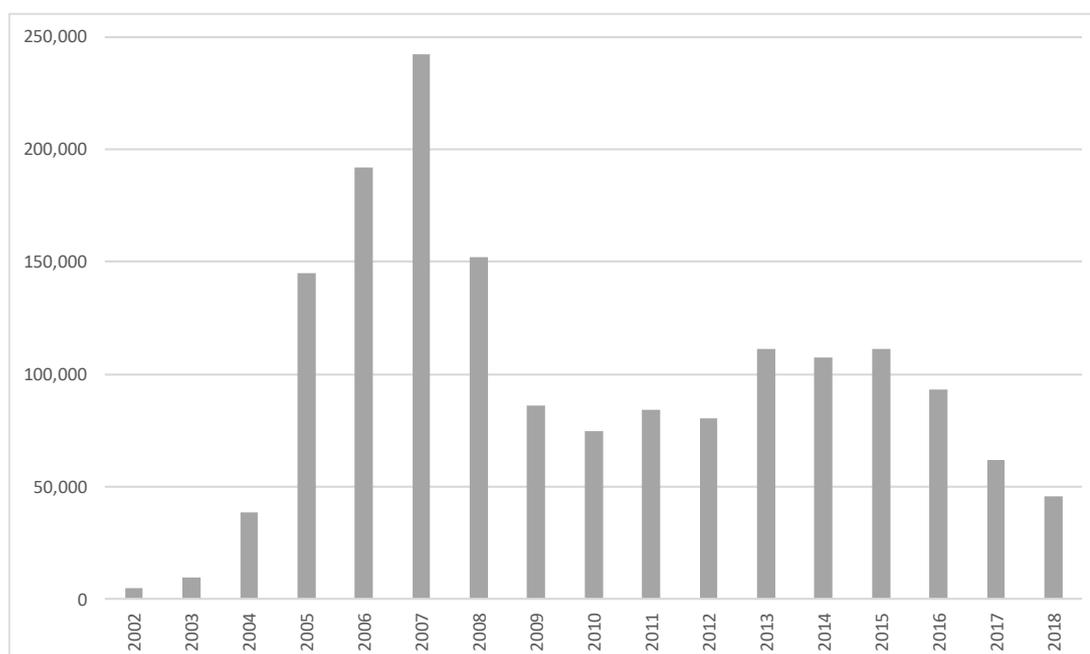
7 In 2018, about the same number of residents not born in the UK was estimated for India. In previous years, Poland was the clear leader in this ranking.

8 Since country of birth cannot change, as argued by Tromans *et al.* (2009), it is a more robust variable when analysing change over time. Yet, it does not take into account the length of stay in the host country. Consequently, some people who have been living in a foreign country for a long time and might have acquired citizenship of this country would be still reported as foreign-born (Anderson & Blinder 2015). On the other hand, citizenship as shown on a person's passport is not a more accurate measure either. Nationality might be a good indicator for short-term migrants who are not yet meeting the criteria to apply for a second citizenship. However, there might be migrants who moved to the country a long time ago but have never acquired second citizenship meaning that nationality alone cannot be an indicator on the length of stay in the host country. For a more detailed discussion, see Janta & Harte (2016).

9 The data include workers, people looking for work or claiming benefits / tax credits, the self-employed and students working part-time.

10 In order to be allocated a NINo, registrants have to satisfy a set of criteria. In addition, the process of allocating a NINo can take some time after a migrant arrives to the UK. See for instance DWP (2014).

Figure 2.1 National Insurance Number (NINo) registrations to Polish nationals entering the UK, 2002-2018



Source: Department for Work and Pensions, Stat-Xplore.

Note: The NINo data is based on nationalities.

Various data sources show that Polish migrants were predominantly young. For instance, the 2011 Census data shows that over 67% of Polish migrants¹¹ in England and Wales were 20 to 39 years old, compared with just 27% of the population of England and Wales as a whole. Similarly, over 82% of Polish migrants were 20 to 64 years old, compared with 60% of the population in England and Wales (see Figure 2.2).

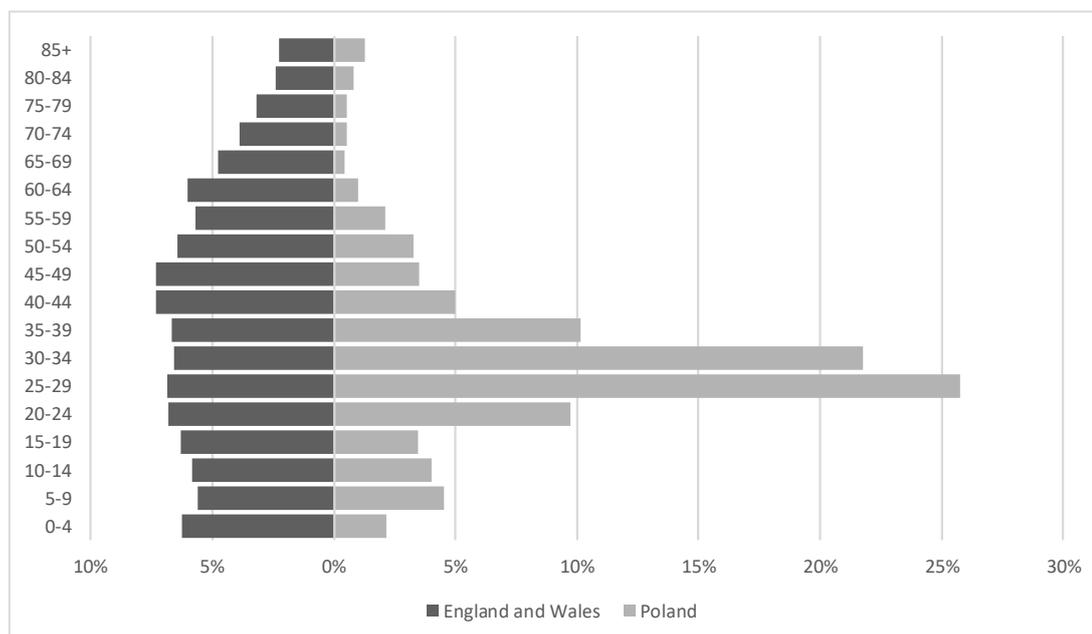
This higher proportion of young people among Polish migrants *vis-à-vis* the overall population in England and Wales results from the fact that most Polish migrants were coming to work (Pollard *et al.* 2008). It also results from the relatively low proportion of Polish people aged 65 and over, mostly consisting of post-war emigrants.¹² Finally, it also results from a small yet rapidly growing population of Polish children.¹³

¹¹ Defined as people born in Poland.

¹² Pre-accession, the Polish-born population was extremely elderly. According to the 2001 census data, there were 58,000 people born in Poland living in the UK in 2011, and 57% of them were aged over 64 (Drinkwater *et al.* 2006).

¹³ It has to be noted, however, that only Polish children born in Poland are included in the Census data under the 'Polish population' category. Children born to Polish migrants in the UK are classified as UK-born, thus not counted towards the overall Polish population in the Census data.

Figure 2.2 Age structure of the overall population of England and Wales and Polish population in England and Wales, 2011



Source: 2011 Census for England and Wales

Note: Polish migrants defined as people born in Poland.

Data on Polish migrants in the UK also show that the numbers of male and female migrants are almost equal (Home Office 2009; ONS 2017), and that most Polish migrants at the time of arrival to the UK were single and without minor dependants (Home Office 2009). Polish post-2004 migration to the UK was also highly selective with respect to the educational attainment of migrants due to the association of age with the growth of tertiary education (see Section 2.5.2). Overall, only 15% of Polish migrants who arrived in Britain between 2004 and 2010 had no qualifications, 21% had Level 1, 2 or 3 qualifications, and 65% had Apprenticeship, Level 4+ and other qualifications (ONS 2019b).¹⁴ Kaczmarczyk and Okólski (2008, cited in Chłoń-Domińczak 2018) suggest that access to the British labour market attracted a disproportionately large share of highly-educated Poles, particularly from villages and small- and medium-sized towns. With the Polish labour market still considered to be geared towards low- and medium-skilled employment, imbalances persist between the supply of and demand for highly-skilled workers (Karolak 2015, 2016). Therefore, feeling that the Polish labour market was not able to absorb their skills, many young Poles decided to migrate.

¹⁴ Level 3 qualification is equivalent to an A-level, apprenticeship and Level 4+ are equivalent to post-A level qualifications. Source: Gov.uk (no date).

2.5 Polish-UK labour market comparison

2.5.1 Unemployment levels

Just before the EU accession, the unemployment rate in Poland was at a record high of around 20% (see Figure 2.3). As the economy recovered, the unemployment rate started to fall, reaching a low of 7% in 2008. This decrease resulted not only from a strengthening economy but probably also from a large outflow of labour due to post-accession migration. The rate of unemployment increased again during the global economic crisis, remaining at around 10% until 2013. Since then, unemployment levels fell to 6% in 2016.

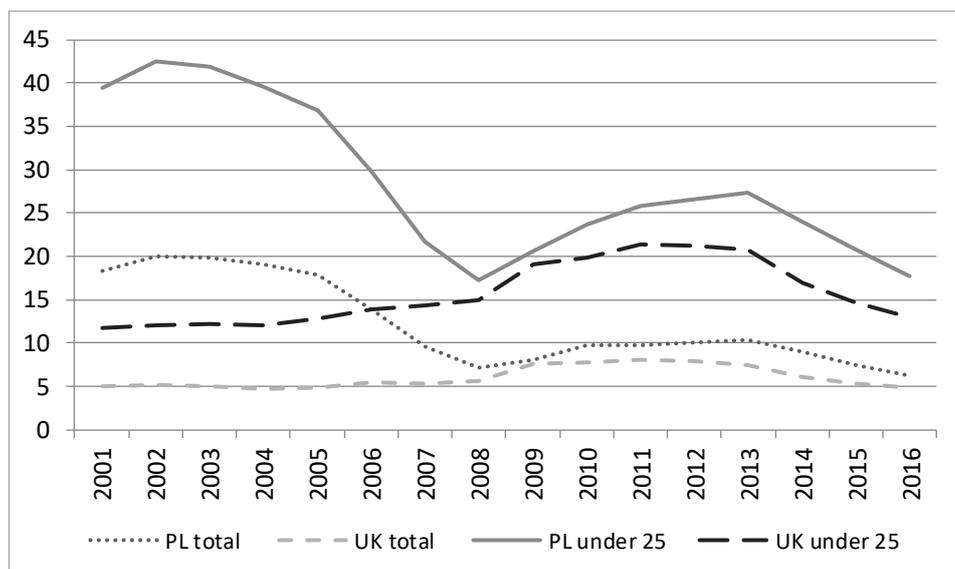
From 2001 to 2016, the unemployment rate in the UK remained relatively stable at around 5%. With the global economic crisis, there was a rise in unemployment to around 7-8% between 2009 and 2013. However, the rate of unemployment has since remained at a relatively low level, reaching 5% in 2016. Overall, the total unemployment rate in the UK constantly remained lower than in Poland.

2.5.2 Unemployment levels among young workers

In order to fully understand the context of Polish migration to the UK, it is also important to look at the unemployment rate among younger workers (aged 25 and below). The youth unemployment levels oscillated at around 40% in Poland on the eve of EU accession, and when faced with the prospect of being unemployed, many young Polish people perceived migration as a more secure option to find employment.

In general, between 2001 and 2016 unemployment rates among young workers in Poland and the UK show a similar dynamic (see Figure 2.3). They remained at a relatively high level (and a very high level in Poland) until around 2005, falling gradually until the onset of the global economic crisis. The unemployment rate then increased until 2013, and has started to decline again afterwards. However, despite largely similar trends in both countries over this timeframe, the youth unemployment rate was higher in Poland than in the UK, with a staggering difference of about 28-29 percentage points in the pre-accession and early accession years, which dropped to 2-3% during the economic crisis years, and opened out to around 6% in more recent years.

Figure 2.3 Total unemployment rate and youth unemployment rate in Poland and the UK, 2001-2016, (%)



Source: Eurostat, indicator 'unemployment by sex and age' [une_rt_a]

Note: Youth unemployment defined as unemployment rate in an active population of people less than 25 years old.

Youth unemployment rates are important for understanding migration trends due to the demographic situation in Poland. The large population of people born in the early 1980s, called a second baby-boom generation in Poland,¹⁵ reached adulthood in the early 2000s. A large share of these people completed secondary and tertiary education at rates not seen among earlier generations. In fact, the education boom of the 1990s and early 2000s has most likely contributed to the overall trends in the labour market. In 1995, only 6.8% of the Polish population held university degrees, whereas by 2008 this percentage was 17.4% (Siemienska & Walczak 2012). This rise resulted mainly from an increase in the proportion of young people going to university. In 1990 only 9.8% of the 19-24 year-old population was studying, increasing to 30.6% in 2000 and around 38% in 2005. Since then it has remained stable at 39-40% (Ministerstwo Nauki i Szkolnictwa Wyższego 2013). As noted by Fihel and Kaczmarczyk (2009), the number of workplaces for graduates did not increase at the same pace, contributing to what the authors called the "brain overflow". With high unemployment levels in Poland and the opening of labour markets in Western Europe, many young Poles migrated soon after graduating because they could not find work or did not even look for jobs in Poland (White 2011a). While this out-migration had a positive effect on

¹⁵ The first baby boom population denotes people born soon after the WWII. A second baby boom population was recorded in Poland when people from the post-war baby boom populations had their own children in the late 1970s and early 1980s.

unemployment levels in Poland, it also caused concerns about a potential brain drain and demographic changes as young and educated people were leaving the country.

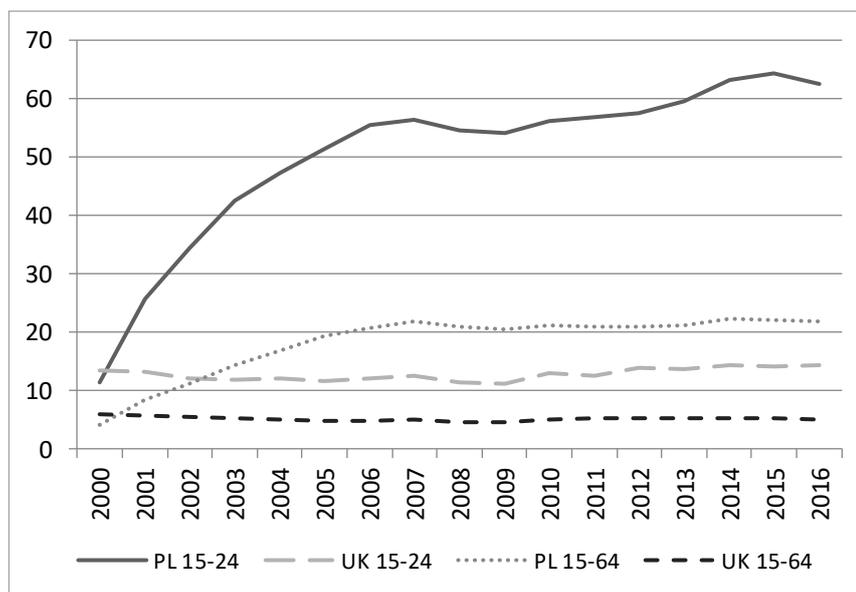
2.5.3 Temporary employment and precarious work

Apart from the actual and perceived difficulties in finding employment in Poland, job security and levels of pay are also important factors for explaining the timeframe and scale of Polish migration. Job insecurity expressed as a share of temporary employment, for instance, remains high in Poland, particularly among the youngest workers. Although temporary contracts may be a preferred option for some workers, involuntary temporary employment can lead to precariousness in workers' situations.

Since the early 2000s, there was a noticeable increase in the share of temporary contracts in Poland, in particular among the youngest cohort of workers (aged 15 to 24). In 2001 around 26% of young workers had temporary contracts, rising to about 52% in 2005 and reaching 63-64% in 2016. This compares to under 10% of workers across all age groups in 2001 and around 20% in 2005 (see Figure 2.4).

As estimated by the Polish Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, roughly half of the temporary contracts are not employment contracts but civil contracts (e.g. contracts for a completion of a particular task or commission contracts) (Eurofound 2008). Civil contracts are a particularly insecure form of employment because they are typically offered for lower-paid jobs, with workers facing less job stability, fewer training opportunities and a higher risk of poverty. In addition, workers on civil contracts are not protected under the Employment Law and cannot take their cases to the Employment Tribunal but must use the civil courts. Nevertheless, social security contributions are much lower on civil law contracts, making them an attractive option for employers and some workers, who might achieve higher income (compared to being on a standard employment contract) at the expense of job security and potential future social security payments (e.g. sick pay or state pension) (Lewandowski 2014).

Figure 2.4 Percentage of workers in each age group on temporary employment contracts compared for Poland and the UK 2000-2016 (%)



Source: Eurostat, indicator 'part-time employment and temporary contracts' [lfsi_pt_a]

Note: PL indicated Poland, UK indicates the United Kingdom, 15-24 indicates workers aged 15 to 24, 15-64 indicates workers aged 15 to 64.

Compared with Poland, over the analysed period from 2000 to 2016, the UK labour market provided greater stability, with a much lower proportion of temporary contracts. Nevertheless, there are other employment conditions that may contribute to the precarious situation of workers in the UK such as being on a zero-hours contract, working in a gig economy, being an agency worker or in bogus self-employment. Some of these employment conditions are particularly pronounced among migrant workers, thus having an impact on their overall work security (Taylor *et al.* 2017).

2.5.4 Earnings

The level of pay is also an important factor considered by migrants, in particular economic migrants. In general, the average earning levels expressed in purchasing power standard (PPS) are much higher in the UK than in Poland (see Figure 2.5).^{16 17} However, between 2000 and 2015, the PPS in the UK increased only by 11%, compared with a 100% in Poland. Nevertheless, PPS earnings in Poland were still only

¹⁶ As provided by Eurostat: "The purchasing power standard, abbreviated as PPS, is an artificial currency unit. Theoretically, one PPS can buy the same amount of goods and services in each country. However, price differences across borders mean that different amounts of national currency units are needed for the same goods and services depending on the country. PPS are derived by dividing any economic aggregate of a country in national currency by its respective purchasing power parities.". Source: [http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Glossary:Purchasing_power_standard_\(PPS\)](http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Glossary:Purchasing_power_standard_(PPS)), last accessed 15 November 2017.

¹⁷ The average earnings in nominal value are also much higher in the UK than in Poland. However, it is difficult to compare these values across analysed years due to the fluctuations in the exchange rates between PLN and GBP.

about half of those in the UK in 2015, meaning that, economically, it is still easier to live in the UK.

Figure 2.5 Annual earnings in Poland and the UK, in Purchasing Power Standard, 2000-2015



Source: Eurostat, indicator 'annual net earnings' [earn_nt_net]

Note: Data for gross earning of a single person without children, 100% of Average Wage

2.5.5 Economic differences between regions

Analysis of national data can lead to overlooking the regional economic disparities in Poland and in the UK. Describing Poland's situation, White (2011a:28) concluded, "the terms 'Poland A' and 'Poland B' crudely capture the difference between the wealthier, western part of the country, and regions to the east of the River Vistula [however] 'A' and 'B' are simplistic labels that fail to capture the actual socioeconomic diversity of Poland", with considerable differences within regions and particular localities.¹⁸ As discussed in Chapter 3, return is often to migrants' local areas, and the unfavourable labour market situation in particular regions/localities is likely to influence the likelihood of return.

2.6 Polish-UK family formation and child and family policy comparisons

This section provides a comparative overview of the family formation trends among Polish migrants in the UK, Polish nationals in Poland and UK residents. It also offers

¹⁸ Poland A and B refers to the historical, political and cultural distinction between the western and eastern part of Poland. Poland A located west of the Vistula river is much more developed and has faster growth than Poland B, east of the river.

comparisons between Polish and British child and family policy, and analyses how these aspects shape Polish migratory trends.

2.6.1 Family structure

The direct comparison of family types in the UK, Poland and among Polish migrants in the UK is challenging due to a lack of directly equivalent data sources. Firstly, the closest equivalent data come from different years, with Polish data dating to 2011 and UK's data being from 2016. Another limitation is that the UK's data only include families with the head of family born in Poland, excluding family structures when other members of the family (but not the head) were Polish.¹⁹ Finally, there are also some definitional issues. For instance, until recently in Poland a child living with parents who were not legally married would be classified as living with a lone parent (single mother or father), regardless of the actual living arrangement of their parents. So some of the apparently striking differences in family composition across countries have to be read with these caveats in mind (see Table 2.1).

Overall, out of nearly 30 million families in the UK in 2016, around 433 thousand families were Polish. One-person households constituted 37% of all households in the UK and 31% among Polish migrants. In comparison, only 24% of Poland's households were one-person (out of a total 13.5 million households). On the other hand, there is a much greater share of married households in Poland (56%) than in the UK (42%) or among Polish migrants (39%). Lone-parent families are also more prevalent in Poland (17%) than in the UK (10%) or among Polish migrants (10%). Yet, nearly a fifth of Polish migrants (19%) were in cohabiting households, which constituted 11% of all households in the UK and only 2% in Poland.

The overall household trends are also reflected in the composition of families with children. Overall, there was a much greater share of married parents with dependent children in Poland (38%) than the share of such families among Polish migrants (26%) or families in the UK (16%). On the other hand, lone-parent families were much more likely in Poland (17%) compared with Polish migrant families (9%) and families in

19 The UK data are based on the Household Labour Force Survey (Hawkins & Moses 2016) (data from Q1 2016) and only include families with the head of family born in Poland. If a traditional approach is applied that defines that a man / father is the head of a family, this approach will only cover about 70-75% of Polish families living in the UK. This will include families in which both parents are Polish-born and families when father is Polish and mother was born in other country. This approach will also include single parent households led by a woman but exclude families with a non-Polish father and a Polish mother.

the UK (6%). Finally, cohabiting couples constituted 8% of Polish migrant families, compared with 4% of families in the UK and only 1% of families in Poland. The share of children living in other family types was marginal.

Table 2.1 Family types in the UK, Poland and among Polish migrants in the UK, (%)

Family type		As % of families		
		Polish families in the UK	All families in the UK	All families in Poland
All households (with or without children)	One person	31	37	24
	Married couple	39	42	56
	Cohabiting couple	19	11	2
	Lone parent	10	10	17
	Same sex cohabiting couple	<1	<1	<1
	Civil partnership couple	<1	<1	not recognised under Polish law
Families with dependent children	Married couple	26	16	38
	Cohabiting couple	8	4	1
	Lone parent	9	6	17
	Same sex cohabiting couple	<1	<1	<1
	Civil partnership	<1	<1	not recognised under Polish law
All households (in thousands)		433	29,937	13,568

Source: UK data based on Household Labour Force Survey, Q1 2016 after Hawkins & Moses (2016). Data on Poland based on 2011 Polish Census after GUS (2014).

Note: these are not directly equivalent data sources – see text.

As Hawkins & Moses (2016:8) conclude, the different family composition among Polish families compared with UK families overall can be explained by “the younger age-structure of the Polish population”. In addition, some of the differences in the family structures of Polish migrant families (e.g. smaller share of children brought up by married parents and a greater share of children living in cohabiting households) can be explained by the changing socio-cultural norms of Polish migrants. Families living in a more traditional society in Poland can be under a much greater social pressure to adhere to traditional norms, such as raising children in married households. The legal arrangements, such as the legal recognition of cohabitation, can also be an explanatory factor for family composition. The differences in the family composition among Polish migrants in the UK as compared to families in Poland are noteworthy as they may indicate an adaptation to British social-cultural norms.

2.6.2 Family size ideals

As the fertility levels in Poland are below the population replacement levels and among the lowest in the world, it is not surprising that demographic challenges are considered one of the main priorities of Polish family policy (Balcerzak-Paradowska 2015). Analysis of family size ideals indicates that a sizeable proportion of couples in Poland do not realise their desired fertility and have smaller family sizes than intended. This trend is particularly pronounced among the younger generation of women, many of whom have similar ideal family sizes as do older generation of women, but have much smaller actual families compared with earlier generations. Conversely, women in the UK exhibit, on average, one of the highest fertility levels in Europe and appear likelier to realise their intended family size (Hoorens *et al.* 2011; Testa 2012).

Table 2.2 and Table 2.3 summarise fertility trends in the UK and Poland, showing a noticeable difference between women’s personal ideals and their actual number of children.²⁰ These national trends are further analysed and compared with the family size preferences among Polish migrants in Section 6.2 and 6.3.

Table 2.2 Mean woman’s personal ideal and actual number of children by age in Poland and the UK

	Poland		UK	
	Women aged 25-39	All women	Women aged 25-39	All women
Mean personal ideal	2.12	2.42	2.27	2.33
Mean actual	1.27	1.73	1.38	1.71

Source: Author’s own compilation of data based on Testa (2012).

Note: The mean actual number of children is estimated for women who are still in the fertile years (typically aged 15 to 49).

²⁰ Data provided for women aged 15 onwards, including data for all women and data for women in the prime reproductive age group (aged 25 to 39). Data for both women and men are available in Testa (2012). In order to provide a comparative background for subsequent chapters, analysis in this chapter are conducted solely on data for women. This allows comparing this data source with the analysis in Chapter 5 focused on women’s birth records, and Chapters 6 and 7 focused on the findings from the online survey data (over 90% of the online survey respondents were female).

Table 2.3 Distribution of women by general ideal number of children, by age and country (%)

			Number of children (%)				
			None	1	2	3 and more	No ideal / No answer / DK
UK	All women	Personal ideal	5	6	53	29	7
		Actual	25	18	34	23	>1
	Women aged 25-39	Personal ideal	5	10	50	29	6
		Actual	32	23	25	19	1
Poland	All women	Personal ideal	1	8	44	32	15
		Actual	24	20	29	26	1
	Women aged 25-39	Personal ideal	1	12	51	21	15
		Actual	26	33	30	10	1

Source: Author's own compilation of data based on Testa (2012).

Note: The actual number of children is estimated for women who are still in the fertile years (typically aged 15 to 49).

2.6.3 Child and family policy

Family and the well-being of family members are described as “core interests” of the Polish government. The Ministry of Family, Work, and Social Policy has invested in several support programmes for families – both dedicated family programmes and general work-life balance and labour market measures. Families with children who meet the income requirements may obtain child benefit and other allowances (European Commission 2019a), albeit their monetary value is typically quite low. A new cash benefit called “Family 500+” was introduced in 2016, offering a universal monthly cash transfer of PLN 500 (around £100) for the second child and any consecutive children in families. It was extended to the first child in 2019. There are also grants for large families and one-time allowances to cover costs of textbooks for school-aged children (Ministerstwo Rodziny n.d.). However, despite these programmes and additional investments in recent years, Polish family policy is considered to lack a comprehensive, coherent and consistently implemented model of family support (Balcerzak-Paradowska 2015). Furthermore, Szelewa (2017) suggests that the shape of Polish family policy is implicitly focused on family-based care,²¹ with the caring responsibilities in families still disproportionately borne by women.

²¹ Szelewa (2017) has used a term ‘familialistic’ to denote family-based care.

Child and family policy in the UK falls under the scope of both the central government (the social assistance and family leave provision) and the Scottish and Welsh Governments and the Northern Ireland Executive (provision of the health and education services). Families with children living in the UK can benefit from a universal child benefit. Since 2013, a new system of social assistance called Universal Credit has been introduced to gradually replace a system of individual benefits²² offering a single payment to families in need of financial support (European Commission 2019b). Despite cutting the level of support for families and pushing towards individualised responsibility for managing family care and other needs, the UK can be still characterised as fitting the ‘not family-based’ care type, with government agencies being responsible for the provision of several family support and childcare services. Comparing the support available to parents in Poland and the UK, Kay and Trevena (2017) suggest that migrant families from across Central and Eastern Europe (including Poles) have a feeling of there being greater financial ‘security’ in the UK compared with their own home countries.

2.6.4 Formal childcare provision

There are several differences between Poland and the UK regarding availability, eligibility to access, affordability, cost and quality of Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC). Firstly, a higher share of children across both analysed age groups (children under the age of 3 and children aged 3 to compulsory school age) attend formal childcare services in the UK than in Poland. In addition, a slightly higher share of children under the age of 3 in Poland are cared for only by their parents. Some of these differences may result from the legal recognition of what the formal childcare services cover. For instance, in England formal childcare services include nurseries or other type of daycare, registered childminders and registered nannies.²³ In general, any form of paid childcare provided by an individual person that is not registered would be considered undeclared work. In contrast, in Poland formal childcare is only provided by nurseries and other types of approved daycare facilities,²⁴ and

22 These benefits included Child Tax Credit, Housing Benefit, Income Support, Jobseeker’s Allowance, Employment and Support Allowance and Working Tax Credit.

23 In addition, In England each childcare provided must be registered with Ofsted. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/providing-childcare-services-in-england>, last accessed 24 February 2020. There are some differences in the formal childcare regulations in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland due to a devolved administration.

24 There is no childminder position equivalent in the Polish childcare system. In addition, nannies can work as registered workers but this registration is mostly tax and social security related, rather than to ensure the quality of childcare provision. See: <https://www.gov.pl/web/gov/skorzystaj-z-dofinansowania-na-zatrudnienie-niani>, last accessed 24 February 2020.

consequently, parents of young children make a variety of non-formal childcare arrangements. These differences have an impact on the extensiveness of the formal childcare market, thus the supply of services. A more market-oriented childcare system in the UK is also one of the drivers to improve quality of provision. However, the supply of workers to this sector is reduced, if potential workers do not have qualifications required to enter the system.

Table 2.4 Percentage of children in the age groups in childcare in Poland and in the UK, 2017, (%)

	Children aged 0-3		Children aged 3+	
	Poland	UK	Poland	UK
Children in full-time formal ECEC	10	5	42	23
Children in part-time formal ECEC	2	28	15	45
Children cared for only by their parents	48	41	22	20

Source: Eurostat: variables: 'children in formal childcare or education by age group and duration' [ilc_caindformal] and 'children aged less than three cared for only by their parents' [ilc_caparents]

There is also a difference when children start receiving ECEC. A legal entitlement for access to ECEC is similar in both countries –from ages 3 to 5 in Poland, and between ages 3 and 4 (from 2 for disadvantaged children) in the UK. However, in practice, most children in Poland only access ECEC at the age of 6 as there is an obligation to attend preschool activities from this age. This is much later in a child’s life than in the UK, where compulsory schooling starts at the age of 4 to 5. Finally, the UK offers more flexibility in the ECEC provision than Poland. Children in Poland are typically provided 5 hours a day of free-of-charge care, with capped rates for subsequent hours. In the UK, children are offered a certain number of hours throughout the year which can be taken as the parents prefer. In addition, families can receive financial support to pay for other forms of approved childcare. Overall, the UK’s provision seems to offer more flexible and extensive childcare arrangements, thus being more compatible with the childcare requirements of working parents (European Commission 2019a, 2019b).

2.7 British and Polish schooling system

This section provides a comparison between the Polish and UK²⁵ education systems to outline how education-related factors shape decisions of Polish migrant parents. As summarised by Ryan and Sales (2011), the main differences between the Polish and British education systems relate to the school structure, overall philosophy of teaching and learning, and expectations with regard towards pupils. Polish migrant parents' knowledge and experience of the education system is, to a large extent, shaped by the Polish system. This sets their expectations towards the British system, which is organised and operates differently.

First of all, Poland's education system is much more centralised than the British system, with individual schools having less autonomy in deciding the curriculum and resources used (Sales *et al.* 2008). Migrant parents are often not aware of the complexity and range of schools in the British education system or how to navigate it, particularly regarding the emphasis on the school 'choice' in Britain and the role of parents in exercising this right on behalf of their children. Trevena *et al.* (2016) suggest that Polish migrants, and in particular those arriving to the UK with school-aged children, are unaware of the school 'choice' and often do not exercise their right in this respect, instead sending children to the local school as they would in Poland. These decisions about children's education are also often related to parental social and cultural capital (e.g. command of English, social networks/connections with British and Polish people), with many Polish parents lacking 'insider knowledge' of the British system. In contrast, Polish migrants whose children were born in the UK may have been in a better position to make decisions related to their children's education.

The age of starting school and the structure of primary and secondary schooling also differs between the education systems. In Britain, children start school in September after their 4th or 5th birthday, whereas in Poland children are typically 6 or 7 years old when they start school. Primary schooling therefore starts at an earlier age in the UK than in Poland, with primary education covering ages 4-5 to 11 in the UK (7 years),

²⁵ The UK's education system is devolved meaning that each of the countries: England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland, has separate systems under separate governments. It means that there is no uniform system across the UK. See: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/devolution-of-powers-to-scotland-wales-and-northern-ireland>, last accessed 24 February 2020.

Because the Polish education system has changed considerably in recent years, this section presents the key features of the system as they operate at the moment, noting how the system operated were at the time of data collection for this study.

and covering ages 6-7 to 15 (8 years) in Poland.²⁶ Pupils take examinations (GCSE) at age 16 towards the end of compulsory schooling in the UK, with the results being important for their future education.²⁷ Due to the differences between the systems, some migrant parents may not be aware of the critical role of lower secondary school selection and the GCSE exams in the British education system. For instance, some parents may not understand that older children arriving in the UK would be required to sit the GCSE exams whether or not they had enough time to prepare for them. In addition, the secondary school selection process can in itself have significant implications for children's future educational routes, particularly because some secondary schools can have specific subject focuses and therefore be more suitable for children with well-defined future education and career aspirations. Furthermore, migrant children who lack sufficient time to prepare for the GCSE exams or were at schools offering lower-quality standards may be disadvantaged vis-à-vis their peers, and may consequently restrict their further educational opportunities, for instance in academic pursuits (Trevena *et al.* 2016).

There are also differences in the curriculum, assessment methods, homework, and parental involvement. In general, all children in Poland are expected to fulfil the same educational objectives and standards as set for a particular grade. They are also assessed against similar benchmarks. In contrast, children in the UK are grouped – or 'streamed' - according to their ability, meaning that children in a single class can work with different worksheets and towards different objectives. Additionally, British schools place greater focus on developing critical thinking skills and teaching children how to search for and assess information, and how to apply knowledge in practice. In Poland, a lot of teaching and learning remains focused on the acquisition and memorisation of knowledge. In order to support learning, children are expected to do homework daily from the first years of the primary school in Poland. Parents are often required to engage in children's learning by supporting them in completing homework and by monitoring general progress. In contrast, primary school pupils in the UK have minimal homework, and parents are expected to be more involved in the school life and various social and fundraising events (Lopez Rodriguez 2010).

²⁶ Between 1999 and 2019 there was a lower secondary school (gimnazjum) in Poland. This school type offering education to 12/13 to 15/16 years old pupils (3 years of schooling) was phased out following the 2016 educational reform (MEN e.d.)

²⁷ School pupils now also being expected to stay in secondary education until 18 in the UK.

These various factors mean that British schools are often perceived by Polish pupils and parents as more child-friendly and child-centric. However, the differences between both schooling systems can be also a cause of frustration and misunderstanding, in particular if parental expectations towards British schools are shaped by their experiences of the Polish education system.

2.8 Conclusions

Despite the recent large migration flows, the scale of intra-EU mobility is still at a relatively low level compared with the EU population size. Nevertheless, some countries have been impacted by the considerable increase in post-accession mobility, either as a sending or receiving country.

Because the UK was one of three countries with no restrictions upon labour market access at the time of the 2004 accession, it experienced a significant and largely unanticipated inflow of migrants. In absolute numbers, arrivals from Poland dominated in the migration flows. Many migrants were arriving with open-ended plans and subsequently settled in the UK long-term. This had profound consequences for the composition and characteristics of the UK's population, ultimately sparking debates about integration and social cohesion, the impact of migration on the labour market and migrants' rights to access publicly-funded services and the welfare system.

The UK continued to be the leading migration destination country for Polish nationals in the 2010s. However, Polish nationals are also increasingly migrating to other countries. Poles in the UK are relatively young and well-educated. For around four in five Polish nationals, the decision to move to the UK was economically-motivated. Although many migrants did not plan permanent migration, a considerable share of Polish migrants still live in Britain (according to 2019 data), with Polish migrants remaining the largest EU-migrant population group in the UK. The rapidly-growing population of children born to Polish parents contributes to this trend.

The socio-economic situations in Poland and the UK have influenced migratory decisions and can also indicate future migratory trends. Since the majority of Polish migration to the UK was economically-motivated (see Section 3.4.1), the labour market situation in both countries, including employment opportunities and the level of pay, played an important role in migrants' decision-making processes. The more economically favourable situation in the UK, with considerably higher earnings and

the level of unemployment continuously recorded to fall below that in Poland, was the key migratory driver.

The insecure and often precarious employment situation in Poland was, and continues to be, particularly pronounced among the youngest workers, as demonstrated by the youth unemployment rate and proportion of young workers on temporary contracts. These can function as a deterrent against returning to Poland. Over time Polish migrants have gained experience, and often additional skills, when working in the UK. However, whether and how this expertise and experience would translate and benefit Polish migrants in the Polish labour market is still not well understood. As Polish migrants become older (albeit still relatively young in absolute terms), they may be less likely to accept potential employment precariousness in Poland, which they may have experienced before migrating and which could have been a driving factor in their migration to the UK. In addition, the unfavourable economic outlook of particular Polish regions can also decrease the likelihood of return. The increasing purchasing power of earnings in Poland may encourage some migrants to reconsider their stay in the UK. However, this also depends on the quality and reliability of information on employment opportunities in Poland, as well as the attractiveness of these opportunities.²⁸

Wider contextual factors may also play a role in the return migration decisions of Polish migrants. For instance, families could consider a range of factors related to children, as children's wellbeing is of a paramount importance for Polish migrants. Bringing up children in the UK has most likely strengthened Polish migrants' relationship with Britain due to the use of child-related services and the development of closer relationships with British people. This exposure to and use of services may have also changed migrant parents' expectations about the types of services that should be available, and how these services should operate (e.g. free-of-charge). For instance, the exposure to the UK's more extensive and flexible childcare arrangements from an earlier age in a child's life may have raised migrant parents' aspirations about this type of provision in Poland. This may be particularly important for dual-working families that value female and male labour market participation equally.

²⁸ There are some EU-level initiatives, for instance the Eures – European job mobility portal, focused on providing labour market information, including a list of job offers, from across EU MS countries.

Simultaneously, Polish migrant families may have also adopted the British social-cultural norms related to family formation, family composition, and the division of roles within families. As such, the emphasis of Poland's family policy upon traditional patriarchal family roles, which expects women to provide the majority of childcare, could be a factor deterring returns.

Finally, the education of children can be an important factor for families with school-aged children. Parents of migrant children may feel 'locked' into the UK due to the differences in the organisation of the education systems and school curricula, and the expectations towards pupils' knowledge and skills at each level of the education trajectory. For that reason, returning to Poland with school-aged children could be seen as detrimental to children's future educational and career opportunities, in particular if such a move took place at a critical stage of education. In addition, Polish parents have largely positive experiences of schooling in Britain as they consider the British education system to be more child-friendly than the system in Poland. This can further support Polish migrants' decisions to stay in the UK.

In this chapter's review of key developments in Polish migration to the UK, family formation and the socio-economic environments within which they have taken place, several potentially influential factors underlying them have also been identified. In the following Chapter 3, the thesis turns to examining the available research evidence relating to these and other factors.

3 Literature review

The review of research literature and data available (academic and policy-related, in English and in Polish) was the first stage of this research project. The aim of the literature review was to develop an understanding of the context and gather existing, relevant evidence providing insights into migration and family formation theories and trends. It focused on trends in Polish migration to the UK and family formation trends among Polish migrants. This was also used to determine the research approach, and to identify and refine the hypotheses to be explored (see Chapter 4; and Sapsford and Jupp, 2006). Additional literature searches were conducted throughout the duration of the study to provide updates on the current state of knowledge relevant to this project.

Section 3.1 provides an overview of the main approaches to, and factors involved in, explaining the migratory process. Section 3.2 focuses on migration theories, while Section 3.3 offers a short overview of fertility theories related to the migration experience and a brief discussion of how these theories could be applied to explain the situation of Polish migrants. Section 3.4 discusses factors that drive and/or discourage Polish migration, the relationship between and weighting of these factors, and how they change over time. Section 3.5 examines patterns, trends and typologies in Polish post-2004 migration in the EU. Finally, Section 3.6 presents the conclusions of the literature review.

3.1 Understanding migration

International migration has been analysed from multiple different approaches covering a range of micro- and macro-level factors at the individual and household levels. Several theoretical schemes provide insight into the reasons why people move abroad and return to their home countries. As Cassarino (2004:253-254) observed in reference to return migration, “multifarious factors...have made...migration a multifaceted and heterogeneous phenomenon”.

3.1.1 Factors influencing migration

Decisions taken by individual migrants are shaped by a combination of motivations, social dynamics and political and economic structures (Goldin *et al.* 2011:120 cited in

Kobzar *et al.* 2015). These multi-layered factors represent both structural conditions (employment, housing, education, political and citizenship rights) and socio-cultural and personal circumstances (social relations and feelings of belonging) (de Haas & Fokkema 2011). However, the relative importance of each factor differs by individual and the stage reached in their migration experience (Castles & Miller 2009).

Migration is motivated by opportunities to achieve a better standard of living and quality of life, and to gain additional qualifications and skills through education. The labour, health and benefits systems, as well as shared languages, established migration communities and existing social networks also shape migration dynamics (Kobzar *et al.* 2015).

Research shows that the initial motivation for migration is often linked to, and influences, return migration decisions. However, this relationship cannot be taken for granted as the initial reasons and causes of migration can have varying impacts upon migration trajectories and outcomes (in terms of staying abroad and return). The initial factors that motivated migration can therefore be different from factors that “perpetuate it across time and space” (Massey *et al.* 1993:448). Consequently, factors that develop while staying abroad can act as new, independent causes of migration and return migration. For instance, migrants’ decisions may be influenced by the development of migration networks and institutions supporting mobility, as well as social changes in the home and host countries.

3.1.2 Approaches explaining the migratory process

Studies examining migration typically examine actual migration behaviour, and thus explain the observed events post-hoc. However, as argued by de Haas and Fokkema (2011), it is not clear whether, and to what extent, the same factors influence intentions to migrate/return and the actual migration/return event. It is therefore important, as the authors suggest, to study migration intentions to gain a fuller picture of the actual experience of moving to a host or home country.

King's (2000, cited in Guzzetta 2004:113-114) research reveals that there is often disparity between migration intentions and outcomes. His typology suggests four possible combinations between migration intentions and outcomes:

1. migration intended to be permanent which results in permanent migration,
2. migration intended to be permanent but with return migration,
3. migration intended to be temporary and with return migration,
4. migration intended to be temporary, but becoming permanent.

The complex set of factors and interactions that contributes to international migration means that “research on migration is...intrinsically interdisciplinary” (Castles & Miller 2009).

The following sections offer a review of the main migration theories.

3.2 Theoretical approaches to migration

Research literature on international migration provides a framework for understanding the multifaceted migratory process of migration and settlement abroad. Massey *et al.* (1993:432) highlight that migration theories do not provide a “single, coherent theory of international migration, only a fragmented set of theories that have developed largely in isolation from one another”. Although all migration theories ultimately aim to explain the same phenomenon, they “employ radically different concepts, assumptions, and frames of reference” (Massey *et al.* 1993:432). For that reason, the authors express scepticism about approaches that offer explanations based on a narrow set of factors, e.g. micro-level approaches that do not consider the importance of wider structural factors on individual decisions or structural approaches that deny the agency of individual migrants. Consequently, the authors suggest incorporating “a variety of perspectives, levels and assumptions” in order to understand the “complex, multifaceted nature” of contemporary migration processes (Massey *et al.* 1993:432). This is in line with Castles and Miller’s (2009:30) declaration that “macro-, meso- and micro-structures are intertwined in the migration process (...) [and] no single cause is ever sufficient to explain why people decide to leave their country and settle in another”.

The following sections present theories concerning the magnitude and dynamics of the migration phenomenon, which aim to provide a comprehensive explanation both

for the initial migration decisions as well as for return migration.²⁹ The subsequent sections present analyses of how these migration theories have been applied to Polish migration.

These theories focus on both economic and non-economic motivations for migration and shed light on the specific circumstances under which migration takes place. The following theories are discussed:

1. Neoclassical economics
2. The new economics of labour migration theories (NELM)
3. The structural approach
4. Social System and Network Theory
5. Transnationalism

3.2.1 Economic theories of migration: neoclassical economics and the new economics of labour migration theories

Building on Ravenstein's law of migration (1885) and the approaches often known as 'push-pull' theories, both the neoclassical economics and the new economics of labour migration (NELM) theories assume that migrants make rational economic choices when responding to market uncertainties. 'Push' factors, such as high levels of unemployment, underdevelopment, poverty and political repression, influence people to leave the areas of origin, whereas 'pull' factors, including demand for labour and political freedoms, attract people to certain receiving countries (Castles & Miller 2009).

Migration is seen as the outcome of an individual cost-benefit analysis, with migrants making rational decisions and moving to countries "where they can expect the highest economic returns on their human resources" (de Haas & Fokkema 2011:756). Migration is perceived as an investment in human capital and takes place when migrants have a good chance of recouping their investment in migrating and skills. Consequently, migrants are often self-selected, with the highly skilled more likely to

²⁹ There is a broader range of migration theories (see Massey et al. 1993), e.g. dual labour market theory (contributing to the economic theories) or world system theory (related to the structural approach). However, since these approaches do not provide analysis for the conditions of return migration, they are not discussed in this chapter.

move because of a higher potential return on their human capital investment (Chiswick 2000).

These theories assume that migrants respond to differentials in earnings and employment conditions between the sending and the receiving countries, with people migrating because they expect higher earnings/better jobs abroad. Successful economic integration in a host country brings opportunities to be more productive and high-earning. However, successful integration abroad can lead to different outcomes.

According to the neoclassical economics theory, return migration happens in cases where migrants are unable to integrate successfully into the labour market by securing employment (de Haas & Fokkema 2011). According to this theory, return migration is the outcome of “structural (educational and economic) integration failure” (de Haas & Fokkema 2011:757) “in terms of expected earnings, employment and duration” (Cassarino 2004:255).

In contrast, according to the new economics of labour migration theory (NELM), return migration is both a consequence and a logical outcome of successful migrant integration into a host country’s labour market. This theoretical approach characterises migration as a temporary phenomenon, with return being a ‘calculated strategy’ following a successful experience abroad. Once migrants meet their goals, such as making savings or acquiring additional skills/training, the probability of return increases. As concluded by Cassarino (2004:256), “the NELM approach to return migration goes beyond a response to negative wage differential” (Stark 1996:11 cited in Cassarino 2004).

The focus of the neoclassical economics theory rests on an individual experience while the subject of the NELM is a family unit or a household, with individual family members temporarily moving abroad to accumulate capital and remitting part of the income to the household (Massey *et al.* 1993). With migration being a livelihood approach to improve a family situation, it becomes logical to send the family member with the best chance of accumulating enough human capital and earning sufficient income in a short time. Essentially, this marks a shift from viewing return migration as a migration failure (the neoclassical economics theory) to viewing it as a success

story of a well-executed migration plan (NELM) (de Haas & Fokkema 2011; Massey *et al.* 1993; Stark 1996:11 cited in Cassarino 2004).

The main shortcoming of these approaches is that both theories explain individual return decisions exclusively in terms of economic factors, paying little attention to broader socio-economic factors, political situations, or migration policies (Stark 1996 cited in Cassarino 2004; Massey *et al.* 1993). Viewed this way, return migration is reduced to an isolated experience which is uninfluenced by the host or home countries. Another shortcoming is that these theories do not consider how the remittances and skills are used upon return to the home country. Nevertheless, as observed by Massey *et al.* (1993:433), public discourse about international migration (in media and some government policies) has been largely shaped by a neoclassical economics theory due to its “simple and compelling explanation”. As such, this approach has also served as “the intellectual basis for much integration policy”.

3.2.2 The structural approach

According to the structural approach, migration is affected by a wide range of situational and structural factors in the sending and receiving countries (Cassarino 2004). Migration is seen as a way to maximise capital and accumulate greater wealth in developed economies by mobilising cheap labour from poorer countries. As such, it further perpetuates the unequal distribution of political and economic power and other resources (Castles & Miller 2009). Much of the literature on the structural approach is concerned with third-world migration to the developed world. However, it can also be a useful theoretical lens to understand migration from CEE countries, which have a very large differential in earnings relative to Western European countries.

According to this theory, return migration occurs when the socio-economic context in the home country meets migrants’ expectations. However, as scholars argue, migrants often face an incomplete understanding of the situational and structural factors in their home countries, even in the current age of information and knowledge exchanges. Consequently, migrants' expectations are often different than the reality they encounter upon return, and this requires some effort from them to readjust to the local context. Additionally, integration of returnees may be hindered by the inability of the

potential employers to adequately assess their skills, knowledge and foreign work experience (Kwok & Leland, 1982; Stark 1995; both cited in Barcevičius 2015). Consequently, when migrants are unable or unwilling to readjust and/or adapt, they may once again consider migrating.

The potential impact of returnees on their home countries is the main focus of the structural approach to return migration. The capacity of migrants to use their migration experiences to benefit their origin societies largely depends on their skills and financial capital, as well as on local power relations, traditions and values in home countries (Castles & Miller 2009). Time also plays a crucial role in the return process - if a stay abroad was too short, migrants might not have acquired a sufficient level of skills or experience to modernise their countries upon return. On the other hand, a prolonged stay abroad detaches migrants from their networks and localities, making it hard for them to reintegrate again. The limited capacity of returnees to modernise their countries of origin also results from spending foreign money on consumerism rather than on investments that could secure long-term income (Lewis & Williams 1986, cited in Cassarino 2004).

Overall, the structural approach draws a rather pessimistic picture of the capacities of returnees to innovate and bring change to their home societies. This is based on assumptions of a structural dichotomy/differences between the sending and receiving countries, and a perceived lack of links and information exchanges between them.³⁰ This assumption has been strongly questioned by transnationalists and social network theorists (Cassarino 2004).

3.2.3 Social System and Network Theory

The social system and network theory explains migration through the strong links between migrants and their previous places of settlement. According to social system theory, migration results from pre-existing links between sending and receiving countries, e.g. due to their colonial past, political or economic links or cultural ties (Castles & Miller 2009). The social network theory emphasises links at the micro-

³⁰ A study by Grabowska *et al.* (2017) shows that Polish migrants are agents of change in Poland through social remittances.

level between migrants and their social networks,³¹ such as family members, friends and others already living abroad, and meso-level, with the emergence of the “migration industry”. The likelihood of international mobility increases with the presence of social networks abroad because they decrease the costs and risks of migration while increasing the potential gains from migration (see Massey *et al.* 1993). At the meso-level, the migration industry creates links and networks consisting of individuals, groups or institutions that mediate between migrants and the political or economic institutions of the host countries (e.g. recruitment agents, migration lawyers, smugglers). The migration industry relies on migration flows, thus it has “a strong interest in the continuation of migration” (Castles & Miller 2009:30).

The composition of migration networks and links have impact on the breadth of the social structures in which each migrant operates. The pre-migration structures shape the performance of migrants abroad while also defining how well migrants can maintain cross-border linkages and re-integrate upon returning (Cassarino 2004). However, migration networks and the social capital of migrants often complement and reinforce each other. The actions and initiatives undertaken by returnees are often explained through the experience of migration and the various relationships established abroad. Consequently, the success of return migration results from migration networks and the pre-migration social capital of migrants (Cassarino 2004).

On the other hand, the extended social networks, family reunion (e.g. bringing spouses and children) and formation of new families abroad contribute to a more permanent settlement. The presence of children, in particular school-aged children, further embeds migrants in their lives abroad. Once children go to school in a new country, form peer-group relations and develop transnational identities, any return to a home country becomes more difficult. Similarly, strong employment relationships also offer incentives for long-term stays abroad (Castles & Miller 2009).

3.2.4 Transnationalism

Building on theories of migration networks but going beyond the micro-level, transnationalism aims to better understand the social and economic links between the

³¹ Similarly to the NELM.

home and host countries (Cassarino 2004). It assumes that migrants maintain regular and dynamic links between both countries with the back-and-forth crossing of borders facilitated by advancements in communication technologies and improvements in transport.

Transnationalism is linked to two interrelated approaches: transnational identities and transnational mobility. The transnational identities perspective assumes that migration leads to the creation of ‘double identities’ combining elements from both countries, rather than to conflicting identities. This ability to negotiate one’s place in society allows migrants to be better-integrated in the host country, while regular contact with their home country facilitates preparation for return. Nevertheless, migrants may still need to adapt upon return due to acquiring new ‘identity attributes’ abroad which distinguish them from their home societies (Cassarino 2004:264). As a consequence, returnees may feel excluded by their home societies and need to negotiate between their own identities and the social pressure to conform to the local identities back home.

Transnational mobility highlights the circular character of moving between countries.³² This is because “return does not constitute the end of a migration cycle” but is rather “part and parcel of a circular system of social and economic relationships and exchanges facilitating the reintegration of migrants while conveying knowledge, information and membership” (Cassarino 2004:262).

Although transnationalism is defined as links between migrants’ home and host countries, the research literature also links transnationalism with diasporas and the wider links and connectedness that exists between migrants due to their shared origin, ethnicity or group solidarity. However, “the term diaspora often has strong emotional connotations, while the notion of a transnational community is more neutral” (Castles & Miller 2009:31). As diasporas are beyond the scope of this thesis, diaspora literature is not covered in this review.

³² This is opposed to the binary structuralist vision of cross-border movement.

3.3 Theoretical approaches on the relationship between migration and family formation

Literature on the experiences of migrants in a number of countries proposes a number of hypothesis on the link between family events and migration decisions. These hypotheses might be useful in explaining the aggregate fertility patterns.

Some scholars view migration as a predictor of family events (e.g. Kulu 2005), while others suggest that migration is an outcome of family life events (e.g. Dustmann 2003; cf. Kleinepiper *et al.* 2015). Most of the theories and frameworks explaining the relationship between family events and migration are based on the experiences of people migrating from developing high-fertility countries to developed (typically) low-fertility countries. However, as shown in the subsequent sections of this chapter, these approaches can also provide a useful analytical tool to examine experiences of Polish migrants in the UK, representing migration between two low-fertility countries).

3.3.1 Migration as a predictor of family events

Some researchers suggest that the migration trajectory can help in explaining family behaviour (e.g. partnership formation, fertility). Analysing the impact of migration on family events and patterns of fertility, researchers have convened five partly complementary, partly contradictory hypotheses (see Kulu 2005), presented below.

The *adaptation hypothesis* assumes that the fertility behaviour of migrants adapts to that of people in the destination country, often as a result of exposure to cultural factors or socio-economic and political conditions in the receiving society. This means that migrants alter their fertility behaviour on the basis of practical factors, such as the host country's welfare provisions or the labour market situation (Andersson 2004; Andersson & Scott 2004). For most migrants, adaptation of fertility patterns usually means convergence to a lower fertility level typical for the host country. However, convergence from a lower fertility context to higher fertility behaviour is also observed (see Milewski 2007).

The *socialisation hypothesis*, in contrast, emphasises that migrants' fertility patterns are mostly shaped by the values and the dominant social norms experienced in the childhood years in their countries of origin. Therefore, it predicts that migration does not affect individual behaviour as migrants follow the fertility preferences found in their childhood environment (Milewski 2007).

The *selection hypothesis* argues that migrants are a specific group of people whose personal norms and values are more similar to those of people in the country of destination than in the country of origin. Therefore, rather than migration changing migrants' fertility intentions, migrants move to countries where fertility rates closely resembling their personal fertility preferences. The selection hypothesis emphasises the importance of individual, observable, demographic and socio-economic characteristics of migrants, such as education or occupation, as well as unobservable factors such as fertility preferences or professional career ambitions (Milewski 2007; Schmid & Kohls 2009).

The *disruption hypothesis* suggests that, immediately before and after migration, migrants exhibit lower fertility than that expected if they had not migrated. This lower fertility level can be linked to several factors, for instance insecurity and stress related to the move itself, temporal separation of partners if they move at different times, and breaks in economic activity. Lower fertility levels before migration are reported as family formation is postponed in anticipation of the move, whereas elevated birth rates follow shortly after migration to catch-up and compensate for the delay in childbearing (Kulu 2005; Milewski 2007). The decrease in fertility is only temporary and usually has no impact on the completed fertility of a woman (Schmid & Kohls 2009).

Finally, the *interrelation of events hypothesis* suggests that elevated birth rates shortly after migration result from different events, such as family formation and migration, which take place simultaneously. This is particularly relevant for migrants who move for the purpose of family building (Milewski 2007).

There is some similarity between the *disruption* and *interrelation of events hypotheses*, as they both mostly focus on the short-term effects (timings effects) of migration upon fertility. In contrast, the *socialisation* and *adaptation hypotheses* mostly focus on the

long-term effects, while the *selection hypothesis* emphasises the importance of the wider socio-economic circumstances of migrants. As noted in Schmid and Kohls (2009: 41), “these hypotheses are not mutually exclusive” and may operate at the same time, apply only to certain groups of migrants or to specific times, or even “impose counter-acting influences on migrant fertility” at the individual levels and consequently also be observed in aggregated fertility patterns.

3.3.2 Migration as an outcome of family events

Examining the family life course, some scholars observed that migration is more likely to take place at certain life/family formation stages. Young, single and childless people are typically the most mobile populations. On the other hand, having a partner and/or children decreases the desire and the likelihood to migrate due to the economic and psychological costs, which are particularly high when children are of school age. However, when families with children migrate, either together or as a result of family reunification, their likelihood of return is low (see Kleinepier *et al.* 2015).

Family-related factors also come into play in cases of return migration. For instance, for husbands/wives who migrated on their own while their family stayed in their home country, the risk of marital separation or divorce is found to increase the likelihood of return. On the other hand, being in a relationship with a partner from the destination country decreases the chance of return (see Kleinepier *et al.* 2015). Similarly, the presence of children can also decrease the likelihood of return migration (Dustmann 2003).

This brief review shows the complexity of the relationship between family formation/fertility behaviour and migration. These hypotheses are used in Chapter 5 to support the analysis of the birth registration data, and to interpret the migration and family formation patterns of Poles in the UK.

3.4 Factors influencing Polish migration

Polish intra-EU migration has been influenced by a range of factors at a macro- (e.g. EU accession, economic situations in Poland and other EU countries), meso- (e.g. links with previous waves of migrants paving a way for migration), and micro-level (e.g. the situation of an individual migrant and his/her family). The subsequent parts

of this section provide a more detailed overview of how each of these factors shape Polish migration, and how these factors have been linked with the migration theories presented in Section 3.2.

3.4.1 Poles predominantly viewed as economic migrants

Comparative studies analysing migration flows in the EU post-2004 report that the main drivers for EU migration were the relative income levels and employment opportunities in particular MS (European Commission 2012; Holland *et al.* 2011). The economic factors were also the main determinants for Polish post-accession migration (Anacka & Fihel 2012; Drinkwater *et al.* 2006; Pollard *et al.* 2008; White 2016; White *et al.* 2018). Therefore, it is not surprising that *the economic theories of migration* dominated analytical approaches to investigating Polish post-2004 migration to the UK, in particular in the early years after EU accession. Drinkwater *et al.* (2006) argued that emigration for Polish nationals was a rational reaction to the difficult economic situation and high levels of unemployment in Poland. This was echoed in Pollard *et al.*'s study (2008:30) observing that “the large majority of post-enlargement migrants have come to the UK to work”.

Studies mostly explored employment experiences of Polish migrants, such as their sectors of employment, occupations and wages (Drinkwater *et al.* 2006; Fihel & Piętka 2007), the relationship between migrants' class and their employment status (Eade *et al.* 2007), the migrants' de-skilling and the discrepancies between educational attainment and the nature of employment in the UK (Pollard *et al.* 2008), and the experiences of workers employed in the particular sectors of economy, e.g. hospitality (Janta & Ladkin 2009; Janta 2011) and construction (Datta 2008, 2009).

Comparing pre- and post-accession employment experiences of CEE migrants (including Polish migrants), Anderson *et al.* (2006) concluded that for many migrants it was easier to secure employment and improve working conditions post-2004. This confirms the importance of *the structural factor* of EU membership (in line with the structural approaches exploring migration), as legalising migration status³³ helped

³³ Many migrants from Poland and other CEE countries had irregular status in the UK pre-2004. The 2004 enlargement legalised their stay and work in the UK.

CEE migrants to obtain higher-status jobs. Nevertheless, many migrants remained in low-wage and low-status jobs. Many post-accession Polish migrants were also willing to accept such jobs, at least temporarily, in exchange for relatively high earnings and a decent lifestyle. The relative ease in finding employment in the UK was also facilitated by *structural factors* related to the labour market opportunities, including the demand for low-skilled labour in the British labour market and the presence of social networks (in line with the social networks theory). These social networks included a ‘migration industry’ (Garapich 2008) – various businesses operated by and for migrants which help to maintain transnational links and adaptation to the UK, and the existing Polish migration networks formed by the pre-accession migrants (Trevena 2013).

For some highly skilled and career-oriented migrants, in particular those just entering the labour market, low-skilled occupations were not perceived as humiliating but rather as a stepping-stone for eventual upward occupational and social mobility (Parutis 2014; Szewczyk 2014; Trevena 2013). In fact, over time many Polish migrants did move up in the occupational ladder and/or change their sector of employment due to undertaking additional training, gaining new skills or qualifications, and being promoted (Cieslik 2011). This finding confirms that, in line with the economic theories of migration, Polish migrants wanted to capitalise on their investment in education and training.

Gaining new experiences, having stable and secure employment, and having job autonomy and respect were qualities that migrants valued highly, as they did not experience these in Poland (White 2011b; White 2016) (these structural factors related to the labour market situation in Poland can be viewed as the facilitators of outmigration). Yet, despite gaining these additional credentials and experience, many Polish migrants were not optimistic about their career prospects in Poland. As the “cultural capital cannot be simply carried across borders in a ‘rucksack’” (Erel 2010, cited in Ryan 2018:241), many people feared that their knowledge, skills and expertise would not easily transfer into the Polish context.³⁴ The structural approaches exploring

³⁴ This was confirmed in Ryan & Mulholland’s (2014) study of French migrants in London, which demonstrated the difficulty of transferring cultural and social capital from home to destination country, as well as transferring newly-acquired cultural capital to the country of origin upon return.

migration confirm the economic difficulties of returnees to integrate in the local labour market. Finally, migrants have gradually become embedded in the British labour market over time, while simultaneously slowly dis-embedding from (or having never been embedded in) the Polish labour market (Ryan 2018).

In general, as argued by Cieslik (2011) and Karolak (2015; 2016), few studies focused on migrants' own experiences and perceptions of the labour market, or aspects related to the quality of work. Overall, several studies have attested that Polish migrant workers were satisfied with their working conditions and standards in the UK (Cieslik 2011; Karolak 2015, 2016; Okólski & Salt 2014; White 2013a). This satisfaction with working conditions is paradoxical in view of *the dual labour market theory* and *the segmented labour market model*, which show that migrants tend to experience sectoral and occupational segregation and inequalities (see Massey *et al.* 1993). The analysis of Polish migrants' employment situations in the UK indeed indicates similarities with the experiences of other migrants, such as high levels of precariousness and job insecurity, requirements of flexibility and low levels of pay. The precariousness of the Polish migrant workers might have been further influenced by their young age, as young people typically have a structurally worse position in the labour market than older workers.

Polish migrants' positive perceptions of their labour market experiences may have resulted from having sufficient means to financially support their families and having a 'decent' life. Since a common reason for Polish migration to the UK was to have more time for family (White 2011a), it is unsurprising that Polish migrants appreciated that working in Britain provided them with more opportunities and flexibility for reconciling professional and private life (Chłoń-Domińczak 2018; Duda-Mikulin 2013a, 2013b, 2015).³⁵ Consequently, migrants realised that from a financial perspective, life was much easier in the UK (Karlak 2016; Kay & Trevena 2018; McGhee *et al.* 2012; Piętka-Nykaza & McGhee 2017; White *et al.* 2018).

³⁵ In general, both female and male Polish migrant workers held positive views on opportunities to reconcile professional and private life in the UK. However, Bargłowski & Pustulka (2018) study to some extent challenge this conviction. The authors suggested that female employment in Polish migrant families was typically seen as subordinated to male employment, with female migrants only working if it made sense financially for a family, and if the partner agreed to take care of the children while the woman was at work.

In sum, many studies suggested that economic factors were relatively important for migration decisions when moving out of Poland. However, evidence on the importance of economic factors for return migration is less clear. For instance, Barcevičius *et al.*'s (2012) study suggested that economic factors played a pivotal and independent role in shaping decisions to return. In contrast, other studies bring evidence that the role of economic factors should be viewed against a wider context and in relation to other non-economic factors (Erdal 2014b; White 2013a; White 2013b). This lack of consensus in the research literature about the importance of the economic factors for the return decisions of Poles was one of the motivations to conduct this study.

3.4.2 The role of family in migration decisions

The importance of family in deciding to migrate cannot be understated. While some researchers view migration as a predictor of family events, others suggest that migration is an outcome of family life events (see Section 3.3 for a discussion on the theoretical approaches on the relationship between migration and family formation). While there is no consensus on this issue in the research literature, it seems that for many Polish families, decisions to migrate were influenced by family. Firstly, Poles who already had children in Poland were less likely to migrate; secondly, those Poles who migrated and had children abroad seem to be less likely to return.³⁶

Researchers examining Polish families found that children's education (a structural factor) takes a pivotal role in families' decisions to remain in the UK (e.g. Kloc-Nowak 2018; McGhee *et al.* 2012; McGhee *et al.* 2013; Moskal 2010; Ryan *et al.* 2008; Ryan *et al.* 2009; Trevena 2009; Trevena *et al.* 2012; White 2011a; White 2011c) and that parents were unlikely to disturb children's education (Lopez Rodriguez 2010; Sales *et al.* 2008; Ryan *et al.* 2008; Ryan *et al.* 2009). This approach was motivated by a number of factors. Firstly, Polish migrant parents were concerned about the insufficiency of their children's Polish language skills, a structural factor that would make coping with the demands of Polish schooling a challenge.³⁷ Secondly, migrant

³⁶ Evidence from the Netherlands in Kleinepier *et al.* (2015), from Norway in Friberg (2012) and Erdal (2014), and from Belgium in Levrau *et al.* (2014). Evidence from the UK in multiple sources presented in this chapter.

³⁷ The findings from a study by Grzymała-Moszczyńska *et al.* (2015) show that this concern is valid. Due to an insufficient knowledge about bilingualism among teachers in Polish schools, Polish returnee children were often considered to be fluent in Polish and not needing any additional Polish language support regardless of their actual level of academic Polish. Polish teachers were also found not to be sufficiently culturally and socially aware of the specific challenges

parents seemed to be aware of the wider range of structural factors related to the education system, such as the differences in the school programmes across various education stages, and the philosophy and approach towards teaching and learning in Poland and the UK (see Section 2.7; and Moskal 2014; Ryan *et al.* 2009; Ryan & Sales 2011; Trevena 2012; White 2011a; White 2011b).

The provision of a better future for children was one of the main motives for migration among Polish nationals, even if children's opportunities were often at the cost of parents' self-sacrifice (Castles & Miller 2009; Clements 2014; Erdal 2014a).³⁸ However, the literature analysing the actual situation of Polish migrant families raised questions about the extent to which this 'better future' was attainable for Polish migrants, and whether or not the real-life experiences of Polish migrant children were in line with their parents' aspirations. Bargłowski and Pustulka's (2018:10) study of Polish migrant parenting practices offered the rather pessimistic conclusion that Polish migrants "seemed to be aware that their current situation conflicted with the idea of providing 'a better future' through mobility".

The availability of flexible work and childcare arrangements (structural factors) also played a key role in migrant parents' decisions. Previous research studies found that Polish migrant parents demonstrate a broad range of attitudes towards care arrangements and spending time with children (just as British parents do) (Kloc-Nowak 2018). However, overall migrant parents believed that they had better opportunities to combine professional and parental responsibilities in the UK than in Poland and that this, in turn, encouraged them to stay in the UK (White 2011a; Ryan *et al.* 2008; Ryan *et al.* 2009). In addition, research by Duda-Mikulin (2013a, 2013b, 2015) showed that bringing up children abroad had a modernising role on the division of power and childcare responsibilities in families, with migrant fathers offering greater involvement in the provision of care (see the social remittances concept in Grabowska *et al.* 2017). However, some migrant families adopted a traditional male earner and female caregiver model, in particular less educated women and women in

that returnee children might be facing in Polish schools, for instance being of a mixed racial origin or having one non-Polish parent. Polish schooling was also reported to be less student-friendly, with more hierarchical and formal relationships between staff, parents and students.

³⁸ Parental, and in particular maternal, sacrifice of prioritising children's needs and potential benefits over parent's (mother's) own needs is a deeply embedded cultural norm in Poland (see the concept of 'Mother Pole' in Hryciuk & Karolczuk 2012).

low-paid jobs for whom work was less economically rewarding (Bargłowski & Pustulka 2018). These labour market withdrawals were also motivated by the high cost of childcare, with fees for formal childcare provision (a place in a nursery or at a childminder) often exceeding the salary of an average-earning migrant (Bargłowski & Pustulka 2018). To some extent, Polish migrants also relied on family members to provide support with childcare (see Kloc-Nowak 2018, and the concept of ‘flying grannies’ in Osipovič 2010). However, the lack of wider family networks was considered a challenge for many Polish migrant families, and as a factor that could encourage return migration (Bargłowski & Pustulka 2018; Engbersen *et al.* 2013; Osipovič 2010).

That said, having children also expanded the social circles of migrants and provided opportunities to create local friendship networks, e.g. through playgroups and schools, and by using services such as healthcare. These child-centric activities allowed migrants (including Polish migrants) to understand better and become more deeply involved in the local system and structures (in line with the social network theories of migration, see Ryan 2018 for application of these theories to Polish migrant, and Ryan & Mulholland 2014 for French migrants). As a result, Polish migrants gradually began integrating and having ‘social anchors’ (Grzymała-Kazłowska 2017) or factors ‘embedding’ (Ryan 2018) them in the UK. However, some Polish migrants might have been prevented from gaining these benefits, e.g. due to their language abilities.

Analysing factors that influenced return among CEE migrants, Barcevičius *et al.* (2012) noted the importance of family reasons. Typically, return coincided with changes in the family structure or family needs, such as children being born, children starting education or transferring to the next education cycle, or changing childcare needs. Difficulties in managing as a single parent abroad, as well as not wanting children to grow up in a foreign culture, also contributed to returns. Returning due to family reasons helped to mitigate the potential negative societal perception of returnees. However, as Barcevičius *et al.* (2012:26) pointed out, “the link between family and return is not always causal” as wider literature on Polish migrants suggests that returns take place when migrants' wider goals and expectations are accomplished.

3.4.3 Socio-political factors

The *structural factors* of EU enlargement can be seen as facilitators of the East-West migration flows. Poland's accession to the EU provided Poles with new rights and economic opportunities to live and work in EU MS (Collett 2013). While this relative ease of moving between countries encouraged migration, the low barriers to mobility can also facilitate return.

Examining Polish migration to the Netherlands, Kleinepier *et al.* (2015) noted that the free movement of people (*a structural factor*) influenced the level of return migration. Polish migrant workers who entered the Netherlands after 2007, a year when the restrictions to access the Dutch labour market were lifted, were more likely to return than Poles who came in earlier years. This shows that strong migration controls and regulations may be counterproductive, as only a small proportion of migrants return home when residence permits are at risk due to migration regulation. On the other hand, when travelling back and forth is relatively easy, migrants may prefer to return home (at least temporarily). As the authors concluded, “return migration thus occurs more frequently in a context with few institutional migration barriers, which makes the family domain an even more important factor in migration decision-making” (Kleinepier *et al.* 2015:173).

Socio-political contexts and other structural factors in the home and host countries also play a crucial role in migration decisions. Individuals migrate when opportunities abroad are favourable and can compensate migration costs. Potential migrants compare aspects such as living standards and the quality of housing (Spencer *et al.* 2007; Rabikowska 2010), quality of life (“having a ‘normal’, ‘decent life’” McGhee *et al.* 2012), and the availability and quality of services (e.g. healthcare, education) when they search for stability (Kloc-Nowak 2018). Other relevant social factors include the efficiency of the national welfare system to provide support for migrant families. White (2011a) observed that child benefits constituted a substantial part of the budget for Polish families, and thus facilitated their stay in the UK.³⁹ Migration decisions are also influenced by the command of the language spoken in the

³⁹ According to White (2011a) the state benefits available in Britain were facilitating Polish migrants' stay but rarely constituted a 'pull' factor attracting migrants to the UK.

destination country, as poor language capacities can limit migration opportunities (White 2011a; 2011b). Factors such as the age at migration and duration of residence in a destination country are also important variables for understanding migration decisions. In general, migrating at a younger age and remaining longer in the host country significantly increases the likelihood of settling abroad. The probability of return migration is especially high during the first five years after arrival, and decreases steadily thereafter (Dustman 1996). This may be a relevant factor for Polish migrants as a substantial percentage of Poles has been living in the UK for over a decade, and many Polish migrants have had children during that time (see Chapter 5).

Migration can be also positively influenced by the openness of the host society towards diversity and inclusion, whereas anti-migration sentiments and hostility towards migrants can potentially deter migration. Moving from Poland, one of the most culturally and ethnically homogenous countries in Europe, to a superdiverse Britain provided many Polish migrants with their first opportunity to encounter a culturally, socially and ethnically diverse society. These encounters with different social structures, values and lifestyles caused many Poles to confront their own practices and discourses about tolerance and openness towards others. This, in turn, could also affect migration decisions (Gawlewicz 2015).

Even the social and political factors were typically not the sole determining factors in migration decisions; but, as shown by Barcevičius *et al.* (2012:28), these factors often contributed to migration decisions, in particular to deter return to home countries.

3.4.4 Emotional factors, a sense of belonging and feeling at home

Studies have consistently found that the most common reasons for returning to Poland were homesickness, not living close to family and friends, and responsibilities to look after elderly parents, with return migrants mostly moving back to their local areas (Barcevičius *et al.* 2012; Frelak & Rogulska 2008; Lubbers & Kaliszewska 2013; White 2011a). This confirms the importance of the social system and network theories to explain Polish migration.

Initially upon migrating, Polish migrants were provided with emotional support by family and friends in Poland. This support could also be facilitated abroad, for instance

by living in areas with a high concentration of Polish migrants, and migrants' ability to build new networks and access social capital and emotional support in the UK. The level and nature of support largely depended on pre-migration ties and the existence of a 'migration industry' (Burrell 2008; Garapich 2008; Ryan *et al.* 2007, 2008; Spencer *et al.* 2007; White 2011a). White (2011a:169) suggested that "if Polish migrants can make a sufficiently Polish home in the UK and use transnational networks to alleviate their homesickness [...] they may prefer to stay in the UK", and this could, in turn, postpone their return.

The likelihood of Polish migrants staying in the UK is also related to the emotional factors of feeling 'at home' and integrating in the destination country. 'Home' often represents a state of mind in which the person belongs and feels a sense of stability and rootedness (Dawson & Rapport 1998; de Haas & Fokkema 2011; Snel *et al.* 2006, last two sources cited in Erdal 2014b). Migrants may have a sense of belonging and remain active in multiple locations, indicating that their idea of home may cover multiple places – 'here', 'there', or 'both' – while sustaining dual attachments and ties over time⁴⁰ (Al Ali & Koser 2002; Snel *et al.* 2006, both cited in Erdal 2014b). This is in line with the theories of transnationalism providing explanations how migrants may capitalise on links with home and host countries, and how this, in turn, facilitate dual identities among migrants. However, moving between countries may also result in some people no longer being able to locate their home because they no longer belong to their countries of origin and, simultaneously, may not yet belong to their destination countries (Erdal 2014b). This is because the creation of home in the new country, and the corresponding notion of belonging, is a dynamic process. It encompasses an individual's sense of rootedness or identification with a place and development of a community and its collective values, both of which change as a result of everyday experiences (Sime 2018). This process of becoming attached requires an emotional investment from migrants but it can reward migrants with a new identity as well as a feeling of emotional safety and being 'at home'.

These mutually overlapping dimensions of home, including the spatial, temporal, emotional, symbolic and rational, refer to both private and public spheres. Private

⁴⁰ This is in line with the theory of transnationalism.

interpretations include the notions of rootedness and relatedness. The public or collective definition understands home as a social construct and associates it with social status and the ways of acquiring home (e.g. buying house/property) (Hobsbawm 1991, cited in Parutis 2006). The likelihood of return migration decreases once migrants successfully (re-)create home in a new environment, for instance by living independently as a nuclear family (White 2011a). In the minds of migrants, home may no longer relate to a particular space or time but rather to their origins, which become the basis of their sense of identity. Although migrants may be nostalgic for the values and culture from the past, the potential return could only be to the spatial location of their past home, rather than to their origins or past because their origin country has changed (Parutis 2006). Once migrants become attached to a new place and (re-)construct home, these new connections help migrants locate 'home' in the immigrant country and provide them with a sense of new identity.

Parutis' (2006; 2013) studies show that when defining their home and belonging, aspects such as social status, family unification and living conditions were more important for Polish migrants than time spent abroad. In fact, she noted that despite a relatively short stay in Britain, some Polish migrants have already developed a sense of rootedness in the UK.⁴¹ Poles were more likely to perceive Britain as their home if their social status in the UK was aligned with their education level and career aspirations. Living together as a family in the UK also gave Poles a symbolic meaning of feeling at home, as the affiliation and emotional ties with a particular place bound people together.⁴² Owning a house gave migrants a physical attachment to the UK, which often translated into an emotional and symbolic connection of belonging to Britain, and encouraged greater participation and integration in a local community. This connection, at least initially, was often quite rational because buying a house was perceived as a financial investment rather than a deeper attachment to the UK. In contrast, renting accommodation was often an emotionally disturbing process which postponed the feeling of being 'at home' in Britain. Nevertheless, as noted by Parutis (2011:265), Polish migrants were able to "skilfully manipulate the British housing

41 It is worth noting that Parutis (2006) study was conducted in 2004-2005 and included Polish migrants who came to the UK before (the earlier was in 1998) and after Poland's EU accession.

42 Describing factors that facilitated feeling at home in the UK, Parutis (2013) noted that many Polish migrants may have already developed a sense of rootedness in Britain but others may never feel at home in this country.

market in order to achieve maximum benefit from the limited housing options available to them”. Finally, buying a property in the country of origin was often seen by migrants as a good financial investment, but as suggested by Parutis (2006; 2013), could be also interpreted as contributing to a new myth of return.

The emotional dimensions of home were also important for many Polish migrants in Norway (Erdal 2014b). Some migrants conceptualised home as a place where their immediate family was located (often in Poland), while others applied a rational approach and located their home in a place where they have lived at that particular moment in time (in Norway). There were also cosmopolitan Polish migrants articulating multiple belongings and feeling ‘at home’ both in Poland and in Norway. As noted by Erdal (2014b), these emotional aspects related to home and belonging were important for Polish migrants’ identity construction, which could change (and often changed) over time.

Researchers have also observed similarities between Polish and other migrant groups. For instance, Ryan (2015a) observed a similar idealisation of own childhood and perceptions of greater happiness during youth among Irish and Polish migrants. This longing for a nostalgic past, described by Ryan as a ‘rural idyll’, was shared by migrants who wished that their own children could have a similarly happy childhood. Because ‘home’ was now in a foreign country, migrants were questioning their ability to create a similar environment and conditions for their children to grow up in abroad (White 2013a; White 2013b).

However, research conducted with migrant children and youth shows that young people often have different perspectives and experiences of migration from their parents. For instance, Sime’s (2018) study of CEE migrant children living in Scotland found that they built their sense of security and belonging upon emotional factors. This is because the children had often experienced destabilised family relations (e.g. family breakdown, separation from their extended family and friends, or living temporarily with one parent or extended family when their parent(s) migrated). Migrant parents, on the other hand, may have experienced the economic insecurities of precarious and low-paid jobs, political instability, and other personal difficulties, thus built their sense

of security and belonging abroad on the notions of stable employment and beliefs of a better future.

Studies also confirm the theories of transnationalism, and suggest that similarly to adult migrants, children can have multiple and intersecting identifications with both the country of their (or their parents') origin and the host country. Moskal's (2015) study, conducted in Scotland, examined Polish migrant children's sense of place and construction of home, revealing an emerging translocal identity resulting from specific images and emotions that are related to Poland and Scotland. As suggested by Moskal and Sime (2016), these multiple belongings and identities can also result from living transcultural lives and being embedded in two cultures, for instance by speaking two languages (their family language and the official language of a country where they live).

Finally, research literature provides examples that return migration, though sometimes temporary, can also be motivated by the obligation to provide care for ill or ageing parents (the structural factor). This is particularly prevalent in societies such as Poland, where elderly care is expected to be provided mainly by family members as opposed to the welfare state or private institutions (White 2013a; White 2013b). As argued by Krzyżowski (2011), the normative system within Polish society is to reinforce intergenerational solidarity through the care of elderly parents, partly due to the low availability of care institutions in Poland. As a result, migrant women (and, to a lesser degree, migrant men) are burdened with the double obligation to care both for their own children and for their elderly parents in Poland. Replacing direct personal care with financial support is one of the coping strategies of migrant families. However, the expectations and realities of transnational intergenerational care obligations can lead to numerous tensions and moral dilemmas for migrants. At the societal level, the migration of adult children in the context of the care needs of their ageing parents in Poland is often subjected to criticism, with discussions resembling a moral panic (Krzyżowski 2013).

3.5 Patterns, trends and typologies: Polish post-accession migration

Using the perspective of social dynamics in the migratory process, this section provides an overview of patterns characterising Polish post-accession migrants and an

assessment of attempts made hitherto to categorise types of migrants. The concept of social dynamics tries to examine *potential* sequences of migration patterns, the changing nature of migration factors and patterns over time, as well as analyse how they lead to diverse migration outcomes. This section builds on insights from the migration theories revised in sections 3.2 and 3.3, and presents the principal factors influencing Polish migration.

3.5.1 Circular and temporary migration patterns

Migration circularity was a predominant migration pattern among Polish migrants in the pre-accession years, but as Okólski (2012) argued, it also provided analytical lenses for the most recent migration trends. In the initial years following the 2004 accession, researchers, policymakers and the general public assumed that Polish migration was a temporary phenomenon and that migrants would return to their home country after a few years living abroad. Early studies of Polish post-accession migration trends indeed suggested temporary migration patterns, with many migrants not intending to stay permanently abroad. Because it appeared not to result in permanent settlement abroad, Okólski labelled Polish migration as ‘incomplete migration’. This ‘incomplete’ nature of Polish migration was characterised by periods of short-term, often repeated employment abroad, with a large proportion of earnings remitted to support household members in the migrant's home country (Okólski 2001, 2012; Okólski & Salt 2014).

These temporary migration patterns occur because Poles were ‘settled in mobility’ (Morokvasic 2004, cited in White 2016), with one family member working abroad for (often prolonged) periods of time whilst other family members lived in Poland. This migratory approach allows migrants to have “a foot in each country” and to feel that “s/he lived in Poland while working abroad” (White 2016:11).

The assumption about the temporality of migration also results from the initial intentions of Polish migrants. Several studies (Erdal & Ezzati 2015; Ryan 2018) have noted that many Polish migrants, in particular those who were single and without children when they arrived in the UK, described their decision to migrate as almost accidental, or an adventure that happened by chance. Their initial intentions were usually to return to Poland after a relatively short period abroad, or they did not have

clear plans on how long to stay. However, because most of these return migration intentions were uncertain and Polish migrants gradually started settling in the UK, these intentions did not reflect actual return behaviours.

Wider studies show that circularity and temporary movement have been a dominant pattern of migration for a broader range of countries in the CEE region. Favell (2008:703) observed that the temporary and circular character of migratory movements continued during the post-accession years, with CEE labour migrants being viewed as “regional ‘free movers’”. Kleinepier *et al.*'s (2015) study also noted high migration levels among recent intra-EU migrants, who often stay abroad for short periods of time and circulate between home and host countries.⁴³

The circularity of migration was influenced by a range of factors, such as geographical proximity, accessible infrastructure for travel, availability of networks in the host country, and the history of circular labour in some EU countries. In addition, in the EU context, the legal framework for intra-EU migration (the freedom of movement) cannot be underestimated as a factor facilitating frequent movement.

Barcevičius *et al.*'s (2012) study provides some evidence about the cyclical patterns of migration in CEE countries, with returnees regarding their return as temporary. The first type of circular migration is represented by typical seasonal workers such as those in agriculture and hospitality sectors who are contracted for short-term labour assignments. For them, the temporary nature of their migration was usually planned at the outset. However, for other migrants this temporariness was not planned, and instead resulted from the disappointment of unmet expectations after being confronted with realities at home country. For example, many returnees were negatively surprised by the economic and labour market situation, particularly in more disadvantaged regions of home countries. In addition, living costs increased more than they realised and compensation was not commensurate with the increase. As concluded by the authors, this “disappointment can turn into a ‘migration loop’ trap” (Iglicka 2009:86 cited in Barcevičius *et al.* 2012:31) in which, over the long-term, many Polish migrants may be potentially ‘stuck’ and constantly navigating between Poland and the UK. The

⁴³ However, since EU migrants do not need to report their mobility, capturing their behaviour can prove difficult, e.g. in population registers.

failure of return migrants to integrate may result from being disadvantaged in both home and host countries' labour markets, as well as from a broader range of attachments putting restrictions on migrants' future options as related to children's schooling, housing situation, and psycho-social wellbeing (see Erdal 2014b; Iglicka 2009; Iglicka 2010 cited in Barcevičius *et al.* 2012). Apart from not permanently moving back to Poland, this 'constant' return may have some negative emotional consequences for a migrant family (Kay & Trevena 2017; Piętka-Nykaza & McGhee 2017).

Finally, the temporal migration pattern identified by Barcevičius *et al.* (2012) also included the strategy of "rational international unpredictability" (Grabowska-Lusińska *et al.* 2009) and "liquid migration" in which several options are kept open (Grabowska-Lusińska 2010), as presented in the next sub-section.

3.5.2 Post-accession 'liquid migration' characterised by temporariness, unpredictability and individualisation

There was some anticipation, in particular in the early post-accession years, that Polish migration exhibits new forms of mobility not observed in the earlier waves of migration in Europe.⁴⁴ These new features were characterised by White (2016:10) as "transnational identities, ties and practices" of "mobile EU citizens". Researchers anticipated that these new mobility practices were influenced by migrants' thoughts about how long to stay abroad. Other researchers suggested that this 'liquid migration' was also typical for the earlier waves of migration from Eastern to Western Europe, but had intensified in the post-accession years (Anacka *et al.* 2013; Engbersen & Snel 2013; Glorious *et al.* 2013; Grabowska-Lusińska 2010, 2013; Moskal 2013). Grabowska-Lusińska (2010) observed that post-accession returns did not seem to fit many theoretical migratory concepts due to the liquidity of migrants' strategies. The strategies of many migrants could be characterised as unpredictable, with many factors potentially playing a role in their decisions to return to Poland (and other CEE countries). This was because many CEE labour migrants did not have a fixed idea of their duration of stay in the receiving countries and tended to keep their options open (Snel *et al.* 2015). As reported by Fihel and Grabowska-Lusińska (2014:30), this

⁴⁴ Polish migration was perceived as an example of wider CEE migration trends.

repeated “back-and-forth mobility for employment” dominated CEE migration patterns and could be influenced by the family situation given the significant costs of moving a family to the destination country.

This paradigm of transnational lives is closely linked to, and builds upon, the theories of transnationalism and social networks. These analytical frameworks were considered relevant to explore the “temporary, often seasonal migration patterns” (Glorious *et al.* 2013:8) observed among post-accession CEE migrants. The concept of transnational lives also seemed to fit well with the wider concepts of cosmopolitanism and transnationalism of young European migrants. New migration waves often included groups of “young migrants, often students or graduates, without family obligations and without clear plans concerning their future life” (Glorious *et al.* 2013:8).

In line with the theory of social networks, researchers argued that Polish migrants' social networks shaped patterns of migration, stay and integration. Traditionally, the theory of transnational social networks assumed that family and close friends back home in sending countries were sources of social and emotional support for migrants, whereas colleagues, neighbours, other migrants and members of the host society provided more informational and practical support. Over time, transnational ties would become less important and networks in the host country would become stronger, facilitating community formation and a permanent stay (Friberg 2012). Ryan *et al.* (2008) and White and Ryan's (2008) research showed that, for Polish migrants, this relationship might remain dynamic. The authors argued that Polish migrants could have strong transnational ties with their home communities in Poland even after having lived in the UK for several years, allowing them to keep their options open and maintain the possibility of their return to Poland. At the same time, they established strong networks in the UK, in turn facilitating permanent settlement as migration was easier to bear emotionally and could be extended indefinitely.

3.5.3 Return migration

The assumed temporariness of Polish migration at the time of 2004 accession brought anticipation that Poles would eventually return to their home country. The expectation of return migration became even more prominent with the onset of the economic crisis. In line with the economic theory, high flows of labour migration were observed during

periods of economic prosperity, with EU migrants (including Polish migrants) attracted by the labour market opportunities. However, smaller inflows and greater return migration were expected during the economic recession because EU migrants were typically more affected by the worsening economic situation than native workers (European Commission 2012). Indeed, the declining situation in the British labour market was the main reason for return to Poland, as cited by respondents in Iglicka's (2009) study. Pollard *et al.* (2008) also noted that migration flows to the UK were slowing four years after accession, and that there was increased evidence of return flows. In addition, the relatively good performance of the Polish economy (in comparison to other EU countries) was seen as a 'pull' factor encouraging return migration. However, there was no evidence of mass return during the last economic turmoil because the recession had less impact on employment in the UK than anticipated, and consequently reduced incentives for Polish migrants to return.

Assessing the number of Poles who returned from working in another EU country, Barcevičius *et al.* (2012) estimated that around 175,000-210,000 Polish nationals returned between 2004 and 2010. However, the authors advised caution in assessing these return migration numbers (see Barcevičius *et al.* 2012: 71-75), arguing that "no mass return took place during the economic crisis" because many migrants "opted for either a wait-and-see strategy by staying in the host countries or moving onward to other destination countries".

Assessing the socio-demographic profile of return migrants, Barcevičius *et al.* (2012) observed that returnees from CEE countries were generally single, predominantly younger than 30, and typically had lower education and skills levels than stayers. This could be because low-educated migrants were in jobs that were lost during the recession and because better educated Polish migrants probably had "fewer problems with integration, better language skills and more desired qualifications in the labour market of the host country" (p. 13), making them less prone to return.

However, researchers also noted that many returnees had difficulties in finding jobs in Poland, or were disappointed by the working standards in Poland, thus triggering

another decision to migrate (see concept of ‘migration loop trap’ in Iglicka 2009; Karolak 2016)⁴⁵.

The economic situation of particular Polish regions is considered to be an important factor because Polish migrants typically return to their local area (Iglicka 2009; White 2011a, White 2013b; Barcevičius *et al.* 2012), mostly due to the important role of local social networks in reintegration, even if these regions have a poor economic outlook and difficult labour market conditions. However, the research of Lubbers and Kaliszewska (2013) on Polish migration to London qualifies this conclusion. They observed that the likelihood of return was small for migrants coming from less economically developed and more traditional parts of Poland, suggesting that the economic prosperity of particular Polish regions can have both positive and negative influences on return migration decisions.

The phenomenon of a second migration was also noted by White (2011a; White 2013a; White 2013b), with Polish returnees often facing unanticipated challenges (e.g. instability and insecurity in the labour market, a low level of social trust, and regional inequalities) upon moving back to Poland. White (2013b) framed this situation as a “double return migration”,⁴⁶ in which failed returns to Poland led to re-settlement abroad. She argued that “Poland currently seems to be having problems keeping its return migrants”, stating that many migrants are “[going] back only to depart again” (White 2013a:1). According to her, disappointment related to failed returns to Poland meant that these double return migrants “engage in new, less transnational livelihood strategies, integrating more abroad and burning bridges back in Poland” (White 2013b:25). The author noted that these signs of settlement in the UK are more pronounced among families, in particular families with school-aged children. It can be hypothesised that, due to the challenges in capturing migration flows, the scale of the ‘double return’ migration is underestimated and therefore also unexplored in the Polish migration scholarship.

45 Building on the social remittances concept, Karolak (2016) examined Polish return migrants’ perception of and coping strategies with different working standards experienced abroad and upon return. The four main strategies proposed by Karolak included re-emigration, activism, adaptation and entrepreneurship.

46 This phenomenon is known in the wider migration literature as ‘re-(e)migration’, ‘secondary migration’ and ‘yo-yo’ migration (see White 2013b). White coined the phrase ‘double return migration’ because Poles whom she interviewed for her research perceived moving back to their migration country as a return. As White (2013b:29) explained: “Migrants talk about ‘return’ to the place they miss when they are away from it. My interviewees often missed being abroad when they were in Poland and felt that they ‘returned’ when they went abroad again”.

3.5.4 Family migration and settlement abroad

In their analysis of the general migratory trends (not specific to EU mobility), Castles and Miller (2009) noted that economically-motivated migrants are usually young ‘target-earners’ who work abroad in order to save money and improve their economic conditions. After a period of time in the receiving country, some of these migrants return home whereas others decide to remain abroad. Although most of the economic migrants have no intention of settling permanently in the receiving country, for many temporary labour mobility is transformed into a permanent stay because their targets and/or plans have changed. Forming a partnership and starting a family usually denotes the end of the temporariness of migration.

These dynamic patterns of migration and settlement may help to explain the trends observed among Polish migrants. Even if the initial migration trajectories of Polish migrants may have been temporary, spontaneous and “intentionally unpredictable” (Eade *et al.* 2006), as some authors have suggested, over time with the birth of child(ren), Polish migrants have increasingly demonstrated patterns of “undeliberate determinacy” (McGhee *et al.* 2017) and settlement in the UK (White 2011a). This is because, as research studies have consistently found, children’s wellbeing, education and future opportunities are considered very important factors for Polish migrant parents (Kay & Trevena 2017; Sales *et al.* 2008; Sime 2018; Ryan *et al.* 2008, Ryan 2009; Trevena *et al.* 2012), with “the interests of children (...) often the main focus of the household's livelihood strategies” (White 2011a: 138). As such, having child(ren) plays a pivotal role in Polish families' decisions about staying abroad. For Polish migrants, family migration can be an indicator of a long-term or even permanent settlement in the UK and other receiving countries because “if migrants form a family they are more likely to stay, either in the country of origin or in the country of destination” (Engbersen *et al.* 2013:978-979; Friberg 2012; White 2011a).

It seems that Poles have a similar migration/settlement behaviour also in other contexts. Examining Polish migrants in Norway, Friberg (2012) observed that many economic migrants went through three stages in the migration process. The first stage was defined by (often male) ‘mobile workers’ temporarily working abroad to earn money for their families in Poland. At this stage, it was a short-term, economically-

driven migration without plans to stay long-term in Norway. However, after a period of working abroad, some of these migrants went through the circular migration stage (“transnational commuter stage” Friberg 2012:1601-1602), with regular periods of working abroad and returning back to Poland to join their families. When partners (typically wives) and children moved to Norway, migration entered a third stage. Family reunification was typically motivated by certain financial stability in Norway and the psychological factors of wanting to live together as a family. Friberg (2012) argued that once family and children joined the primary migrant, it could be expected that they would stay permanently or at least long-term in Norway, because family migration required migrants to socio-economically re-orientate towards Norway due to “changes in household needs, housing, schools, consumption and leisure-time activities, accompanied by a shift in orientation towards social life in Norway” (Friberg 2012:1602).

In line with Friberg's (2012) findings, researchers examining Polish migration patterns in the UK also observed similar trends of settlement abroad, particularly among migrants arriving with children.⁴⁷ Many research studies by Ryan and her colleagues, even those studies conducted in the early post-accession years (e.g. Ryan *et al.* 2008; 2009; Ryan 2009; Ryan and Sales 2011; Sales *et al.* 2008), provide evidence for common patterns in the longer-term stays of Polish migrants. The authors analysed a wide range of factors which influence migrants' decisions to return or extend their time abroad, including career trajectories, lifestyle opportunities, romance and family relationships, and concluded that children and schooling played an important role in the decision-making process. Typically, family migration was a complex and dynamic process in which Polish families arrived with open-ended plans about staying in the UK, and migration decisions were “re-evaluated and re-considered several times over the life-course” (Ryan & Sales 2011:92). However, “the changing needs of children, and particularly the stage they have reached in their education, ... [was] a key element in this process of evaluation and decision making” (Ryan & Sales 2011:92). The authors suggested that the increasing number of Polish children in British schools and

⁴⁷ As presented in Section 3.5.1, there were also studies that characterised post-2004 migration from CEE (including Polish migration) as a temporary or ‘liquid’ phenomenon. However, research by Friberg (2012) as well as research on Polish families in the UK seems to contradict this ‘liquid’ migration type. It is also worth noting that some scholars questioned the co-residentiality requirement as a pre-condition to build an intimate relationship in families, for instance Pustulka (2012) and Urbańska (2015).

the formation and reunification of families among Polish migrants were emerging as critical aspects that could not be omitted from debates on settlement in the UK. The authors argued that having children in British schools helped Poles to integrate into their local areas more easily and, in this way, caused their stay to become more permanent (see White 2016).

Similarly, White's (2011a; White 2011b; White 2011c) research into the factors that determine Polish families' decisions to move, how long to stay in the UK, and whether or not to return to Poland, found that "parents, in particular, seemed disposed to stay" mainly because they did not want to "disturb their children's lives by returning to Poland", especially "in the case of school-age children" (White 2011a:227). According to White (2011a:212), "to have a child starting school can be perceived as a point of no return, the end of temporariness and flexibility for young parents". Therefore, "factors encouraging return have to be strong and also multiple" (White 2011a:201). White's studies also highlight the importance and significance of non-economic factors in migration decisions and the fact that Polish migrants, if they return, are mostly returning to their local area. Consistent with findings presented in earlier sections of this chapter, White did not find evidence of mass return of Polish migrants during the economic crisis.

Drawing on comparative research and historical studies analysing previous waves of intra-EU migration (e.g. Irish migrants to the UK), Ryan (2015a:2) noted that in the past EU migrants also "anticipated temporariness of their mobilities". However, along with longer stays abroad, many migration plans changed over time "as processes of settlement may gradually emerge" (Ryan 2015a:2). This conclusion made Ryan (2015a) sceptical about the circularity and temporariness of Polish post-2004 migration to the UK. She argued that many researchers analysing contemporary migration in Europe too early "heralded a new form of transient mobility associated with short-term, temporary and circular migration, and high levels of transnationalism" (Ryan 2015:1). The author observed that many Polish migrants went through similar phases as previous EU migrants, with Polish migration mainly motivated by economic reasons. With the evidence of family reunification, patterns of longer-term stays started to emerge.

Similar conclusions were reached by Kleinepier *et al.* (2015), who argued that the family dynamics of the EU migrants, the connections between family choices and migration, and the possibly more permanent character of intra-EU migration has been potentially overlooked in policy discussions. Analysing Polish migrants in the Netherlands, Kleinepier *et al.* (2015:173) found that “the majority of Polish migrants that left the Netherlands were single and hardly any of these individuals had children living in the households” whereas those who had family obligations were “the least mobile” (2015:173). The authors suggested that “it is...essential to know more about family life decisions in relation to patterns of settlement and return in order to gain a better understanding of the drivers of the growing intra-European migration faced by most EU countries” (2015:173).

A wider range of studies examining the role of families and children in the migration process also noted patterns of longer-term settlements among Polish migrants with children (see Clements 2014; Ramasawmy 2013), and that migration had a role in changing gender norms in Polish families (Duda-Mikulin 2015), as well as decisions to start a family and parenting practices (Kloc-Nowak 2015; Kloc-Nowak 2018; Marczak 2013; Pustułka 2014b).

Overall, the dominant stream of research studies analysing Polish families⁴⁸ focus on families emigrating to the UK with children or bringing up older (school-aged) children. The key topics examined in these studies include the education of Polish children in British schools, how migration decisions are made in view of challenges and opportunities resulting from the presence of children, as well as integration strategies with the local communities.

Although some authors analysed the situation of families with younger children (e.g. Kloc-Nowak 2015; Pustułka 2014a; Pustułka 2014b), the aspects related to the relationship between family formation in the UK and settlement/return were not discussed in depth in these studies. This limited attention to the situation of Polish families with young children is somehow surprising, particularly in view of the rapid increase in the number of children born to Polish mothers in the UK (see Chapter 5

⁴⁸ Mostly studies by White, Ryan, Trevena and their collaborators presented in this chapter.

and Janta 2013). This paucity of research on the relationship between family formation and migration among Polish migrants in the UK was one of the motivations for conducting this PhD research project.

3.5.5 Typologies of post-accession Polish migration

The variety of factors, patterns and strategies regarding migration, settlement and return has inspired the development of various typologies characterising Polish post-accession migrants. These typologies are based predominantly on the experiences and orientations of Polish migrants in the UK and capture the diversity of post-accession migration waves and changing migrant intentions about the length of their stay abroad (see Düvell & Vogel 2006; Eade *et al.* 2007; Engbersen *et al.* 2013; Grabowska-Lusińska & Okólski 2009; Luthra *et al.* 2016; Piętka-Nykaza & McGhee 2017; Ryan *et al.* 2007; Spencer *et al.* 2007; Trevena 2013; White & Ryan 2008).

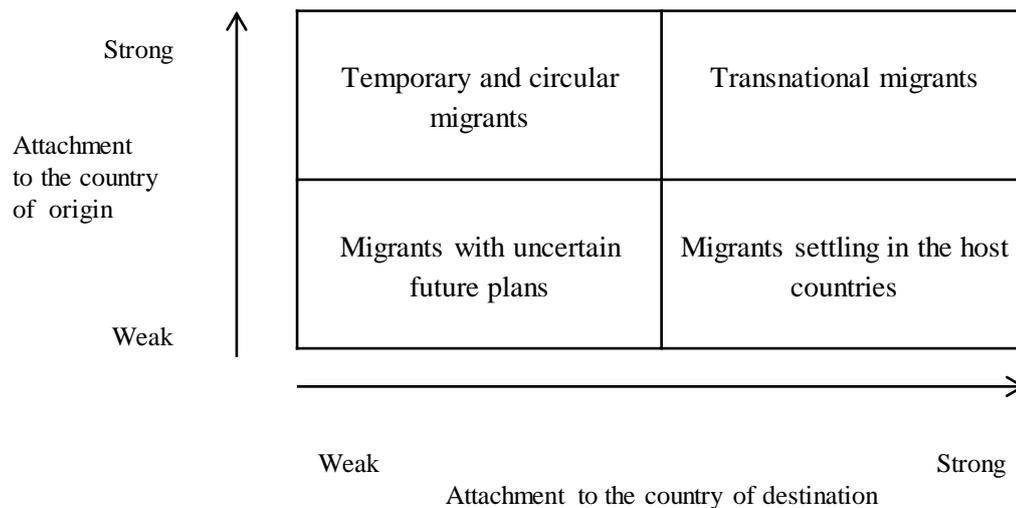
Engbersen *et al.* (2013) observed that the types of post-accession Polish migrants to some extent resembled classic migration typologies, showing a diverse range of initial migration motivations and patterns and a gradual shift from temporariness towards permanent settlement. The EU institutional context of the free mobility of labour also facilitated a diversity of migration patterns and the potential to navigate between particular migration types.

In general, typologies characterise migrants by: (1) their ties with the receiving country, and (2) their intended duration of migration, and orientation towards returning to their country of origin. Each type of attachment can be either weak or strong, and related to socio-cultural, economic and demographic factors. In terms of attachment to the destination country, these factors include “a command of the national language, contacts with the native population, strong or weak labour market positions, and cohabiting with a partner and children in the destination country” (Engbersen *et al.* 2013:965). Looking at the home country, these factors relate to “economic investment plans, family ties and obligations, and a partner and children who still reside in the home country” (Engbersen *et al.* 2013:965). With migrants' attachment to home and host country potentially changing with time, the authors concluded that it should be viewed in “a dynamic perspective” (Engbersen *et al.* 2013:978).

Based on these dimensions of attachment to a host and home country, Engbersen *et al.* (2013) proposed four main types of Polish migrants (see Figure 3.1):

1. temporary and circular migrants,
2. transnational migrants,
3. migrants with uncertain future plans, and
4. migrants settling in the host countries.

Figure 3.1. Types of post-accession CEE labour migrants



Source: Author's own elaboration based on Engbersen *et al.* 2013.

Analysis by Luthra *et al.* (2016) suggested that these four migration types could be further extended to include migrants motivated by family and education reasons. Below, each type of migration is discussed in more detail, whereas Table 3.1 provides a summary of how seven studies have categorised the various types of Polish migrants.

Temporary migrants planning to return to Poland

This type represents typical economic migrants planning a short temporary stay abroad in order to accumulate economic capital and return to Poland (Eade *et al.* 2007; Luthra *et al.* 2016; Piętko-Nykaza & McGhee 2016). Engbersen *et al.* (2013) found that this type of migrant often migrated at an older age, usually had a partner in their home country and often did not plan to stay abroad for a prolonged period. Additionally, this group on average was also not well-integrated in the host country society, both in a

socio-cultural and economic sense. According to Eade *et al.* (2007), temporary migrants only represented about 16 per cent of Polish migrants.

Transnational migrants oriented both to a country of origin and to the host society

Transnational migrants, and to some extent also circular migrants, typically had a strong orientation both towards the home and host country. Engbersen *et al.* (2013:977) noted that this strong attachment to “the country of origin is not contrary to integration in the destination country”, with transnational migrants intending to stay abroad for longer periods of time. This type of migrant, in particular circular migrants, navigated between host country and Poland, retaining strong connections to Poland while undertaking repeated periods of work in Western Europe (Eade *et al.* 2007). According to Eade *et al.* (2007), this type represented only about 20 per cent of Polish migrants, whereas according to the research of Luthra *et al.* (2016), this type comprised 13 per cent of the surveyed Polish migrant population.

Migrants settling in the destination countries

This type comprises individuals who migrated with an intention to stay abroad for a longer period of time, if not permanently. They were usually working in highly skilled professions and were well-integrated in the host country society (Engbersen *et al.* 2013). According to Eade *et al.* (2007), this settlement-oriented type represented 22 per cent of Poles in London.

Migrants motivated by family or education reasons

This type of migrant was identified by Luthra *et al.*'s (2016) research and included individuals motivated by family reasons who were equally likely to stay in the host country or another country or return to Poland (around 33% in each category). These migrants were typically highly-educated individuals motivated primarily by education reasons.

Migrants with uncertain future plans

This type was represented by young and highly-educated migrants mainly motivated by employment opportunities and the will to experience a new way of life, and improve their language skills and career prospects, while not having precise plans

regarding the length of their stay abroad. This group also included young labour migrants who just migrated and started working abroad in low-skilled jobs, low-skilled migrants with semi-legal status⁴⁹ (Engbersen *et al.* 2013), adventurers migrating ‘just because’ they had an opportunity to move (a type “perhaps unique to free movement conditions”) (Luthra *et al.* 2016:21), and migrants who reported migrating due to other factors such as education and family. This wide range of migration drivers can indicate that new waves of EU migrants enjoy mobility as “unconditional European citizen(s)” (Favell 2008:57) and are “committed to an international life from the very onset of their migration” (Luthra *et al.* 2016:21).

As migrants with uncertain future plans were the most common group of Polish migrants in London (42 per cent of all migrants according to Eade *et al.* (2007) research), this finding could indicate that, for many Poles, migration was an experimental and often speculative experience.

The feature of not having clear plans and being open to change was described by Eade *et al.* (2007:34) as the “strategy of intentional unpredictability”. It allowed migrants to “keep their options deliberately open” and adapt “to a flexible, deregulated and increasingly transnational, post-modern capitalist labour market” (Eade *et al.* 2007:34). In this way, a large share of Polish migrants was believed to exhibit new forms and practices of mobility. However, more recent research demonstrated that Polish migrants exhibited practices of settling in the UK following the birth of children, thus resulting in the patterns of “undeliberate determinacy” (McGhee *et al.* 2017). Nevertheless, a deliberate “waiting out strategy” (White 2011a:207) and the uncertainty of migration plans still seem to be the most consistent finding from recent Polish migrants in the UK (Burrell 2009; Igllicka 2009; White & Ryan 2008), with “Polish migrants’ propensity to keep their options open as long as possible” (White 2011:216).

⁴⁹ At the time when this research was conducted, Romanian and Bulgarian migrants were still subject to transitional arrangements and as such did not have an unconditional access to the Dutch labour market.

Table 3.1 Typologies of Polish post-accession migration

Migrant characteristics	Düvell & Vogel 2006	Eade <i>et al.</i> 2007	Trevena 2013	Grabowska-Lusińska & Okólski 2009	Engbersen <i>et al.</i> 2013	Piętka-Nykaza & McGhee 2016	Luthra <i>et al.</i> 2016
temporary migrants planning to return to Poland	return oriented migrants	hamsters	target earners			economic migrants	short-term accumulators
transnational migrants	transnational migrants	storks		seasonal circulation	circular migrants	Circular, transnational migrants	
migrants settling in the destination countries	emigrants (primary oriented towards the receiving country)	stayers	career-seekers	long-term residence	settlement migrants		settlers	traditional circular
migrants with uncertain future plans	global nomads	searchers	drifters	settling down		footloose migrants			over-stayers
migrants motivated by family or education reasons				unpredictable intentions			committed expats
							adventurers
							followers
							living and learning

Source: Author's own analysis based on Düvell & Vogel 2006, Eade *et al.* 2007, Engbersen *et al.* 2013; Grabowska-Lusińska & Okólski 2009; Luthra *et al.* 2016; Piętka-Nykaza & McGhee 2016 and Trevena 2013.⁵⁰

Note: Some of these types do not easily fall into one category. Unequal boxes are applied to indicate that these types are 'in between'.

3.6 Conclusions

The approaches, theories, trends and typologies analysed in this chapter seek to explain migration through a range of factors (contextual, structural and related to an individual migrant experience) which relate to the home and host countries.

However, despite the growing attention devoted to migration, it can be argued that there is still insufficient understanding of the factors that determine migrants' decisions to stay or return. This is partly due to it being difficult to fit migrants into the

⁵⁰ The focus of Eade *et al.*'s (2007) research were Polish migrants that came to London post-2004. Some of the research participants might have come to the UK prior to accession, yet, the research was informed mostly by their experiences since 2004. Düvell & Vogel's (2006) typology was based on the pre-accession experiences of Polish migrants in a wider range of destination countries (i.e. Italy, Germany, Greece and the UK), many of whom experienced irregularity in their respective host countries. Grabowska-Lusińska & Okólski's (2009) typology built further on these two classifications, whereas Trevena's (2013) work focused solely on Polish university graduates working in London. Engbersen *et al.*'s (2013) typology is based on quantitative research of a sample of Polish, Romanian and Bulgarian post-accession migrants in the Netherlands. Piętka-Nykaza & McGhee (2016) typology is built upon experiences of the post-accession Polish migrants living in Scotland (in Edinburgh and Glasgow), who lived in the UK for at least six years. Finally, Luthra *et al.* (2016) analysed harmonised cross-national data on Polish migrants surveyed in 2011 within 18 months of migration to Germany, the Netherlands, the UK and Ireland.

predictions of theories because these predictions about migrants are based on imperfect information, which changes over time and through the migration experience. This is also due to some inherent contradictions in the long-standing migration theories,⁵¹ and because much of the reviewed literature assumes a simple model of integration, focusing either on economic (*neoclassical theory and NELM*) or social (*social system theory, social network theory and transnationalism*) integration. In addition, the models of migrants' social integration often also assume a gradual assimilation of immigrant communities into host societies and a simultaneous decline in transnational ties. In reality, migrants' integration is a complex process with economic and social integration being equally important, but not necessarily progressing at the same pace or being supported by the explicit integration policy. For instance, Polish post-2004 migration was facilitated by Poland's EU accession that provided legal routes for Poles to live and work in the EU member states. This structural factor was further enabled by wider structural factors, including improved transportation and communication opportunities, as well as information exchanges. As Polish migrants were mostly coming to the UK for work-related purposes, and most of them were in employment soon after arrival, it can be argued that it facilitated their economic integration (in line with *the economic theories of migration*). Subsequently, their workplaces became also places of their social integration via encounters with the local population. These social encounters were strengthened by the arrival of migrant children, including the birth of Polish migrant children in the UK as well the migration of Polish children to the UK. The presence of children further tied Polish migrants in their localities and facilitated social integration (in line with *social system and network theories*) due to the use of local services (e.g. education, childcare, healthcare) and more regular contact with the members of their local community.

However, migrants were also able to “foster multiple belongings” (de Haas & Fokkema 2011:758) because maintaining social and economic links with the sending countries was not necessarily an indication of migrants' failure to integrate since transnational ties could be maintained in parallel to developing new ties in the receiving countries. For instance, in line with *the transnational theories of migration*,

51 For instance, successful economic integration in receiving countries can be seen as a factor decreasing the likelihood of return (elementary neoclassical theory) or increasing it (NELM) (de Haas & Fokkema 2011).

Polish migrants might have continued receiving emotional support from family and friends located in Poland due to the improvements in the communication technologies, as well as having access to networks offering emotional and practical support in their places of living in the UK.

In addition, despite a diversity in Polish migrants' socio-economic profile and a variety in their motivations and plans for the future, as indicated in the reviewed literature, Polish post-accession movements have been mainly analysed in the literature using particular theories separately. There is a risk of drawing generalised conclusions upon the basis of one or two theories. While one single migration theory is unable to comprehensively explain the experiences and behaviours of Polish migrants, each of the theories is relevant to some extent and provides guidance to particular strands of Polish migration research. This thesis aims to explore the applicability of specific migration theories to particular types of migrants. For instance, the experiences of those migrants who decided to settle or re-emigrate permanently to the UK could potentially be explored through *the structural approach* pointing to disappointment with conditions and power relations in their home country and information asymmetry,⁵² and/or through *the neoclassical economics theories* shedding light why skills acquired abroad were difficult to transfer to origin countries. In addition, *transnationalism* and *social network theories* can provide analytical lenses through which to examine the strategies and behaviours of Poles who live a 'normal' life abroad (e.g. develop professionally, start families) while simultaneously keeping in touch with family and friends in Poland and waiting for conditions in Poland to improve before returning.

The reviewed literature on Polish migrants in the UK also sheds light upon factors that have impacted upon migration, and the relative importance of some factors over others. While some factors have been relatively well-researched thus far, aspects related to becoming a parent in the UK are less well understood. As the evidence from the literature suggests that family and child-rearing factors were very important in changing migrant behaviour, this thesis will aim to provide new insights into the changing demographic situation as related to Polish migrants' fertility and to examine

⁵² For instance, employers in the home countries opting for the local experience and being distrustful of skills and knowledge gained abroad.

a broad range of factors relevant for migrants who started or might start families in the UK. In addition, particular factors influencing migration decisions have been typically considered separately in the research literature. The dynamic picture behind the post-accession Polish migration cycle and the relationship between, and weight of, particular factors has yet to be established. This study makes an attempt to analyse that dynamic relationship, looking at how different factors may reinforce each other at various stages of the migration process.

Finally, the diverse motivations of Polish migrants also translate into more varied migration trajectories and patterns of movement, as captured by researchers in several typologies. Although many migrants did not plan to stay permanently, a considerable share of post-accession Polish migrants still lived in the UK when the data for this study were collected. These longer-term stays are in contrast with the temporary and circular migration patterns that were dominant in the pre-accession period. Studying the settlement intentions of Polish migrants in the UK, researchers have observed that a large share of Poles kept their plan “deliberately open” (Eade *et al.* 2007:34), even if over time and with the birth of children the patterns of “undeliberate determinacy” (McGhee *et al.* 2017) started to emerge. The deliberate unpredictability and uncertainty of migrations plans is one of the most consistent findings about recent Polish migration to the UK. Yet, it seems that the concept of social risks related to migration is still unexplored in Polish migration scholarship.

The broad research objectives, stated in Chapter 1 were translated into a list of detailed research questions and analytical approaches, and are presented in Chapter 4.

4 Methodology

This chapter discusses the methodological and analytical approach applied in this research project. Section 4.1 provides a rationale for using a mixed method approach and describes how each of the research methods contributes to answering research questions. Sections 4.2 to 4.4 outline issues encountered during quantitative and qualitative data collection, analysis and synthesis, and drafting research findings. Section 4.5 follows with a reflection on the position of researchers and language in the research process, while Section 4.6 explains the ethical principles that guided this research project. Finally, Section 4.7 concludes by summarising the analytical and methodological approach undertaken in this study and outlines alternative approaches.

4.1 Methodological approach and research questions

The approach of this research project was decided based on a number of theoretical, methodological and practical factors, such as the study aims and objectives, available resources, and approaches applied in previous related studies (Bernard 2000). In order to formulate detailed research questions and to decide on a research approach, the first methodological step included identifying and examining existing information and sources. This provided an understanding about the available evidence, data and sources, and existing evidence gaps, and supported development of a final set of research questions. This literature and data assessment also included considerations about additional data needs and the practicalities of collecting such data.

A review of previous research on Polish migrant families (see Chapter 2 and 3) revealed that the phenomenon of return migration/settlement abroad as related to migrants' family formation has not been a subject of detailed scientific examination thus far. As most previous projects adopted qualitative methodologies and collected primary data predominantly through in-depth interviews and focus groups, this lack of quantitative studies was a reason for including a strong quantitative element in this PhD project. Taking a post-positivist critical realist stance (Becker 1967; Guba and Lincoln 1994), the objective of this study was to strengthen both macro and micro perspectives in order to reconstruct the relationship between Polish migration and

family formation. This epistemological approach allowed me to acknowledge that although previous research studies on Polish migration were theory-laden, these studies were not applying available migration theories in a holistic way, and often considered separately particular factors driving/hindering migration not reflecting on the dynamics and interlinks between factors.

In order to provide a rich and comprehensive account of the migration and family formation phenomena, in line with the critical realist approach acknowledging that all measurement is fallible and all observations are (to some degree) biased by the researcher's views, experiences and attitudes, it was deemed desirable to include multiple quantitative and qualitative measures and observations and use triangulation across all sources of evidence. Focusing on different dimensions of the research questions, the quantitative and qualitative approaches complement each other. The quantitative material gives insights into the researched phenomenon at the macro level and thus contextualises the qualitative research. The aim of the quantitative research is also to provide useful factual data from which generalisations about the characteristics of Polish migrants' characteristics in the UK can be made (Gilbert 2001). In contrast, qualitative research aims to provide a richer micro-level perspective based on individual experiences and decisions, thus clarifying the rationale behind migrants' decision-making and adding multidimensionality to settlement/return decisions. The examination of migrants' viewpoints enables analysis of the meanings and purposes that Polish parents in the UK give to their decisions and, ultimately, their actions (Guba and Lincoln 1994). The emphasis of the qualitative component is on "exploring the meaning of events and situations for participants" (Gilbert 2001:34) in order to disentangle the rationale behind settlement decisions and the role of family formation in the decision-making process.

Table 4.1 provides a list of research questions and an explanation of the methodological approach to answering each question. This table also indicates why particular methods of primary data collection were selected. The following sections in this chapter provide more detail about the approaches used to examine the existing secondary data, and to collect and analyse new quantitative and qualitative data.

Table 4.1 Outline of methodological approach addressing the research questions

Research question	Evidence needed to answer research questions	Existing data sources	Objective of additional primary data collection approaches	
			Online survey	Interviews
1. Characteristics and patterns of migration and family formation of Polish migrants with children in the UK				
(a) What are the socio-economic characteristics of: •Polish migrant population in the UK as a whole, •Polish parents in Poland and in the UK.	Quantitative data providing detail on a broad range of socio-economic characteristics and family composition, for: •Polish migrants in the UK, including Polish migrant parents, •Poles living in Poland.	There is a variety of sources providing information on the socio-economic characteristics of Polish migrants in the UK, as presented in Table 4.2. However, the quantitative information on Polish migrant parents is scarce, with most detail available in the 2011 Census data and the UK's birth registration data.	To generate more detailed information about Polish migrant parents and enable analysis of: •key characteristics of Polish migrant parents, •differences between various groups of Polish migrant parents,	
(b) What are the differences in family-building plans between socio-economic groups? (c) What are the reproductive intentions of Polish migrants?	Qualitative data explaining the factors having impact on family formation intentions and processes.	Existing literature on Polish families mostly focuses on the situation of Polish families who came to the UK with children, with limited information on Polish nationals who started families in the UK.	•family formation intentions of Polish migrant parents, •comparison between Polish migrant parents in the UK and parents in Poland.	To provide in-depth understanding of: •the family formation decision-making process, •how family-building plans vary between various groups of Polish migrants, •how family formation decisions are made in different contexts (in Poland and in the UK).
2. The relationship between the migration and family formation behaviour of Polish migrants to the UK, and Polish migrants' settlement intentions and decisions				
(a) What is the relationship between family formation and migration permanence? (b) What are the migration intentions of Polish women having children with non-Polish men? (c) What are the conditions for Polish migrants with children to return to Poland?	Quantitative and qualitative data explaining the relationship between family formation decisions and migration trends (including return migration).	Qualitative data from previous small-scale studies based on interviews.	To capture the dynamic relationship between migration and family formation decisions of various groups of Polish migrants by examining: •whether starting a family in the UK changed the intentions of Polish migrants regarding their intended length of stay in the UK, •how the family formation experience relates to integration and permanence of migration.	To provide in-depth individual accounts of Polish migrant parents' experiences of family formation in the UK. To help understanding how settlement decisions influence family formation and how the experiences of family formation and bringing up children in the UK influence settlement decisions. To provide information on how family formation experience relates to migrants' integration and permanence of migration, as well as under what circumstances Polish migrant parents would return to Poland.

4.2 Existing data sources

4.2.1 Assessment of data

The data assessment revealed that the available sources mostly provided migration stock data from the macro perspective (see Table 4.2). When the micro data were available, they were predominantly focused on the labour market situation (see

Chapter 2). The birth registration data were identified as the most relevant source of demographic data for assessing family formation trends. However, as they provided a macro-level perspective, they did not allow for a micro-level analysis according to migrants' socio-economic characteristics. This insufficient level of detail in existing data sources about the relationship between migration and family formation, and the life/family histories was one of the reasons for collecting new quantitative data. The identified data sources and their characteristics have been summarised in Chapter 2.

Table 4.2 Identified data sources and their main characteristics

Data source	Data type
EU Labour Force Surveys for the UK and Poland	Harmonised household-level national survey data providing information on population stocks. Data are based on population samples and thus subject to sampling error, in particular for smaller population numbers, e.g. migrants. In the UK, ONS makes microdata available for analysis.
International Passenger Survey (IPS)	ONS sample survey collected at UK's borders monitoring flow of passengers to and out of the UK.
National Insurance Number (NINo) data	Administrative data derived from registrations for NI numbers made by non-UK nationals, produced by the DWP.
Workers Registration Scheme data	Administrative data collected between 2004 and 2011 available in an aggregated format. Access to the UK's labour market for workers from 2004 EU Accession countries was conditional upon registering with this scheme.
2011 Census data in England and Wales, 2011 Census data in Poland	Census data, stocks of population in 2011. 2011 Census for England and Wales provides data on characteristics of UK population by country of birth and nationality.
Annual Population Survey (UK)	A household-level sample survey based on a boosted version of the LFS data providing stock data on the UK's population.
Eurobarometer: population polls data	A series of public opinion surveys conducted across EU Member States on a wide variety of topics.
UK's birth registration data	Administrative data on all births in the UK, containing basic demographic data on parents. Aggregate data published by ONS, including births by country of birth of parents.
Understanding Society	UK's main longitudinal survey of households.

Source: Author's own elaboration on available data sources.

Box 4.1 provides description of alternative research approaches that were considered to conduct this study.

Box 4.1 Alternative research approaches

A mixed-method approach was selected at the study design stage due to: (1) a lack of quantitative studies examining the phenomena researched under this study, and (2) to ensure the breadth and depth of evidence collected. However, alternative methodological and analytical choices could have been made at the time of study design, implementation and/or analysis of the collected evidence. For instance, instead of conducting an online survey, the macro perspective on the issues related to migration and family formation could have been provided by conducting analysis of the existing data sources, e.g. the LFS data available in the UK and in Poland. As these data sources are harmonised, it would also be possible to analyse them in a comparative manner. However, this approach was not selected because of issues related to data access, the lack of sufficiently large data samples and the limitations of particular research questions included in these surveys. For instance, the LFS focuses on the labour market and does not contain much about household factors. It also collects no information on family formation. Other surveys, such as Understanding Society yield much richer information on households, but the sample size would be much smaller. While it has a boost for ethnic minorities, this is not the case for overseas-born, so individual countries of origin might be under-represented.

There are more distinctive approaches that have not been pursued but are worth noting. For example, certain existing textual data sources could, in principle, also provide rich data for analysis, e.g. the online blogs of migrants or entries on internet fora or Facebook groups dedicated to and run by Polish migrants in the UK could have been subjected to content analysis (see Siara 2009).

Focusing on collecting one type of data (either qualitative or quantitative) could also be an alternative research approach to investigate this study's research topic. This approach could have included conducting a longitudinal study, for instance by collecting the survey or interview data at two points in time. This approach could have potentially facilitated capturing the relevance of particular factors and the social change over time. However, the disadvantages of this approach included

risks related to ensuring access to the same survey respondents/interviewees, collecting data from a sufficiently large number of research participants in both rounds of data collection (e.g. the risk of not participating due to a research fatigue), as well as some practical considerations related to time constraints, e.g. the length of the PhD study.

A more targeted approach to data collection could have been selected. For instance, the interviewees could have been selected from Polish migrants that had some specific socio-demographic characteristics, e.g. women having children with Polish men only, Poles having at least two children born in the UK, or individuals of a specific occupational status. However, the limitations of this approach would be that the findings would be mostly relevant only to a very specific group of Polish migrants. This challenge could have been overcome by conducting a much larger number of interviews but this would have been beyond the scope of a PhD project. The interviews could have also been conducted with returnees residing in Poland. However, in addition to stretching the feasibility of the research, this approach would at least partially replicate other research studies (e.g. Duda-Mikulin 2015) that were ongoing at the time of planning this study.

This study could have collected primary data from Polish migrants via focus group discussions. Yet, since most of the research questions related to sensitive subjects of family formation decisions, some research participants might have been reluctant to disclose personal information during a group discussion. In addition, the practicalities of arranging a meeting at a time and location convenient for a group of migrants would have represented a challenge.

4.2.2 The birth registration data

Birth registration data are the most comprehensive information source on children born in the UK.⁵³ The UK birth register records the child's sex, date and place of birth,

⁵³ Birth registration data are compiled into birth statistics by the Office for National Statistics (ONS) (for England and Wales and the UK overall), the National Records of Scotland, and the Northern Ireland Statistics Research Agency. The data were obtained from the relevant national statistical authorities. Any birth which occurs in Scotland must be registered within 21 days, in England and Wales and Northern Ireland parents must register the birth of their baby within 42 days. All birth records are based on the year of registration rather than the year of occurrence. It means that birth figures incorporate a small number of late registrations from births occurring in the previous year.

mother's and father's place of birth, as well as their occupations, marital status and address. It is a reliable source to analyse birth trends among first-generation migrant groups in the UK as it contains each parent's country of birth.⁵⁴

Despite their limitations,⁵⁵ the aggregated birth registration data were considered the most relevant source of data on fertility trends among Polish migrants in the UK. This project focused on conducting detailed descriptive analysis of births to Polish mothers,⁵⁶ and an overview of trends on children born to Polish fathers. Whenever possible, data on births to Polish mothers in the UK were compared with the respective birth registration data from Poland (see the analysis in Chapter 5).

4.3 New quantitative data - the online survey

The objective of collecting new quantitative data through an online survey was to obtain a comprehensive macro perspective on family formation and settlement/return from a large group of Polish migrants. The survey results were used to explore the theoretical hypothesis of and factors influencing migration, as well as characteristics of people who behave in different ways. The reviewed literature indicated that the internet usage among Polish migrants in the UK was high (Ryan *et al.* 2007; Siara 2009), increasing the likely success of this data-gathering approach.

The online survey development was guided by the data and literature review, building on evidence from previous studies. The survey questions were constructed with two aims in mind: (1) to cross-examine, from the macro perspective, aspects that were analysed in earlier qualitative studies, and (2) to assess themes that have not been examined in previous research projects. As such, the survey complemented the existing knowledge by applying a macro perspective to the known phenomena, and provided understanding of aspects that did not gain much research attention to date.

54 Analysis of birth registration data are based on parents' country of birth as it cannot change over time. ONS standard practice is to analyse birth data based on country of birth rather than nationality.

55 The birth registration data limitations are described in my article: Janta (2013).

56 The official birth register term describing Polish mothers is 'Polish-born mothers'. Here, both terms are used interchangeably.

The survey consisted of six sections and it was estimated that completing it would take about 15-20 minutes. Survey questions were predominantly based on a Likert scale, with some open-ended questions included for comments, as necessary.

The survey questionnaire was first developed in English and later translated into Polish. As I am a native Polish speaker, I translated the survey instrument myself. In order to check the quality of my translation, the survey questionnaire was shared with another native-Polish speaker for linguistic validation. Following this feedback and minor language refinements, a final version of the survey questionnaire was developed. A full version of the survey questionnaire is available in Annex 2.

The survey instrument was piloted online on a small number of respondents between 4th and 7th of December 2013.⁵⁷ The aim of this pilot was to make sure that the wording and scope of questions was clear to respondents. The pilot survey results were evaluated and resulted in a small number of questions being re-formulated and, in a few instances, deleted. After these minor adjustments, the survey was rolled out widely. It was available for completion online from 7th January until 12th March 2014, and the survey uptake was monitored on a regular basis. The survey was advertised on several internet fora, websites, and Facebook groups for Polish people in the UK, and through email to parents of several Polish Saturday Schools. Overall, recruitment of respondents through the social media platforms generated the highest number of completed survey questionnaires. This might be because an invitation received through social media could be seen as a more casual engagement compared to an invitation received through a more traditional route, e.g. email from Polish Saturday School. A full list of all websites, fora, organisations and individuals contacted is provided in Annex 1.

The survey asked respondents about potential interest in being interviewed face-to-face, and contact details of interested respondents were collected.⁵⁸ A selected number

⁵⁷ The link to the survey was advertised on the internet forum for Polish mothers in the UK ("Matki Polki w UK") on www.gazeta.pl.

⁵⁸ The survey respondents were asked to give consent for the information provided to be analysed and for their contact details to be used, in compliance with the Data Protection Act 1998.

of survey participants who provided their contact details was invited to take part in the interviews.

Overall, the online survey collected data on over 1,000 respondents.⁵⁹ However, a substantial proportion of respondents failed to complete all questions in the online survey questionnaire, meaning that a total of around 600 responses qualified for analysis.⁶⁰ To the best of my knowledge, this online survey generated the largest database on the family formation and settlement/return plans of Polish migrants in the UK.

4.4 Qualitative methodologies – in-depth interviews

4.4.1 Interview strategy

The aim of the interviews was to provide further explanation on family formation and settlement decisions, and to explore the meaning of and interrelations between various factors that shape these decisions. The strength of the interviews lay in their ability to illuminate meanings, values and beliefs, capture concerns and allow interviewees to give explicit explanations for their actions and decisions. Interviews also served to validate emerging insights from this study (Bryman 2004).

The development of an interview protocol was based on the emerging findings from the reviewed literature, and the preliminary analysis of the birth registration and survey data. Interview protocol development was also guided by a review of research instruments used in topic-related research projects focused on Polish migrants (e.g. Marczak 2013; Osipovič 2010; Ryan *et al.* 2007; White 2011a). This strategy was applied to ensure coverage of a comprehensive range of questions and aspects analysed in earlier projects, as well as to investigate issues that have not been examined thus far. This allowed for comparison of findings from this research study with external sources where practicable. The interview protocol was first developed in English, and once the final version was approved, it was translated into Polish. As with the survey questionnaire, my translation was quality-assured by another native

⁵⁹ This figure includes the total number of responses for the pilot and the main survey because the similarity of questionnaires used for the piloting and the main survey phase allows analysis both data files together.

⁶⁰ The exact number of responses included in the analysis differed per survey question.

Polish speaker, resulting in some minor adjustments to the interview protocol. The final versions of the interview protocol in English and in Polish is provided in Annex 3. Preparatory action to conduct interviews also included obtaining ethical approval, preparing an interviewee information sheet and an interview consent form (see Section 4.6 and Annex 4).

In total, 20 in-person interviews were conducted between February and May 2015.⁶¹ Interviewees were selected from the survey respondents who consented to being contacted, and were located in Cambridge, Peterborough, Bedford and surrounding towns and villages.⁶² Due to interviewees being selected from the online survey respondents, they had similar socio-economic characteristics. A full list of interviewees and their characteristics is included in Table 4.3.

61 Out of the 20 interviews, 17 were conducted with women, one with a man and two with couples (husband and wife), taking the total number of interviewees to 22.

62 There was a high concentration of interviewees in these locations. A large number of the survey respondents was also located in London and Glasgow. However, these respondents were not selected for interviews due to practical reasons related to the financial limitations and the time constraints of the researcher.

Table 4.3 Characteristics of interviewees

Nr	Name	Location	Sex	Age	Education level	Year of arrival to the UK	Family status	Number of children, their year and country of birth	Father's country of birth	Considers return	Employment status	Reason for coming	Housing situation
1	Aleksandra	Cambridge	female	34	secondary education	2004	single mother	one child - UK, 2010	other (non-EU)	No	Working	work	social renter
2	Izabela	near Cambridge	female	37	university degree	2008	married	two children: first child - UK, 2010 second child - UK, 2014	PL	No	Working	joining partner/husband	homeowner
3	Alicja	Cambridge	female	35	secondary education	around 2007	married	two children: first child - UK, 2012 second child - UK, 2014	PL	No	Looking after children	work	homeowner
4	Hanna	near Cambridge	female	36	university degree	2008	married	two children: first child - PL, 2007 second child - UK, 2008	PL	No Moved to another country	Working	work	homeowner
5	Kinga	near Cambridge	female	35	university degree	2007	married	two children: first child - PL, 2007 second child - UK, 2013	PL	No	Working	joining partner/husband	private renter, later homeowner
6	Gabriela	near Peterborough	female	35	university degree	2006	married	two children: first child - UK, 2010, second child - UK, 2012	PL (raised in the UK)	Yes Also considers moving elsewhere	Looking after children	joining partner/husband	private renter
7	Maria	near Cambridge	female	48	university degree	2006	married	two children (twins): first child - UK, 2006 second child - UK, 2006	PL	No	Working	joining partner/husband	private renter
8	Adam	Peterborough	male	34	university degree	2005	married	two children: first child - UK, 2010 second child - UK, 2012	PL	No	Working	work	private renter
9	Dorota	near Peterborough	female	34	university degree	2005	married	two children: first child - UK, 2008 second child - UK, 2011	PL	Yes, already returned	Working	work	homeowner
10	Patrycja & Oskar	near Peterborough	female and male	33 (Patrycja)	vocational education (Patrycja)	2006 (both)	married	three children: first child - PL, 2002 second child - PL, 2005 third child - UK, 2009	PL	No	Working	work / joining partner/husband	social renters
11	Kamila	Cambridge	female	35	university degree	2006	married	two children: first child - UK, 2012 second child - UK, 2014	PL	Yes, but unlikely	Working	work	private renter, later homeowner
12	Ula	Bedford	female	27	secondary education	2008	married	three children: first child - UK, 2008 second child - UK, 2010 third child - UK, 2013	PL	No	Looking after children	joining partner/husband	private renters
13	Ada	Bedford	female	40	university degree	2001	married	four children: first child - UK, 2003 second child - UK, 2005 third child - UK, 2013 fourth child - UK, 2014	UK	No	Working	work / joining partner/husband	homeowner
14	Daria	Cambridge	female	30	university degree	2005	married	two children: first child - UK, 2010 second child - UK, 2014	PL	Yes, already returned	Working	work	homeowner
15	Anna	Cambridge	female	33	university degree	2008	single mother	one child - UK, 2009	other (non-EU)	No	Working	work	social renter
16	Natalia & Artur	near Cambridge	female and male	35	university degree	2004	married	two children: first child - UK, 2006 second child - UK, 2010	PL	No	Working	work	private renters
17	Karolina	Cambridge	female	31	university degree	2012 (previously lived in the UK for 1.5 years 2004-2005)	married	two children: first child - PL, 2007 second child - UK, 2014	PL	No	Working	work / joining partner/husband	private renters
18	Marta	Cambridge	female	32	secondary education	2004	married	two children: first child - UK, 2010 second child - UK, 2015	PL	No	Working	work	homeowner
19	Agata	Cambridge	female	31	secondary education	2007	single mother	one child - UK, 2010	PL	No	Working	work	social renter
20	Olga	Cambridge	female	36	secondary education	2001	married	two children: first child - UK, 2010 second child - UK, 2012	PL	No	Working	work	homeowner

Potential interviewees were asked by email about their availability to take part in an interview.⁶³ A follow-up email was sent as a reminder to ensure that recipients received a message. Only a small number of contacted respondents was not available for an interview.⁶⁴ Before an interview, each interviewee was asked to consent to being part of this research study, and was ensured about their right to withdraw from research at any time. Interviewees were also informed that they would not have to answer questions that they were not comfortable with.

The semi-structured interview protocol was piloted with two interviewees to check whether all questions were understood correctly, and whether some modifications, reordering, additions or omissions were needed (Bernard 2000). No major changes were made to the interview protocol following these pilot interviews.

The interview protocol was used flexibly to guide in-depth discussions. All main topics were discussed with all interviewees but because interviews were semi-structured, topics were discussed in more depth with particular interviewees than others. When appropriate, interviewees were probed or new questions were formulated in response to interviewees' answers (Cresswell 2013). Each interview started by referring back to the answers given by the interviewee in the survey and checking about any changes in personal or family situation, and by asking a general, open-ended question about any other important aspects that took place since the online survey was completed. Once all interview questions were discussed, interviewees were asked whether they had any further questions or comments. This provided interviewees with an opportunity for a final reflection summarising or highlighting the key points discussed.

Each interview lasted around 45 minutes to one hour, and was recorded and subsequently transcribed.⁶⁵ All interviews were conducted in Polish as all interviewees and the interviewer were Polish native speakers. All interview transcripts (verbatim) were also prepared in Polish. In order to secure interviewees' anonymity, data were

63 It was about one year since they completed the online survey questionnaire.

64 Respondents were no longer available due to a change in personal circumstances, e.g. a different working schedule or having another child, making it difficult for them to find a suitable time to meet with a researcher.

65 Interviewees were transcribed by a trusted transcriber based in Poland. Before the transcription process started, the transcriber signed a formal confidentiality agreement regarding personal data protection.

anonymised and pseudonyms were used when saving interview transcripts. Transcription was completed as soon as possible after each interview, with additional field notes added to record any preliminary thoughts, reflections and observations. The latter focused on preliminary analysis of the concepts and hypothesis deriving from each interview, plus operational issues relating to how the interview was conducted, for instance presence of children or disruptions, e.g. phone ringing (Bernard 2000). After each interview, the data quality was examined to ensure that each additional interview still captured new information. This approach allowed determining the data saturation point and avoiding interviews that would not provide additional understanding of the researched phenomena (Ritchie & Lewis 2003).

All but two interviews were conducted in interviewees' own homes. Two interviews were conducted in cafes to ensure interviewer safety.⁶⁶ To further ensure my safety, my husband was informed about the location of each interview and my mobile phone allowed to geolocate me in case of emergency. As a token of gratitude for a completed interview, each interviewee received a small box of chocolates. All interviewees agreed to be contacted again for this study or any further studies, and also expressed interest to hear more about the study results.

4.4.2 Analytical approach to interview data

The process of analysis of interview data followed several steps and combined approaches related to a deductive method (e.g. framework analysis and content analysis informed elements) and an inductive method (e.g. grounded theory informed elements). Firstly, the interview data were examined against the main topics from the reviewed literature to explore and test the applicability of migration and family formation theories and hypotheses. The main topics emerging from the literature were used as initial clusters to guide analysis, code data and retrieve examples of text related to these themes (Bernard 2000). This step included searching for patterns and identified consistencies and inconsistencies among interviewees, including alternative explanations for particular plans, decisions and actions. It enabled further exploration of positive cases, that is interviewees that confirmed the current understanding of

⁶⁶ This included one interview with a male respondent and one interview with a couple.

particular phenomena. However, it also allowed identifying negative cases, that is examples that did not fit the known patterns, and cases that suggested new connections and alternative explanations (Bernard 2000). Secondly, the analysis of interview data pointed to new emerging codes and hypotheses not previously represented in the research literature, providing explanations for specific patterns of behaviour and/or thoughts. This allowed the discovery of new aspects and interrelations between migration and family formation, not discussed thus far in studies on Polish migration to the UK. With each additional interview, the main themes, clusters and codes were subsequently refined to ensure that they were well-defined and mutually exclusive (Bernard 2000). The final stage of the interview analysis included adjusting and refining the main themes to fully reflect the variety of codes, clusters and explanations that emerged from data.

The analysis of interview data was completed using interview transcripts in Polish. All codes, clusters and themes were indexed and assigned names in Polish and English in order to efficiently carry out searches, retrieve them, and compare between transcripts in both languages. Whenever possible, codes used the actual phrases used by respondents (Strauss & Corbin 1990:68 in Bernard 2000). Once all codes were identified, they were clustered into the final themes comprising aspects discussed in the literature and new emerging findings. At this stage of the analysis, the pre-selected extracts from interviews illustrating main findings were also translated. Since the number of interview transcripts was relatively small, all analyses were conducted using a pen and paper approach.

Once all data had been collected, the final stage of the research process focused on triangulating the evidence from various strands of the research to draw together insights from across all approaches and research findings. The aim of this task was to provide a coherent analytical approach to analyse, synthesise and identify key findings. This way, it allowed for exploring the extent to which the study findings *confirm* the current understanding of the relationship between migration and family formation, and *complement* the current state of knowledge by providing insights on aspects that have not been examined or well understood under previous research investigations.

4.5 Reflexivity

This section provides an opportunity to reflect on my role as a researcher in the research process, and how my own background, experiences and views could have potentially influenced this study. As Becker (1967: 239) notes, it is not “possible to do research that is uncontaminated by personal and political sympathies”, with sociological research being biased in one or another way. Therefore, it is crucial to reflect on the researcher’s own position within the research process to better understand the selection of the research topics, research process and communication of research findings (Creswell 2013; Gilbert ed. 2001).

4.5.1 The insider-outsider position of a researcher

The literature on researching one’s own social group, in particular when a translation process is required, suggests that a researcher's personal experience can act both as an advantage and a disadvantage during the research process. In some ways, while conducting this study I was constantly negotiating my insider and outsider status (Ganga and Scott 2006). I was an insider as I shared many similarities with the social group I was researching, e.g. a shared nationality, similar age, experience of migration and parenthood. As my children were born in the UK, I was familiar with many of the socio-economic aspects as related to employment, childcare and welfare. On the other hand, my status as a PhD researcher engaged in a professional research-oriented career distanced me from the ‘average’ Polish migrant, thus making me an outsider. My wider socio-legal characteristics, e.g. marital status and having children with a Polish husband could have also led me to be viewed as an outsider by research participants who were bringing up children fathered by non-Poles and/or were not married. Each research stage provided me with opportunities to continuously explore and move between these multiple positions, and dynamically renegotiate them in the research process (Ryan 2015b).

Being an insider can be a challenge as shared ethnicity or nationality paradoxically “increases awareness amongst both researcher and participant of the social divisions that structure the interaction between them” (Ganga and Scott 2006:1, 8), a phenomenon that the authors called “diversity in proximity”. In addition, when

researching people similar to oneself, a researcher can take issues for granted rather than exploring them. Therefore, it can be beneficial for a researcher to talk to different social groups to encourage more confidence from respondents and be more detailed in questions and answers rather than assuming that certain experiences are obvious (Ritchie and Lewis 2003). On the other hand, other strands of methodological literature suggest that researchers should interview only within their own social or ethnic group because their personal characteristics can encourage respondents to disclose more than they would do to a researcher from a dissimilar social group (Bernard 2000).

4.5.2 The insider/outsider position in practice

When collecting primary data focused on the shared experiences with respondents and interviewees, I aimed to establish a rapport with them and apply a cordial and non-judgmental approach to encourage their participation in this project. As I was viewed as a mother-researcher, it reduced the hierarchy and distance between the research participants and myself, and they could, at least partly, identify with me. As noted by Chavez (2008), my motherhood facilitated access, gave me a positionality of a 'shared' experience and helped me with data collection, presentation and representation. At the same time, I had the 'professional integrity' of a researcher, with my fieldwork being guided by the ethical practice of being self-reflective and aware of my responsibilities towards research participants (Denzin & Lincoln 1994). This dual insider-outsider status acted to my advantage and helped me to recruit a large group of Polish parents.

This open and honest approach about my dual status was explained in the introduction to the survey questions and guided conducting interviews. At the beginning of each interview I reintroduced myself, giving interviewees some background on my family situation, my migration history and my current professional role. I remained cordial and non-judgmental to interviewee's cultural and socio-economic backgrounds, religious views and beliefs, and their attitudes towards aspects that we discussed. I presented myself as a humble person keen to learn about respondents' experiences and views. Though I could not totally eliminate the 'interviewer effect' (Bernard 2000), I tried to minimize it given many commonalities between the research participants and

myself. In fact, many interviewees signalled that they were at ease in my company and assumed a shared belonging to the Polish nation and a similar migration pathway, for instance by using phrases such as 'we/us' and 'they/them', 'our country' (Poland) vs. 'this country'/'here' (UK) (see Gawlewicz 2016). To ensure that our presumed shared experiences did not act towards my disadvantage, I probed interviewees for more clarification or elaboration on specific aspects. Some interviewees challenged this approach, suggesting that I was asking about 'obvious' issues or our 'common' knowledge, yet, I asked for these clarifications to understand interviewees' perspectives.

There were also situations when interviewees pointed out the differences between us. For instance, one interviewee stated that I was not a 'typical' Polish migrant because my professional status made me quite distant from the experiences of other Poles. For that reason, as the interviewee suggested, I should not have any return concerns because I could realise my professional ambitions and aspirations in the UK. She contrasted it with her own experience of having a low-skilled job despite completing a university degree, and considered return to Poland as the only viable option to progress professionally. Another interviewee (of a lower socio-economic status) felt a bit alienated while talking to me because she could not understand what a researcher could potentially learn from her experiences and views. In addition, interviewees who were bringing up children as single mothers and/or bringing up children with non-Polish fathers noted that my migrant mother experiences were 'easier' because of factors such as the support with childcare (e.g. sharing responsibilities with my husband), financial stability (e.g. their necessity to work) and legal aspects (e.g. they shared custody over a child and had to obtain the father's agreement to apply for a passport). Overall, however, interviewees acknowledged more commonalities between us while also showing awareness about differences between us.

Researching migration and family formation was also challenging at times from my personal perspective. Being a migrant mother, it was difficult at times to detach myself from this study and remain a balanced and objective researcher. I was aware that my personal sympathies could have potentially had an impact on my reporting of research findings. Nevertheless, I remained reflective and aimed to wear my 'professional hat'

to ensure that my personal dispositions did not taint the impartiality, objectivity and balance in analysis and reporting research findings.

4.5.3 Language of research

Reflexivity in the research process also requires some reflection on the translation process, my role in it, and the representation of respondents through translated text. As I was liaising only with Polish migrants, all of my primary data collection was completed in Polish.⁶⁷ This allowed my respondents to express themselves freely in their native language, and ensured that no respondents were excluded due to a language barrier. My initial analyses were conducted in Polish, but the final analysis required translating texts into English. Being a native Polish speaker, I translated collected material myself. However, the translation process was challenging at times because of the commonalities and differences in language use between myself and the study respondents (Gawlewicz 2016).

There were also some wider challenges related to cross-language research. Firstly, it was important to ensure that the translated texts adequately represented all the subtleties and meanings that respondents have conveyed in their narratives (Bernard 2000). However, it was always a balancing act because there is no "one-to-one relationship between language and meaning" (Temple and Young 2004:174). The second challenge related to the representation of respondents in the translated text. Even if some respondents did not possess a good command of English, their words quoted in the thesis had to be presented in a high level of English (see Temple 2006). It was also problematic at times when the shared language between the researcher and interviewee led some interviewees to an assumption of a shared identity, beliefs, experiences and values. Finally, I was aware that my command of Polish might have deteriorated over the time I have spent in the UK and may have not been up to the professional academic standard that I was representing. To mitigate this risk, all the data collection instruments were the subject of consultation with another native Polish speaker to ensure their high quality. For all these reasons, I devoted special attention

⁶⁷ A similar approach of data collection in Polish has also been adopted by other researchers studying Polish migrants, for instance in studies by Osipovič (2010), White (2011), Gawlewicz (2016), Marczak (2013), Pustułka (2014b) and Duda-Mikulín (2015).

to the translation process as “a part of the process of knowledge production” (Temple and Young 2004:164).

4.6 Ethical considerations

All necessary measures were taken to ensure that the research process was transparent and in accordance with the codes of ethics approved by the University of Warwick and by the British Sociological Association.⁶⁸ Ethical approval was sought before commencing primary data collection. All research participants were informed in writing about the aims and objectives of this project and their rights as participants. The online survey participants were provided with such information as part of the questionnaire; interviewees received a copy of an interviewee information sheet and an interviewee consent form before the interview (see Annex 4). All interviewees were asked for permission and agreed to audio record interviews. All research participants were assured of their confidentiality and anonymity, and safe handling of their personal information. All data were kept in a secured locker and stored on a password-protected computer separately from details of individuals, with anonymised identifiers for each record in computer data sets. All research participants were informed that the research findings would be published as a PhD thesis and other research publications, and presented at conferences and other events.

4.7 Conclusions

This chapter has outlined the methodological and analytical approaches potentially applicable in this research project. Having examined previous research studies and existing data (in Chapters 2 and 3), it has presented the case for using a mixed-method research approach to examine the relationship between Polish migration and family formation in the UK. It has outlined how the research questions were addressed by each of the selected methodological approaches using existing data and collecting new quantitative and qualitative data. Subsequently, the chapter discussed the benefits and the challenges of using each of the selected methodologies to understand better

⁶⁸ The research was in accordance with the codes of ethics applicable at the time the research was conducted, and reviewed by the University of Warwick Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee.

Some of the ethical codes have become stricter since the introduction of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).

particular phenomena. The chapter also outlined aspects related to being a reflective researcher and the ethical considerations that guided this study.

5 Family formation trends among Polish migrants in the UK

The purpose of this chapter is to provide an overview of the fertility trends among Polish migrants in the UK and an initial assessment of the impact of these trends upon their return decisions. The analyses are based on the UK's aggregated birth registration data from 1995 to 2018.

Section 5.1 provides detailed analysis of Polish women fertility and family formation trends in the UK. Section 5.2 discusses the relevance of these trends for the settlement/return decisions of Polish migrants. Section 5.3 highlights and concludes key findings.

5.1 Analysis of the aggregated birth registration data

5.1.1 Substantial increase in the number of births to Polish mothers throughout the UK

Official aggregated birth registration data show that births to Polish mothers (i.e. mothers born in Poland) in the UK have increased rapidly in the last 15 years. Until 2004, the number of births to Polish mothers was relatively small. Since then, all UK countries recorded a significant increase in the total number of births to Polish mothers. In total, there were 1,870 births to Polish mothers in 2004 and this figure has increased year-on-year, reaching 25,675 in 2015. The highest rate of increase was in the early post-accession years up until 2008-2009, after which the rate of increase slowed down (see Figure 5.1). Since 2015, there has been a decline in the total number of births to Polish mothers in the UK, falling to 21,156 in 2018 (see Table 5.1). This decline started in 2014 in Scotland, 2015 in Northern Ireland, and 2016 in England and Wales. Overall, between 2004 and 2018, a cumulative total of 278,178 children were born to Polish mothers in the UK. While forecasting the long-term trend in Polish family formation in the UK may be a challenge, the decline in the number of births to Polish women since 2016 is noteworthy.

Dormon's (2014) analysis of the 2011 Census in England and Wales shows that the Total Fertility Rate (TFR)⁶⁹ of Polish women was 2.13 in 2011. This was higher than both the TFR of all UK-born women (1.84) and the TFR in Poland (1.30). Between 2007 and 2011, the General Fertility Rate (GFR)⁷⁰ of Polish migrant women fluctuated between 93-106 compared with GFR of UK-born women at around 60 (Zumpe *et al.* 2012). This clearly indicates a difference in fertility behaviour between Polish women in the UK, women in Poland, and women born in the UK, with Polish migrant women showing much higher fertility rates than their Polish and UK-born counter parts.

69 This is a key measure of fertility. The TFR is a synthetic measure of period fertility levels, that is referring to a cross-section of the population in one year. TFR represents the average number of children a women would have in her lifetime, if she was subject of the age-specific fertility rates for the period in question. It is generally accepted that a TFR of 2.1 is required to allow for population to remain at a constant level (when excluding population change due to migration).

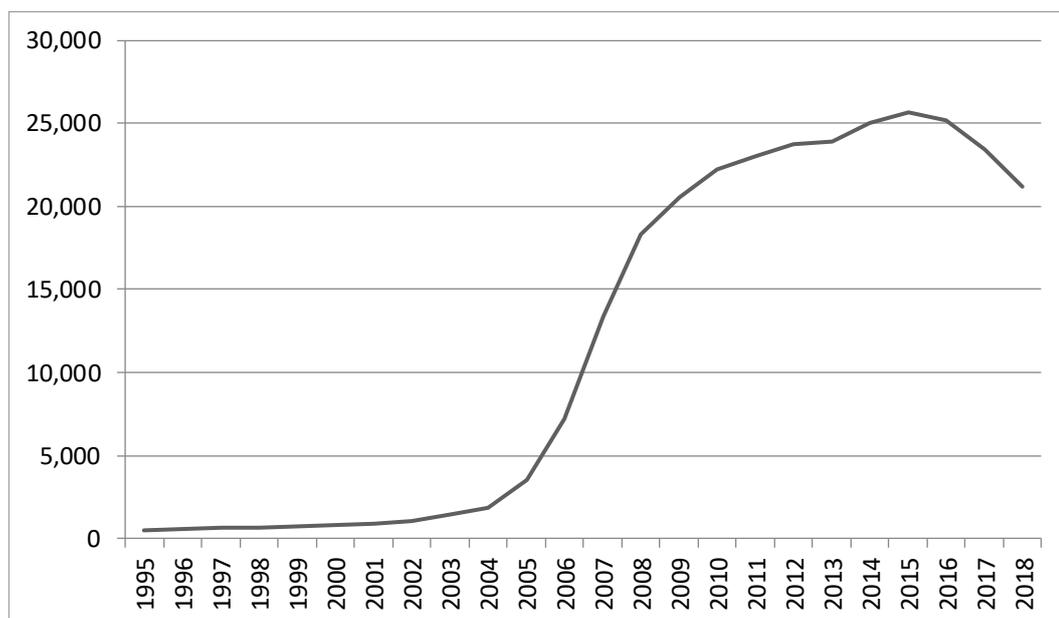
70 The General Fertility Rate is a period measure of fertility, meaning it refers to a cross-section of the population in one year. The GFR is calculated by dividing the number of births in a year by the number of women aged 15-44, times 1000. This measure focuses on potential mothers only, and takes the age distribution into account.

Table 5.1 Births to Polish mothers in the UK by country of the UK

Year	England & Wales	Scotland	Northern Ireland	Total UK
1995	519	18	.	537
1996	564	8	.	572
1997	633	11	1	645
1998	641	12	1	654
1999	711	12	2	725
2000	836	14	2	852
2001	896	25	3	924
2002	1,016	17	8	1,041
2003	1,392	29	3	1,424
2004	1,830	31	9	1,870
2005	3,403	114	43	3,560
2006	6,620	365	186	7,171
2007	11,952	934	447	13,333
2008	16,101	1,509	716	18,326
2009	18,159	1,681	720	20,560
2010	19,762	1,727	753	22,242
2011	20,495	1,791	718	23,004
2012	21,156	1,971	637	23,764
2013	21,275	1,951	687	23,913
2014	22,122	2,197	694	25,013
2015	22,928	2,089	658	25,675
2016	22,382	2,151	625	25,158
2017	20,779	2,089	565	23,433
2018	18,765	1,899	492	21,156

Source: Personal communication with the ONS, NRS and NISRA, and the respective agencies websites.

Figure 5.1 Number of births to Polish mothers in the UK, 2004-2018

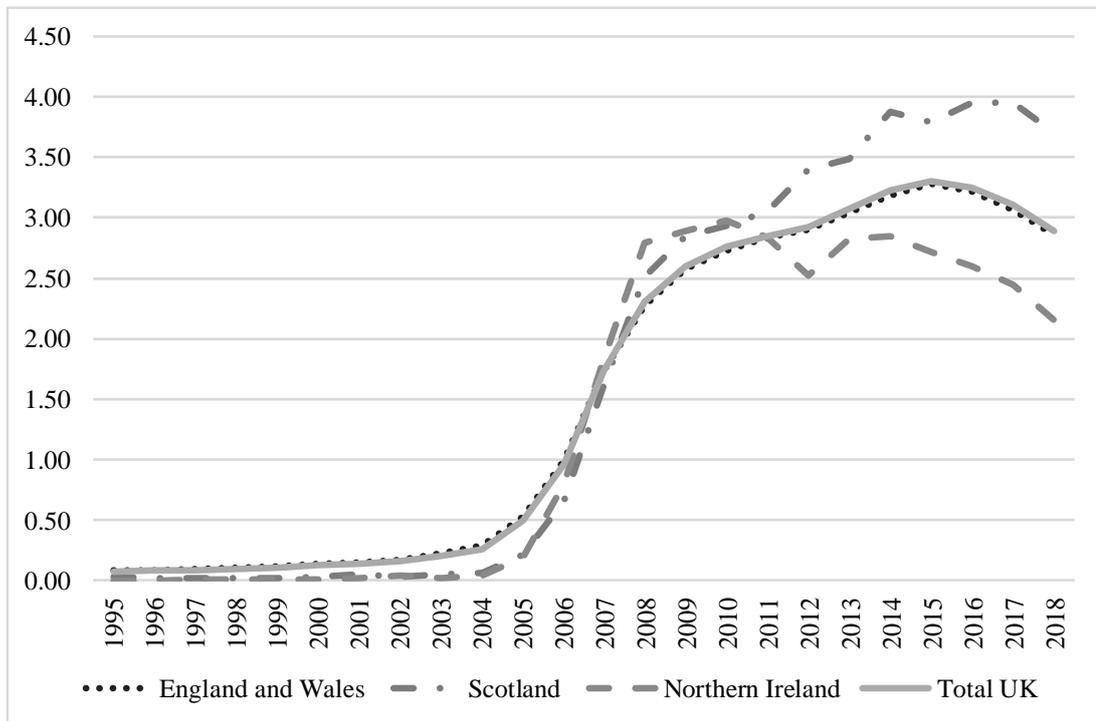


Source: Personal communication with the ONS, NRS and NISRA, and the respective agencies' websites.

5.1.2 Substantial increase in the proportion of births to Polish mothers throughout the UK

Data show that births to Polish mothers constitute a significant proportion of all births in the UK. Pre-2004, Polish mothers contributed less than 0.2 per cent of all UK births. Since then, there has been a rapid increase in the proportion of births to Polish mothers, reaching 3.3 per cent in 2015, but decreasing to 2.9 per cent in 2018. Analysing separately data from across the UK's countries, it is worth noting that births to Polish mothers constitute 3.7 to 4 per cent of all births in Scotland and 2.2 to 3 per cent in Northern Ireland. The figures for England and Wales follow those for the UK as a whole.

Figure 5.2 Share of births to Polish mothers relative to the total number of births across UK's countries (%)



Source: Personal communication with the ONS, NRS and NISRA.

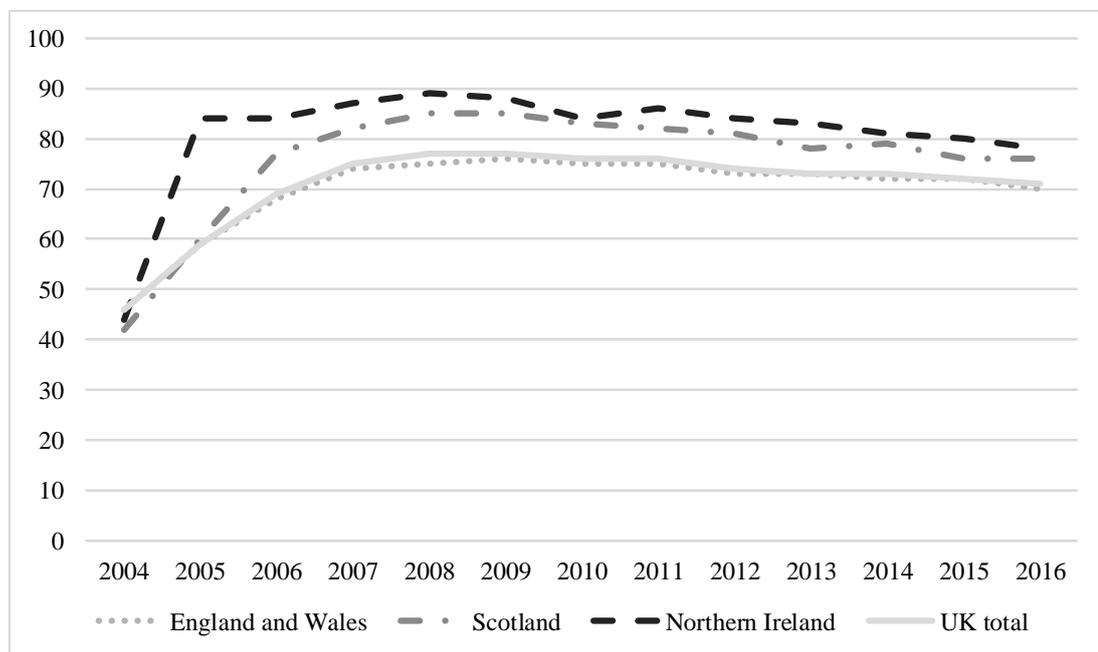
Since 2005, Poland has been in the top ten on the list of mothers' countries of birth for non-UK born mothers giving birth in the UK, and since 2010 Polish-born mothers have topped this list (ONS 2019a; Zumpe 2012; own compilation of data from ONS, NRS and NISRA).

It is worth noting that from around 2007-08 the proportion of births to Polish mothers in England and Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland closely reflects the relative proportion of the total UK population living in these countries. That is, around 88-89 per cent of births to Polish mothers take place in England and Wales, around 8-9 per cent in Scotland and around 2-3 per cent in Northern Ireland. This can be interpreted as a sign that the Polish population, including the age structure of the Polish population (e.g. a population of women of childbearing age), is distributed similarly across the UK to the overall UK's population.

5.1.3 Most Polish migrant children have two Polish parents

In the era preceding Poland's EU accession, only around one in three children of Polish mothers also had a Polish father. This proportion increased considerably after 2004 and from around 2007, approximately three in four children born to Polish mothers also had a Polish father (see Figure 5.3). This translates to 171,863 children with two Polish parents being born between 2004 and 2016 in the UK. The proportion of children with two Polish parents varies between UK countries, with the highest proportion found in Northern Ireland, followed by Scotland, and England and Wales.

Figure 5.3 Proportion of children with two Polish parents (%)



Source: Personal communication with the ONS, NRS and NISRA.

A small but gradual decline in the proportion of births to two Polish parents is also evident from around 2010 (see Table 5.2), even if families with two Polish parents still constitute the dominant family pattern among Polish migrants in the UK (constituting around 70 percent of all families in which children to Polish mothers are born).

Table 5.2 Father's country of birth

		2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Fathers' country of birth	Poland	75%	74%	73%	72%	72%	71%
	UK	11%	11%	12%	12%	13%	14%
	EU (excluding PL and UK)	3%	3%	3%	4%	4%	4%
	Rest of the world	8%	8%	8%	9%	8%	8%
	Not known / Not stated	4%	4%	4%	3%	3%	3%
	All (total number)	22,286	23,127	23,226	24,319	25,017	24,533

Source: Personal communication with the ONS and NRS.

Note: Data for England, Wales and Scotland only. Data for NI could not be obtained thus were not included in this table.

5.1.4 After 2004, Polish fathers mostly have children with Polish partners

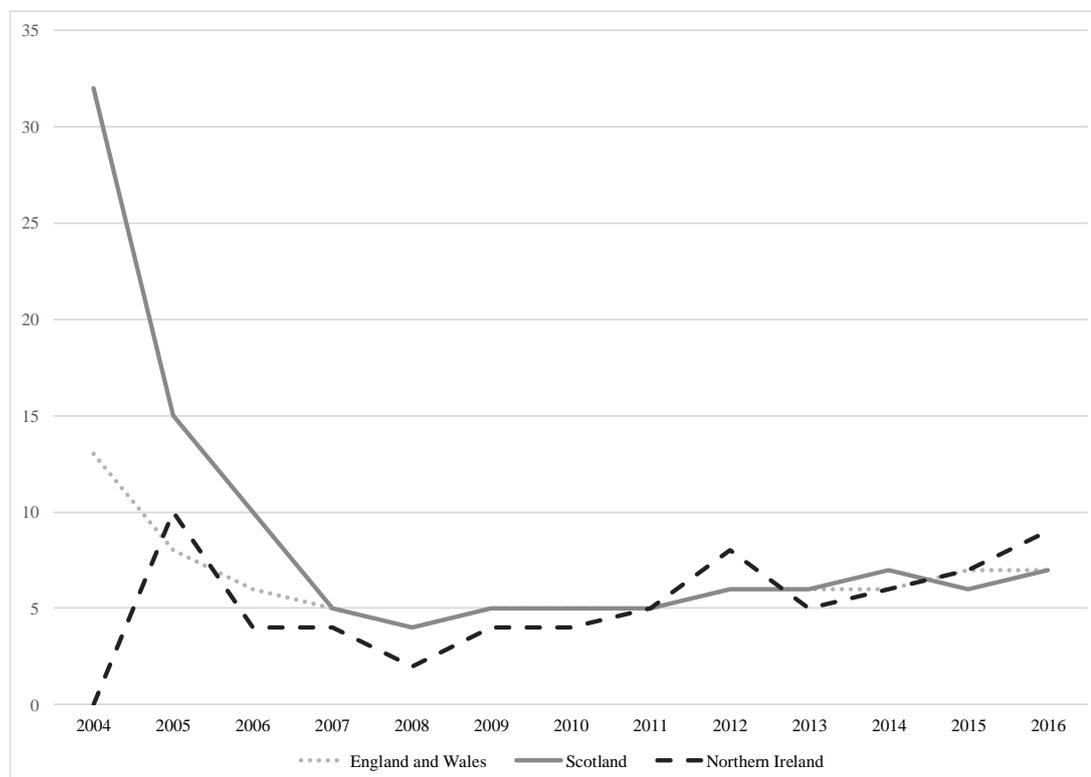
The number of children with a Polish father⁷¹ is much smaller than the overall number of children to Polish mothers. This is because Polish fathers are less likely than Polish mothers to have children with non-Polish partners. Nevertheless, since 2008 (year the records began), Polish fathers are listed in the second place in the ranking of most common countries of birth for non-UK-born fathers in England and Wales,⁷² falling to the third position in 2018 (ONS 2019a).

Overall, there were around 100 births per year to Polish fathers and non-Polish mothers before 2004, and this number grew to over 1,400 children in 2016. Yet, due to a substantial growth in the number of children with two Polish parents, the proportion of children with a Polish father and a non-Polish mother decreased in the post-accession years. On average, between 2004 and 2016 around 6 per cent of children with a Polish father did not have a Polish mother (see Figure 5.4 and Table 5.3).

71 Data on births to Polish fathers have some limitations. This is due to the fact that some records on births registered solely by child's mother are missing data on fathers. It is not clear whether there is systematic bias in reporting (i.e. births to migrant fathers or births to fathers from some socio-economic backgrounds are not reported). Therefore, it is possible that there were more births to Polish fathers than were reported by the children's mothers but, taken the overall small number of births to Polish fathers and non-Polish mothers, we assume this number would be very small.

72 Between 2008 and 2018, fathers born in Pakistan topped this list, with Polish fathers in the second place until 2017. In 2018, Polish fathers were overtaken by fathers born in Romania (ONS 2019a).

**Figure 5.4 UK-born children with a Polish-born father and non-Polish mothers
(% of all children with a Polish born father)**



Source: Personal communication with the ONS, NRS and NISRA.

Note: The high percentage of children born to Polish fathers and non-Polish mothers pre-2007, in particular in Scotland, is related to the overall small number of Polish fathers.

Table 5.3 Children born to Polish fathers and non-Polish mothers

		2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Mothers' country of birth	Poland	94.8%	94.0%	93.9%	93.5%	93.0%	92.7%
	UK	1.9%	2.1%	2.1%	2.4%	2.5%	2.6%
	EU (excluding PL and UK)	1.7%	2.1%	2.1%	2.2%	2.6%	2.7%
	Rest of the world	1.5%	1.8%	1.8%	1.9%	1.9%	2.0%
	All	17,696	18,120	18,054	18,819	19,408	18,714

Source: Personal communication with the ONS and NRS.

Note: Data for England, Wales and Scotland only. Data for NI could not be obtained thus were not included in this table. Not known/not stated option is excluded as the numbers were very small (one child in 2012 and one in 2015, and three children in 2016).

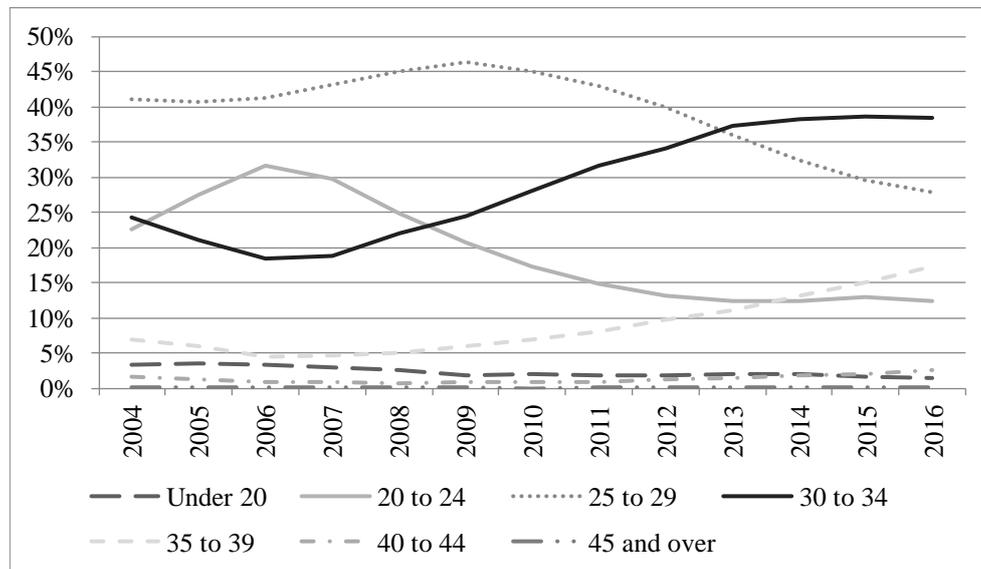
5.1.5 Polish women having children in the UK are becoming older

Analysis of Polish mothers' age at the time of childbirth in the UK shows a gradual shift towards older family formation. In the early post-accession years, the highest proportion of children was born to Polish women aged 25 to 29, followed by births to

women aged 20 to 24. However, since about 2009 women aged 30 to 34 and women aged 35 to 39 have given birth to an increasingly larger proportion of all children born to Polish migrant mothers. In fact, since 2013, children born to Polish women aged 30 to 34 have the highest share of births to Polish mothers in the UK. In addition, since 2014, the share of children born to Polish women aged 30 and over is greater than the share of children born to Polish women aged 30 and below. In 2016, this translated to 42% of children born to Polish mothers aged 30 and below and 58% of children born to mothers aged 30 and over.

Since the data on the age distribution of Polish women in the UK across analysed years are not feasible to obtain,⁷³ it is not possible to compare them with the data on the Polish mothers' ages at when a child is born. As such, it is possible to indicate potential trends, however we cannot be certain about the driving forces behind these trends (see Figure 5.5, 5.6 and 5.7).

Figure 5.5 The proportion of births per age groups among Polish women in the UK, 2004-2016 (%)

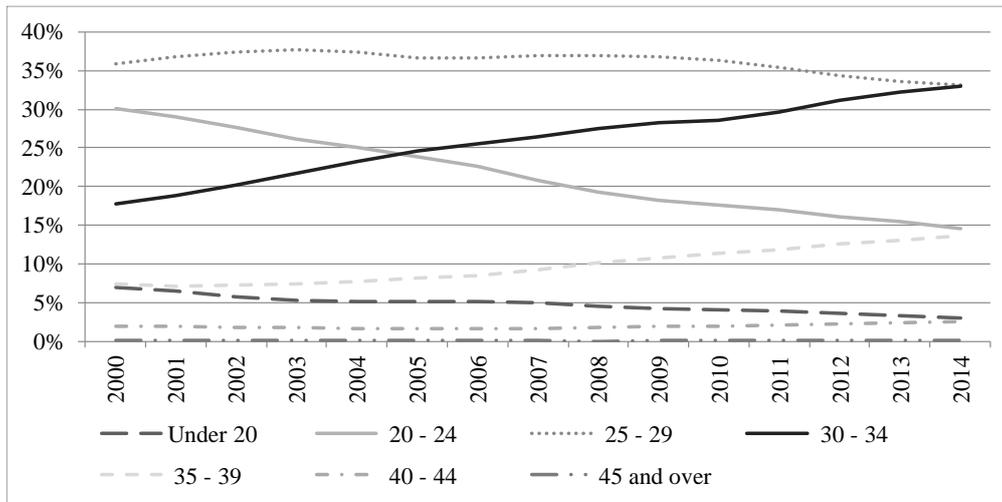


Source: Personal communication with the ONS and NRS.

Note: Figure plotted on the basis of 226,696 births to Polish mothers in England, Wales and Scotland between 2004 and 2016. The age of 17 Polish mothers giving birth in Scotland was not known and these mothers were not included in the analysis. Data for NI could not be obtained thus were not included in this figure.

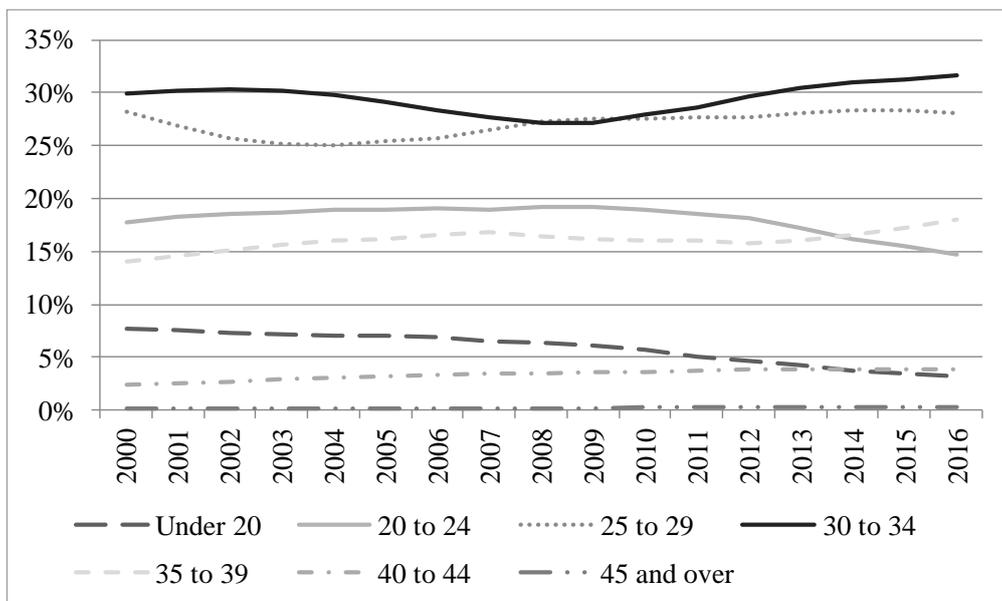
⁷³ The data on the age distribution of Polish women in the UK are only available for 2011 when the Census was conducted. Since then, there are only annual population estimates that are considered too unreliable to be used for the age distribution among migrant populations.

Figure 5.6 The proportion of births per age groups in Poland, 2002-2016 (%)



Source: GUS 2018.

Figure 5.7 The proportion of births per age groups in the UK, 2000-2016 (%)



Source: ONS and NRS.

Note: Data for England, Wales and Scotland. Data for NI could not be obtained thus were not included in this figure.

One of the driving forces for the increase in Polish mothers' age at the time of childbirth in the UK can be an increase in the mean mother's age. For instance, in 2010, the mean mother's age at first births was 26.6 years in Poland and 27.8 years in England and Wales, and the mean age at childbirth across all birth orders was 28.6 years and 29.5 years respectively. By 2016, all these values increased in Poland and

in England and Wales (see Table 5.4) (ONS 2018a; Rogalińska & Szałtys 2017). Further discussion on how these data could be interpreted to support analysis of the aggregated birth registration data is provided in Section 5.2.5).

Table 5.4 The mother’s mean age at first birth and the average age of giving birth in Poland and in the UK

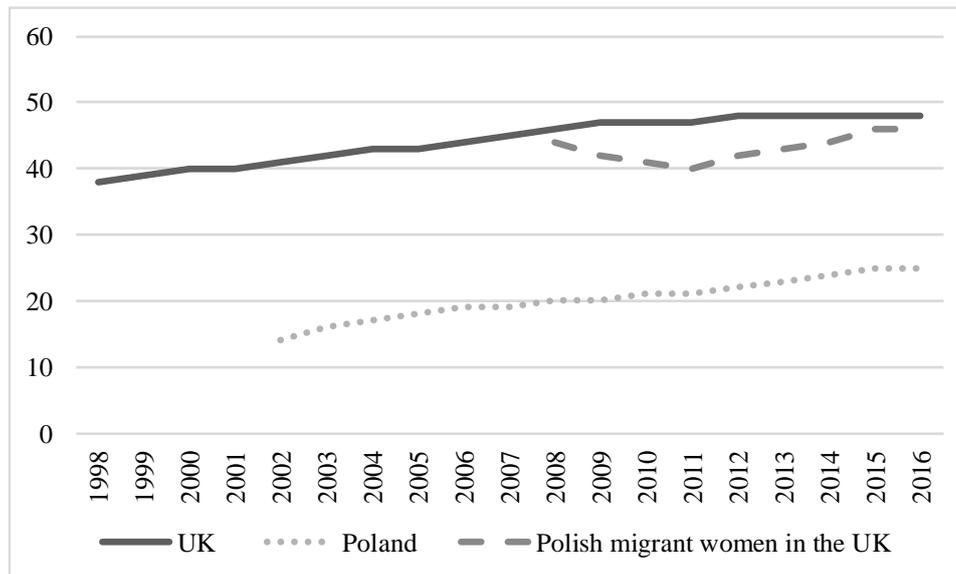
		2010	2016
Mean age for giving birth to first child	Poland	26.6	27.2
	UK	27.8	28.8
Average age of family formation	Poland	28.6	29.9
	UK	29.5	30.4

Source: ONS 2018a; Rogalińska & Szałtys 2017.

5.1.6 Parenthood patterns of Polish women change in the UK

Overall, both in Poland and in the UK, there is an increasing proportion of children born outside marriage. In Poland, this proportion increased from 16% to 25% between 2002 and 2016, whereas in the UK the increase was from 38% to 48% between 1998 and 2016. The trend for Polish mothers in the UK is closer aligned to patterns observed in the UK than in Poland, with around 40-46% of children being born to parents who are not married. This raised questions about the driving factors for this increase in Polish migrant women having children outside of marriage. Potential explanations are presented in Section 5.2.

Figure 5.8 Proportion of children born outside marriage in the UK and Poland, and by Polish mothers in the UK (%)



Source: GUS 2018; personal communication with the ONS and NRS.

Note: UK's data are for England, Wales and Scotland only. The national data sources use the following definitions: births outside marriage or civil partnership for UK data, births out-of-wedlock for Polish data. Data for NI could not be obtained thus were not included in this figure.

5.2 Discussion

5.2.1 Potential for further growth of the Polish migrant children population

The rate of increase and the total number of births to Polish mothers in the UK is on an unprecedented scale. This high initial increase in the number of births to Polish mothers is most likely related to the increase in the total number of Polish migrants living in the UK. The peak in the number of Polish migrants arriving in the UK occurred in the period 2006-8, which also experienced the sharpest increase in births to Polish migrant women. Since 2008, the increase in the total number of births to Polish women can be explained twofold:

1. there is a delay between migration and family formation (as consistent with the disruption hypothesis) and migrants' fertility was still catching up for few years after their arrival in the UK;
2. the age structure of Polish migrants. Upon arrival, Polish migrants were on average young, and entered the highly reproductive age brackets while living in the UK.

The age structure and the ageing of the Polish population in the UK can also, at least partly, explain the decline in the number of births to Polish women since 2016. This decline is likely also related to the decreasing number of Poles in the UK, as the volume of Polish migration has fallen since the Brexit Referendum in 2016. Given the still relatively young age profile of Polish migrants in the UK, it can be predicted that a “Polish baby boom” will continue over the next few years, with the total number of children born to Polish mothers remaining at a relatively high level, as long as there is not substantial return migration of Polish women of the childbearing age.

5.2.2 Two Polish parent family model is dominant among Polish migrants

In the post accession years, the two Polish parent family is a dominant model, with around *three in four children born to Polish women also having Polish father*. However, a small decline in the proportion of children born in two Polish parent families has been recorded. It may potentially indicate that after a few years of living in the UK, Polish women have integrated within the local communities, found non-Polish partners and consequently had children with them.

At the same time, *Polish men mostly have children with Polish women*, even if in recent years there was an increase in the share of children born to Polish fathers and non-Polish mothers. This increase can indicate an increase in the number of Polish fathers sufficiently committed to the relationship (i.e. married or in a stable relationship) to be named on the birth certificate. It can also indicate an increase in the number of permanently-settled Polish men in the population due to migration, since this figure was virtually unchanged year-on-year prior to 2004. This may also indicate a new type of Polish migration, with Polish men migrating to a new life in a new country. This, in turn, can indicate that their return to Poland is less likely than other Polish male migrants. However, it is not feasible to examine this hypothesis on the basis of the available data.⁷⁴

Although forecasting Polish women’s family building strategies is a challenge, the declining proportion of two Polish-parent families could potentially have far-reaching

⁷⁴ This is due to the limitations of the birth registration data, and the profile of the online survey respondents. The survey attracted only 42 male respondents, out of whom only 6 had child(ren) with non-Polish partners. Interviews were conducted with Polish fathers who had children only with Polish women.

consequences for the return potential of Polish migrants who had children with non-Polish partners. For couples where both parents are Polish, the potential return seems easier than for couples where only one parent is Polish, for instance due to the linguistic barrier of one partner not being sufficiently fluent in Polish. Given that nearly one-fourth of children with Polish-born mothers have non-Polish fathers, it is likely that many of these children will not be coming back to Poland in the coming years as Polish mothers tend to settle in the country of residence of their child's father.

Given a large share of two Polish parent families, the prospect of moving back to Poland within a few years of the birth of a child is still possible for these couples. As research literature has shown, for Polish migrants economic reasons play the most important role when emigrating, whereas return decisions are mostly motivated by psychological aspects (see Section 3.4). Therefore, it can be hypothesised that the emotional factors related to the longing to be close to family and friends could have a potentially greater impact on two-Polish-parent families than on couples where only one parent is Polish.

This aspect generated research questions that were examined in more detail during the primary data collection stage, with the survey respondents and interviewees being asked about their family building decisions.

5.2.3 A shift towards higher fertility and older family formation among Polish mothers in the UK

The analysis of the aggregated birth registration data show that Polish migrant women exhibit some distinctive family formation characteristics: their fertility rate is much higher than the fertility rate of women in Poland, and they have children older in life.

This *higher fertility rate* may indicate that the favourable socio-economic context (e.g. stable employment situation, remuneration levels, formal childcare provision or work-life balance policies) can have a positive effect on fertility levels. However, these analyses could not be conducted on the basis of the aggregated birth registration data, thus it created a need for the primary data collection focusing on aspects related to decisions to form a family, factors that influenced these decisions and the actual composition of families of Polish migrants in the UK.

The *shift towards older family formation* can be explained by alternative migrant fertility theories. First of all, the shift towards older family formation could potentially be explained by the gradual 'ageing' of the population of Polish women in the UK. On average, Poles in the UK were very young in the early post-accession years, with 37% of Polish migrants⁷⁵ in England and Wales being under 30 years old (67% under 35 years old) according to the 2011 Census data (see Section 2.4).⁷⁶ However, with a relatively smaller inflow of young Polish migrants in subsequent years, there is evidence that the Polish population in the UK is becoming older (Hawkins & Moses 2016).⁷⁷ A potential consequence of this 'ageing' of the Polish migrant population is a higher proportion of older women of childbearing age, and thus a growing proportion of children born to older mothers.

In addition, the direction of family formation trends among Polish women in the UK closely resembles trends in Poland, for instance a decline in early family formation and an increase in older family formation. These trends could potentially be explained by the *socialisation hypothesis*, which emphasises the importance of the social and cultural norms from the sending country.

On the other hand, this shift towards older family formation in Poland and among Polish migrants in the UK could be also explained by the changing size of age cohorts within Poland's population. As discussed in Section 2.5, Poland experienced a second 'baby boom' in the early 1980s, meaning that the population of Polish women born in the early 1980s was much greater than the population of women born in previous and subsequent decades. The age-specific family formation trends might therefore have been influenced to a great extent by the family formation trends of women from the second 'baby boom' generation. Considering that the population structure of Polish migrants in the UK is highly skewed towards people born in the early 1980s, this factor could have played a dominant role for the age-specific family formation trends among Poles in the UK. For instance, a peak in the number of births among women aged 20-24 was observed around 2006-2007, as women born in the early 1980s were becoming

75 Defined as people born in Poland.

76 The share of women and men was nearly equal in the post-2004 Polish accession to the UK. Therefore, it is possible to estimate that the overall Polish migrant population structure presented in Chapter 2 is also representative for the age structure of Polish women in the UK.

77 Despite becoming older, the Polish population in the UK is still very young, compared with the Polish population in Poland or the overall population in the UK.

mothers during this period. Similarly, since these women were entering their thirties from 2010-2012, there was a noticeable decline in the number of births among women aged 25-29 and an increase among women aged 30 to 34. Because the cohort of women born in the 1990s were not as large as the earlier cohort, we have observed an overall increase in the number of births to older mothers. However, since data on the age distribution among Polish female migrants in the UK are not available for the analysed years, it was not feasible to investigate this aspect in more depth.

However, the rapidly increasing number of births to Polish women in the UK can also be at least partly⁷⁸ explained by the *disruption hypothesis*, with the migration experience acting as an interruption to Polish women's reproductive plans and the elevated birth rates following migration being interpreted as the postponed births. Older family formation among Polish migrant women (*vis-à-vis* Polish women in Poland) could therefore be a catching-up behaviour to compensate for the delay in family formation.

The trend in older family formation among Polish migrant women can be also interpreted in line with the *adaptation hypothesis*, with Polish women potentially adapting their family formation decisions to British socio-cultural norms. Parutis (2013) argues that in a traditional Polish society, women are under reproductive pressure, which can be escaped through migration. Moving to Britain, where there are more open attitudes towards gender roles and more relaxed societal norms compared to Poland, could be viewed as a source of agency and autonomy for women. This way, migration empowers women to escape traditional socio-cultural gender norms and expectations. This, in turn, could have facilitated a trend in older family formation among Polish migrant women because the average age of having a child in the UK is higher than in Poland.

This older age at family formation among Poles in the UK can be also explained (at least partly) by Polish migrant women having more children than women in Poland (as expressed by their higher TFRs). Since children of higher birth orders are typically born when mothers are older, this has an impact on the average age of family

⁷⁸ This rapid increase in the number of births to Polish women could be also explained by the increase in the number of Polish women coming to and living in the UK.

formation. The reasons for having more children abroad compared to Poland were captured in the survey and during interviews.

In sum, the family formation trends as related to the mothers' age most likely result from a combination of several socio-cultural factors. Despite an increase in the mother's mean age at first birth and the average age of family formation, Polish women still remain some of the youngest mothers in Europe. It suggests that the higher average age of women at family formation among Polish mothers in the UK, compared with the situation in Poland, is probably related to the postponement of births and the gradual ageing of the Polish female population in the UK. However, the available data do not allow to make a definitive conclusion on this aspect.

5.2.4 A shift towards births outside of marriage

The high share of children born to Polish women in the UK outside of marriage raises the question of whether Polish migrant women carried with them the parenthood characteristics from Poland and over time adapted to the UK's parenthood patterns, where childbearing occurs increasingly outside of marriage (in line with the *adaptation hypothesis*). The alternative explanation could be that migration attracted a specific group of Polish women who were already more open in Poland towards parenthood outside of marriage (in line with the *selection hypothesis*). Importantly, available data do not allow an examination of what proportion of these children are born in families with two Polish parents versus families where only the mother is Polish. Nevertheless, the large proportion of children born outside marriage by Polish migrant mothers is noteworthy. The survey data provide some more insights on these aspects (see Section 6.2.2).

5.2.5 Relationship between migration and family formation, and settlement

The available secondary aggregated birth registration data provides some guidance regarding migrants' family formation behaviour, and the relationship between family formation and settlement decisions. However, it still fails to provide a clear answer on whether, for Polish migrants, settlement decisions follow family formation decisions or vice versa. This created a need for the collection of primary data to address these questions.

For instance, as explained earlier in this chapter, we do not know the extent to which the increase in the number of children born to Polish migrant women is simply a consequence of the high number of Polish migrants in the prime family formation age groups arriving and residing in the UK. There is thus a need for an improvement in the statistical data provision on age-specific fertility to enable these analyses to be conducted. If Polish migrants have children in the UK simply because they are in highly reproductive age groups, the age of Polish migrants would be the factor most strongly influencing decisions to have a baby in the UK. Subsequently, the experience of having a child abroad might be followed by a decision to settle in the UK because children strongly tie families to the local communities. The factors encouraging return would therefore have to be even stronger to prompt families to move.

Similarly, the secondary analysis of the aggregated birth registration data could only *suggest* whether or not the hypothesis about motivations for family formation were supported. Migrants' fertility poses questions about the importance of the socio-economic context and family policy for family formation. The lack of data on these aspects as related to the situation of Polish migrants in the UK was also one of the drivers for the primary data collection.

5.2.6 Impact of Polish migrant family formation trends

This high number of births to Polish mothers in the UK poses wider questions regarding the impact of migrants' family formation decisions on Poland's demography. Firstly, it suggests a potentially imminent population decrease due to migration and children being born abroad. Given that the majority of children born to Polish mothers in the UK also had a Polish father, these children could have potentially been born in Poland. In fact, if this had happened, there could have been around 4-5% more children born in Poland each year from 2009 to 2016.

Secondly, it presents challenges for the future due to the complex relationship between migrants' decisions related to family formation, the duration of their stay in the UK and the potential for their return to Poland. It can be hypothesised that having a child in the UK reduces the likelihood of these migrants returning to Poland. It is possible that children born to Polish mothers in the UK would never move to Poland, thus potentially signalling a permanent population decrease for Poland. This assumption is

weaker when only the child's mother is Polish and stronger in cases where both parents are Polish (Hoorens *et al.* 2011). A single migrant having a child or several children abroad might not have been able to do so in Poland due to an objective shortage of potential partners or a subjective lack of desirable partners. On the other hand, Polish couples having child(ren) in the UK might have conceived them in Poland as well. As a variety of factors influence childbearing decisions, it is not certain that such a couple would have had children in Poland. However, it can be assumed with a high degree of certainty that the large number of people of family formation age emigrating from Poland to the UK (and to other European countries) has led to fewer children being born in Poland in recent years.

However, Polish family formation abroad and the composition of Polish families is not particularly present in the demography-related policy discussions in Poland, despite the increase in fertility levels being one of the objectives of Polish family policy (see Section 2.6). This led to the formulation of the research questions guiding this study and fed into the discussion on the policy implications of this research (see Section 9.2.2).

5.3 Conclusions

Focusing on the descriptive analysis of the aggregated birth registration data, this chapter discussed the family formation trends of Polish migrants in the UK on the basis of a simple initial hypothesis that these trends might influence migrants' return decisions.

The analyses show that there has been a *substantial increase in the number of births* to Polish mothers throughout the UK and that Polish migrant women exhibit some *distinctive family formation characteristics*. Polish women in the UK tend to show higher fertility than women in Poland, typically have children later in life, and are more likely to have children born outside marriage compared with their compatriots in Poland. In addition, around three quarters of children born to Polish migrant women also have a Polish father. The number of children with a Polish father and a non-Polish mother is still relatively small.

While theories on migrant fertility provide potential explanations, there is still *uncertainty about the driving factors for these trends* and the strength of their influence

on family formation trends among Polish migrant women. For instance, it is likely that Polish women adapt to the British family formation norms of older family formation and childbearing outside of marriage. However, the alternative explanation is that older family formation results from the gradual ‘ageing’ of the population of Polish women in the UK or their postponement of births due to migration. Older family formation could have also been affected by the high fertility rate of Polish migrant women. It is also possible that Polish migrant’s family formation results from the more favourable socio-economic context in Britain (compared with Poland) encouraging women to have children.

There is also uncertainty about the relationship between family formation of Polish migrants and their settlement/return decisions. It is possible that migration and family formation decisions are made independently (at least initially), but over time become interlinked and start influencing each other. As Polish migrant family formation trends can have far reaching consequences on a range of socio-demographic trends in Poland and in the UK, these uncertainties motivated collection of primary data (an online survey and in-depth interviews) to explore a wide range of factors that may have an impact on family formation and migration decisions. The findings from these data are presented in Chapters 6 and 7 (the survey data), and Chapter 8 (the interview data).

6 Socio-demographic characteristics and the family situation of online survey respondents

Analyses of the online survey data are presented in this chapter, which focuses on the socio-demographic characteristics, family formation patterns and family situation of respondents, and Chapter 7, which analyses the relationship between respondents' socio-demographic characteristics and their return decisions.

Section 6.1 examines the demographic characteristics and family formation trends among respondents. Section 6.2 examines respondents' family composition and the characteristics of migrant children, while Section 6.3 analyses the factors that respondents considered to be important when deciding to start a family. Section 6.4 discusses the interrelations of all these factors in influencing Polish migrants' family-building strategies. The main findings from this chapter are summarised in Section 6.5.

6.1 Demographic characteristics

6.1.1 Young Polish women who have migrated to work and/or join partners

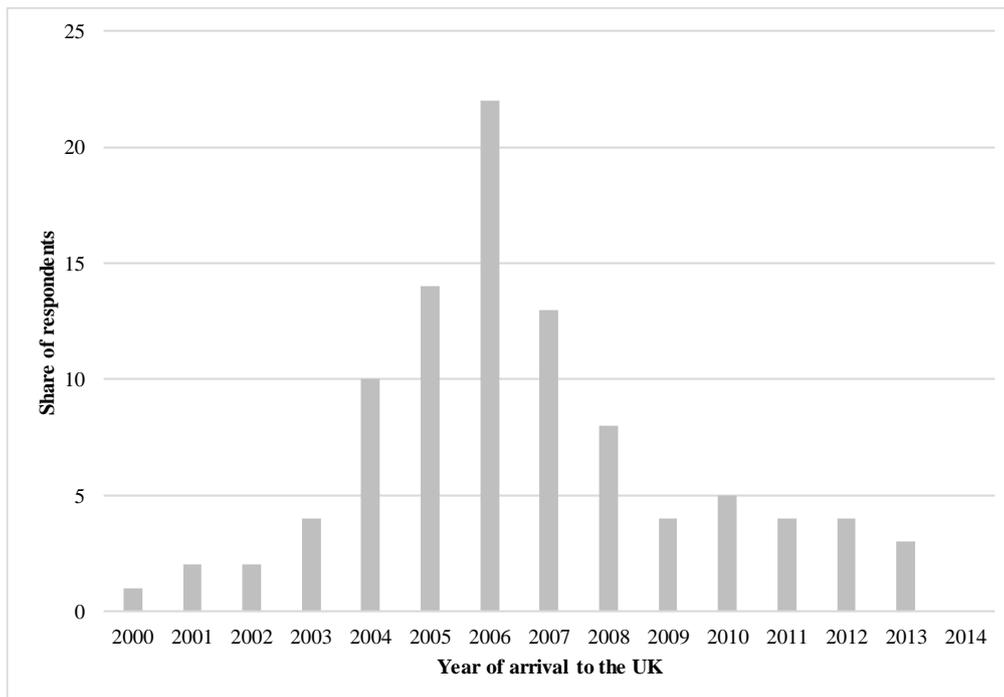
The majority of the online survey respondents were women (92%) in their early 30s⁷⁹ who arrived in the UK in the mid-2000s (see Figure 6.1). Migrants aged 32, 33 and 34 (equivalent to being born in 1980, 1981 and 1982) constituted the largest share of respondents (see Figure 6.2). They had therefore been living in the UK for 7 to 9 years when the survey was conducted.⁸⁰ The respondents' ages and year of arrival to the UK are largely similar to the overall population of Poles in the UK (see Section 2.4).

⁷⁹ People aged between 25 and 40 constituted 89% of the online survey respondents.

⁸⁰ Most respondents (9 out of 10) have never lived in the UK before this migration move (N=614).

The comparison of the online survey data with other data sources that capture Polish migrants' year of arrival is not feasible because of how the data are aggregated. For instance, the 2011 Census for England and Wales includes Polish migrants in a broader category of new Member States (countries that joined the EU between 2001 and 2011) and as such, it is not possible to provide separate information on the year of arrival for Polish nationals. Similar aggregation is used for the Workers' Registration Scheme data. The data on the National Insurance allocations (NINo) provide information about Polish-born registrants for each year. However, these data do not provide information on the stocks of migrants at particular points in time. Therefore, based on this data source, we know how many Polish migrants registered for NINo-related purposes per year but not whether these people still live in the UK. In any case, NINo data also confirm that the largest flows of Polish migrants to the UK were in the early post-accession years, with most new registrants from Poland recorded during 2005-08 (DWP 2015).

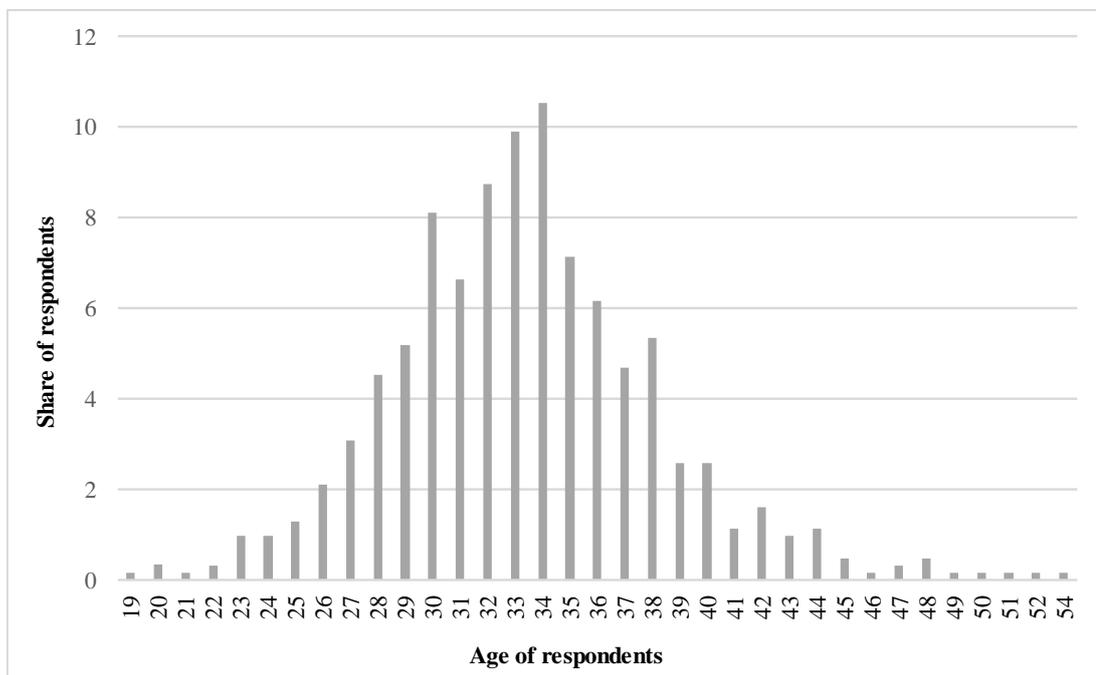
Figure 6.1. Respondent's year of arrival in the UK (%)



Source: 'Migration and childbearing' online survey data collected in 2013 and 2014.

Note: N=591. The figure does not display data for 14 respondents who came to the UK pre-2000.

Figure 6.2. Respondents' ages (%)

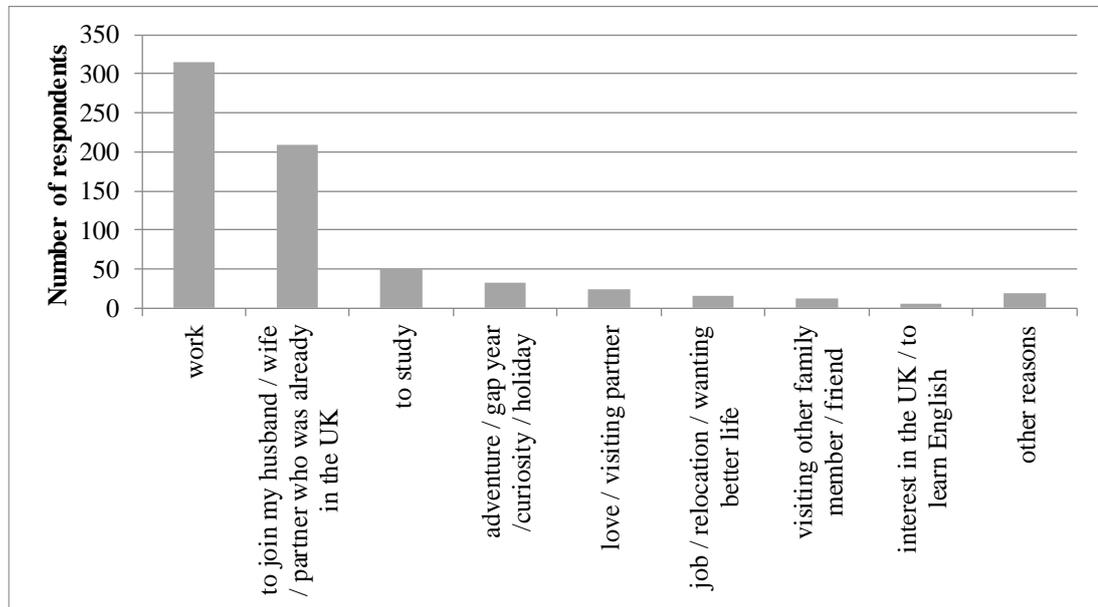


Source: 'Migration and childbearing' online survey data collected in 2013 and 2014.

Note: N=616

The two main migration reasons given were work and to join a husband/wife/partner who was already in the UK. A much smaller number of respondents stated that their main reason for moving to the UK was study.

Figure 6.3 Reason for moving to the UK (absolute numbers)



Source: 'Migration and childbearing' online survey data collected in 2013 and 2014.

Note: Responses do not add up as respondents could select more than one reason for moving to the UK.

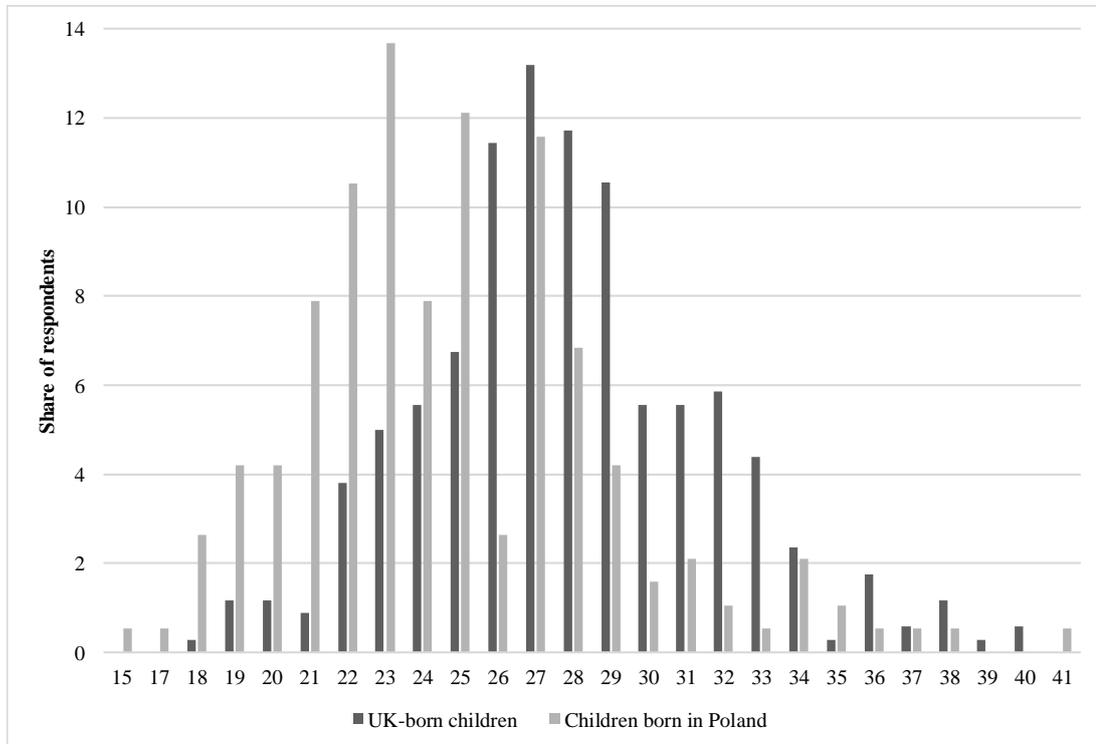
6.1.2 First-time mothers in Poland younger at first birth compared with first-time Polish migrant mothers in the UK

The survey comprises two main groups of women: those who had had their first child in Poland and those who first gave birth in the UK. These amount to 190 and 341 respondents (36% and 64% of the sample), respectively. At the time of giving birth, women who had their first child born in Poland were on average three years younger than women who become first-time mothers in the UK. Most children born in Poland were born to mothers aged 20 to 25, followed by births to women aged 26-30. In contrast, Polish first-time mothers in the UK were on average older, with most births occurring to women aged 26-30, followed by births to women aged 31-35. On average at the time of childbirth, first-time mothers giving birth in Poland were 24.8 years old while Polish mothers of UK-born children were 27.9 years old (see Figure 6.4).⁸¹ Due to the small number of second, third and consecutive children, the survey data did not

⁸¹ The analyses were only conducted for the first child data due to the small number of respondents with two or more children born in Poland (N=73).

allow firm conclusions about the relationship between mother's age and child's country of birth for higher birth orders.

Figure 6.4. Mother's age at birth of a first child (%)



Source: 'Migration and childbearing' online survey data collected in 2013 and 2014.

Note: N=341 for UK-born children and N=190 for children born in Poland. For children born in 2001 and earlier, this figure assumes that they were all born in 2001. Taking into account that over one third of children born in Poland was born in 2001 or earlier, the actual age of some mothers with a first child born in Poland will likely be lower than presented in this figure.

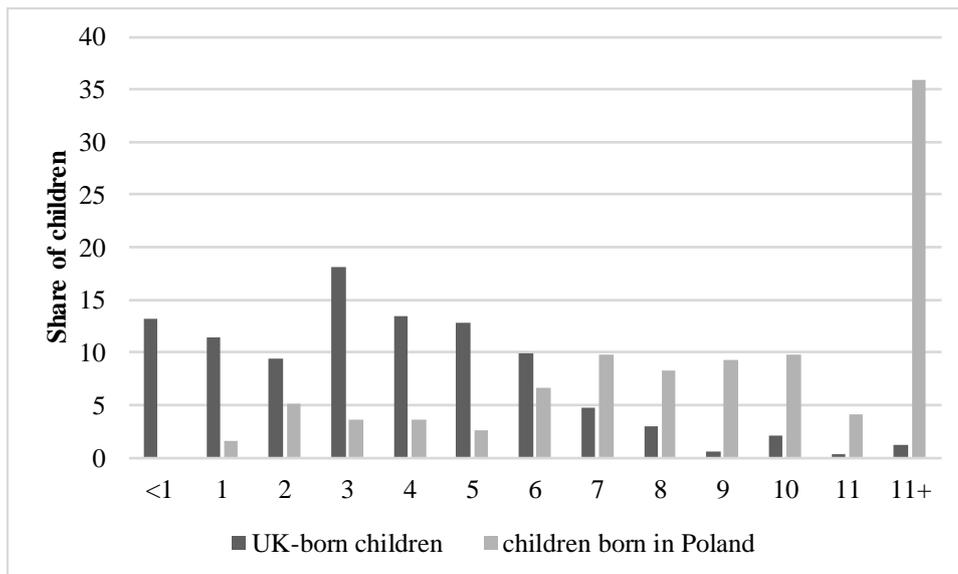
6.1.3 Older mean age of female respondents with children born in Poland

Women who came to the UK with children born in Poland were on average older than women starting families in the UK.⁸² At the time of the survey, the mean age of female respondents who had their first child in Poland was 36.2, significantly higher than the mean age of 32.6 for those women who had their first child in the UK.⁸³ Children born in Poland were also on average older than children born in the UK (see Figure 6.5).

⁸² This older age of women who came to the UK with children born in Poland is partly a statistical artefact because of the single moment of observation of the women in the survey sample.

⁸³ These analyses are based on a result from a T-test of independent samples, $t(4.868)$, $p=0.000$, two-tailed test. Only women who had their first child born either in the UK or in Poland were included in the analysis. Male respondents as well as women who had their first child born in any other country were excluded from the analysis.

Figure 6.5. First child's age and country of birth (%)



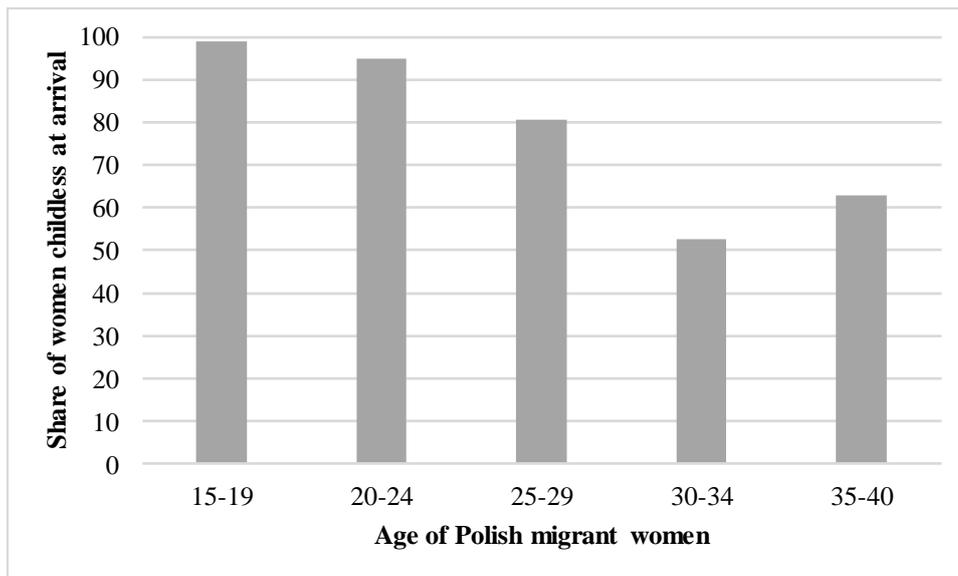
Source: 'Migration and childbearing' online survey data collected in 2013 and 2014.
 Note: N=342 for children born in the UK, and N=195 for children born in Poland.

6.1.4 The likelihood of having a child increases with the duration of residence in the UK

In line with previous research (Waller *et al.* 2012) (see Figure 6.7), the survey data show that the number of years spent in the UK increases the chances of Polish migrant women becoming mothers. Over 75% of female respondents across all age groups had a child in the UK within 5 years of arrival and over 92% within 7 years of arrival (see Figure 6.6).⁸⁴ It is likely that the migration event delayed the process of fertility. Regrettably, the survey data did not allow more detailed analysis of the interaction between the migration decision, the timing of partnership formation and the timing of birth decisions.

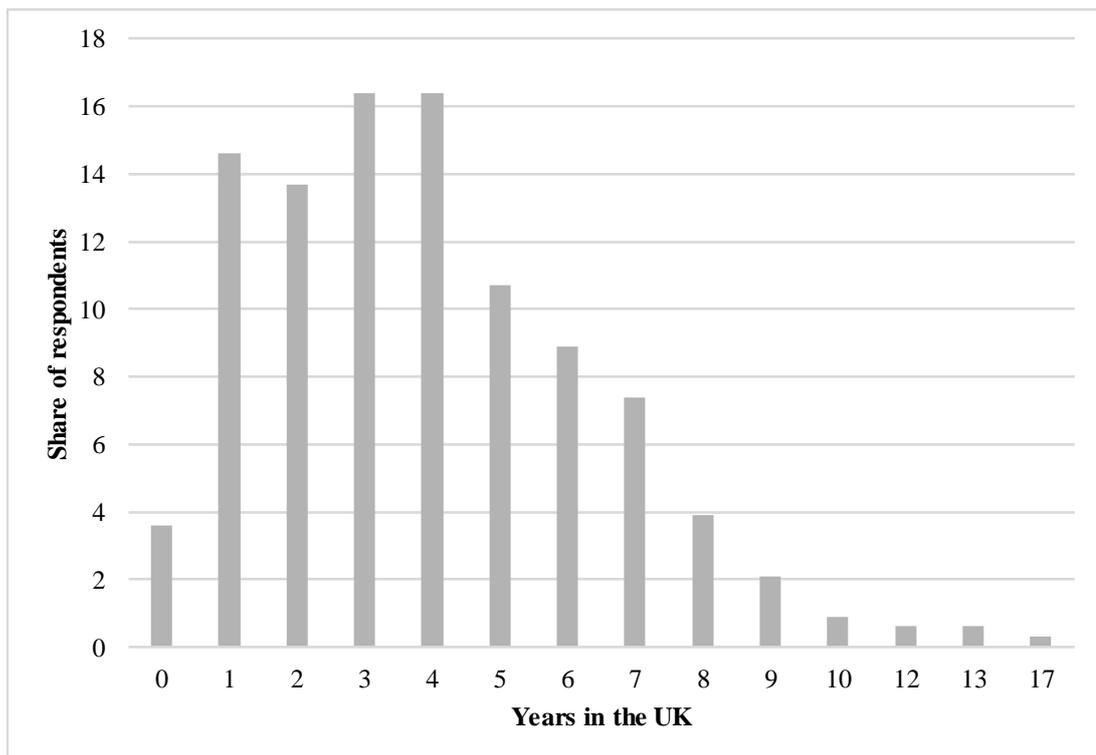
⁸⁴ There was only a very small number of the survey respondents without children. Based on the available data sources, it was not feasible to estimate whether the population of the survey respondents had the same propensity to be childless as the overall population of Poles in the UK.

Figure 6.6 Childlessness of Polish migrant women upon arrival to the UK (%)



Source: 'Migration and childbearing' online survey data collected in 2013 and 2014.
 Note: The total number of respondents N=336.

Figure 6.7 The difference in years between arrival in the UK and the birth of a first child (%)



Source: adapted from Waller *et al.* 2012 based on the Labour Force Survey (LFS) data for 2001-2010.

6.1.5 Most of the online survey respondents were well-educated and working

Overall the survey respondents were well-educated, with 94% of them having at least secondary level education and 57% of respondents having a university-level qualification (see Table 6.1).⁸⁵ Most respondents obtained their educational qualifications in Poland. However, a considerable number were also awarded qualifications, in particular university degrees, in other countries, including 72 respondents with a degree from the UK (see Table 6.2).

Table 6.1 Highest educational qualification and economic situation in Poland before moving and in the UK at the time of the survey

	Respondents	
	N	%
Highest educational qualification		
<i>primary</i>	7	1
<i>vocational</i>	30	5
<i>secondary</i>	177	29
<i>post-secondary but not university level</i>	48	8
<i>university degree</i>	348	57
Total	610	
Economic situation in Poland		
<i>employed</i>	328	54
<i>unemployed</i>	57	9
<i>studying</i>	109	18
<i>full-time mum/dad</i>	70	11
<i>other</i>	47	8
Total	611	
Economic situation in the UK		
<i>employed and self-employed</i>	345	55
<i>unemployed</i>	5	1
<i>studying</i>	27	4
<i>full-time mum/dad</i>	197	32
<i>other</i>	50	8
Total	624	

Source: 'Migration and childbearing' online survey data collected in 2013 and 2014.

Note: Vocational education equals to Polish 'skończona szkoła zawodowa', secondary education equals to 'szkoła średnia / technikum', post-secondary qualification but not university degree equals to e.g. 'szkoła policealna', university degree equals to BA/BSc, MA/MSc, PhD and other equivalent university-level degrees. Respondents who indicated a status of 'studying and working' are included in the 'employed' category. There were 13% respondents who were studying and working in Poland, and 3% in the UK.

⁸⁵ It would be helpful to compare the educational level of respondents with the overall population of Polish migrants in the UK. However, such comparative data do not exist. For instance, the 2011 Census data for England and Wales do not allow such analysis as they are only provided at the aggregate level for all A8 and A2 migrants together. Nevertheless, these data show that these migrants are well-educated.

Table 6.2 Country of award of the educational qualifications

	Poland	UK	other countries
primary	3	.	.
vocational	23	1	.
secondary	163	18	.
post-secondary but not university level	47	4	1
university degree	325	72	7
Total	561	95	8

Source: 'Migration and childbearing' online survey data collected in 2013 and 2014.

Note: The numbers provided in this table and in Table 6.1 do not match due to missing responses.

Looking at the economic situation of the survey respondents, a similar share of respondents was employed in Poland before moving and in the UK at the time of the survey. However, a larger share of respondents was unemployed in Poland than in the UK. There was also a difference in the share of the respondents who were studying – just 4% in the UK compared with 18% in Poland. On the other hand, there was an opposite trend in the share of respondents who looked after family – 11% in Poland and 32% in the UK.

These differences can be explained by the respondents' age and their life stage in each of the countries. While living in Poland, most respondents were still in their early twenties, a prime age for university-level education. Upon moving to the UK, they were a couple of years older and entering the prime childbearing age. Once respondents started families, some of them might have temporarily withdrawn from the labour market to take care of their young children.

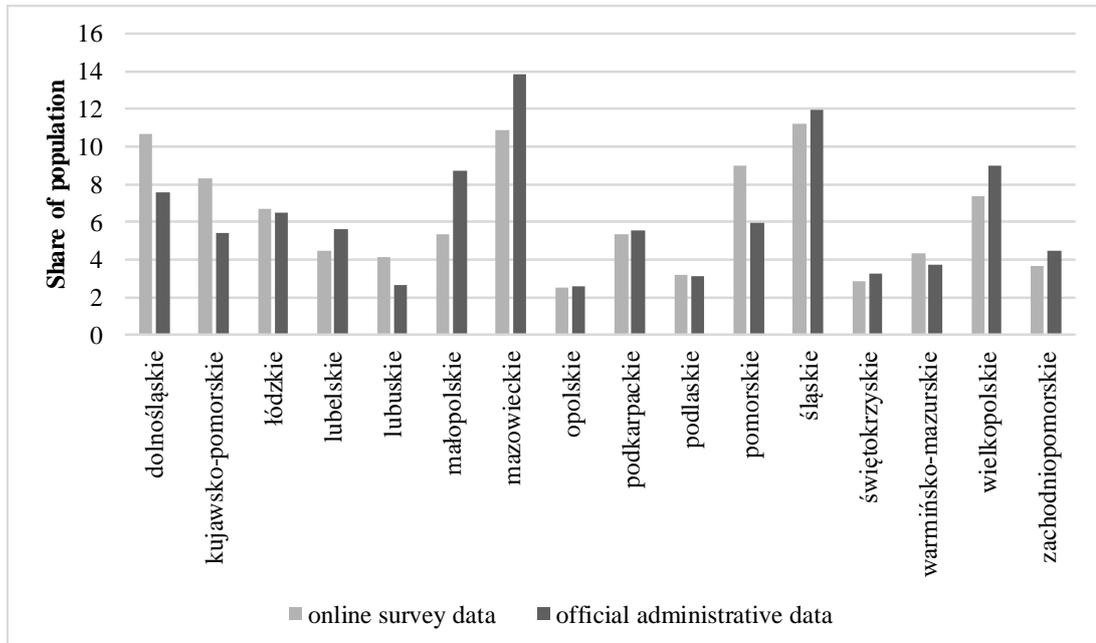
The share of respondents in the 'other' category is the same (8%) in both countries and includes respondents who could not work due to disability or long-term sickness, and other reasons.

6.1.6 Respondents came from across Poland and moved to various parts of the UK

Previous research by Lubbers and Kaliszewska (2013) (see Chapter 3) on the regional origins of Poles in London has shown a disproportionate share of Polish migrants coming from regions in southern and eastern Poland; in contrast, those of online respondents were similar to the overall regional distribution of the population in

Poland (see Figure 6.8).⁸⁶ When discrepancies existed between the survey data and the official statistical data, they were not greater than 3 percentage points for any single Polish region.

Figure 6.8. The comparison of the online survey respondents' region of origin and the regional distribution of the population in Poland (%)



Source: 'Migration and childbearing' online survey data collected in 2013 and 2014 and Polish Statistical Office (GUS 2015) official population data for 31st December 2013.

Note: N=599. Analysis excludes 20 survey respondents who did not live in Poland before moving to the UK.

The population of the survey respondents was also distributed similarly to the overall population of Polish migrants in the UK. Nearly 88% of respondents lived in England and Wales, 10% in Scotland and 2% in Northern Ireland. This resembles the pattern of births to Polish mothers across countries within the UK (see Section 5.1.2).⁸⁷ An open-ended question was used to record the location of respondents, with nearly 150 names of cities, towns and villages mentioned in response. The most popular locations were London (91 respondents), Peterborough (49 respondents), Bedford (26 respondents) and Cambridge (21 respondents).

⁸⁶ The administrative regions of Poland are equivalent to voivodeships. Since 1999, there are 16 voivodeships in Poland.

⁸⁷ This proportion of births to Polish mothers is recorded from around 2007-2008. In the preceding years, a larger share of births to Polish mothers was registered in England and Wales.

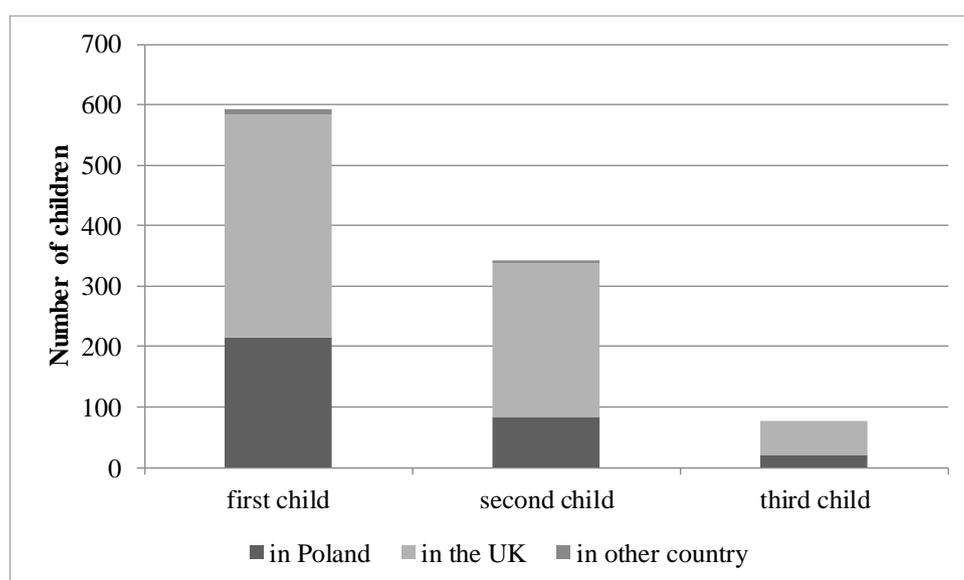
6.2 Family situation of the survey respondents

This section focuses on the family situation of the survey respondents, examining commonalities and differences in family composition and family-building plans between various socio-economic groups of Polish migrants.

6.2.1 Majority of children were born in the UK and lived in the UK

Most children of the survey respondents were born in the UK (see Table 6.3 and Figure 6.9). This comprised just over 60% of 'first' children and around 75% of 'second' and 'third' children. Just 1% of respondents had children born in other countries than Poland or the UK. Around two thirds of all 'first' children born in the UK had two Polish parents.

Figure 6.9 Children's country of birth

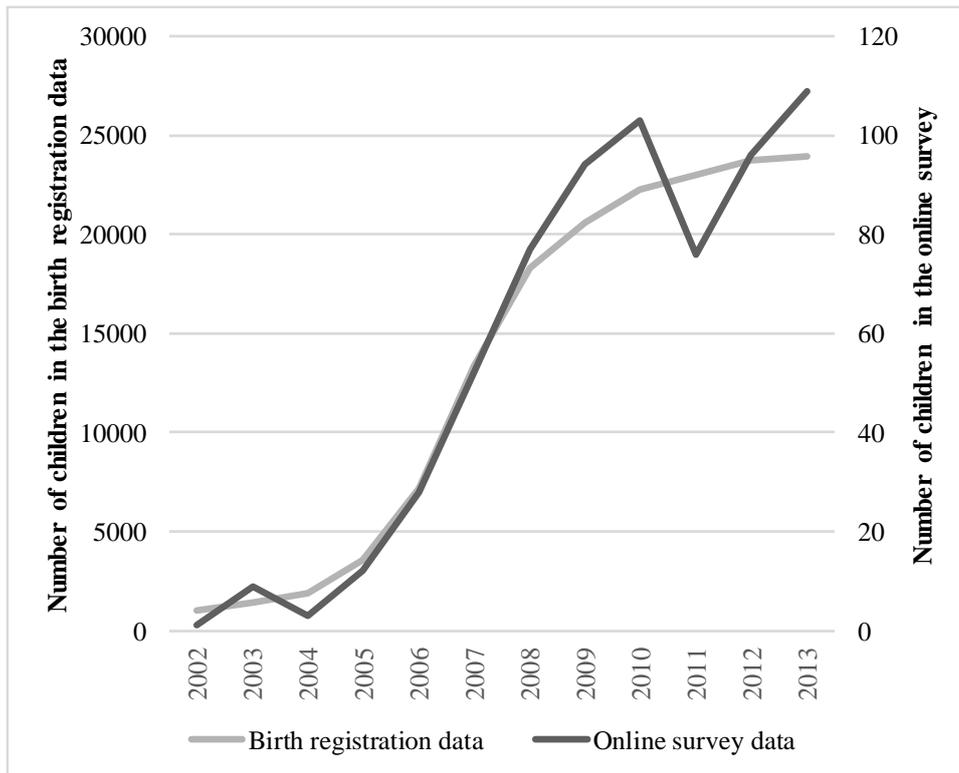


Source: 'Migration and childbearing' online survey data collected in 2013 and 2014.

Note: N=600. Only 12 respondents had four or more children and due to this small number, they are not included in this figure.

Since the birth registration data do not provide information on the Polish children's birth orders across years, it was not feasible to directly compare them with the survey data. However, the overall pattern of respondents' family formation across all birth orders over the years resembles the trend observed in the birth registration data - a rapid increase in the number of births to Polish mothers from 2005 and a slower rate of increase from around 2008-2009 (see Figure 6.10).

Figure 6.10 Trends in the births of Polish children according to the birth registration data and the online survey data (absolute numbers)



Source: 'Migration and childbearing' online survey data collected in 2013 and 2014 and the birth registration data. Note: Only UK-born children are included in the analysis. The total number of respondents of the online survey data varied by child parity; for the first child N=368, for the second child N=248, for the third child N=45, for the fourth child N=5.

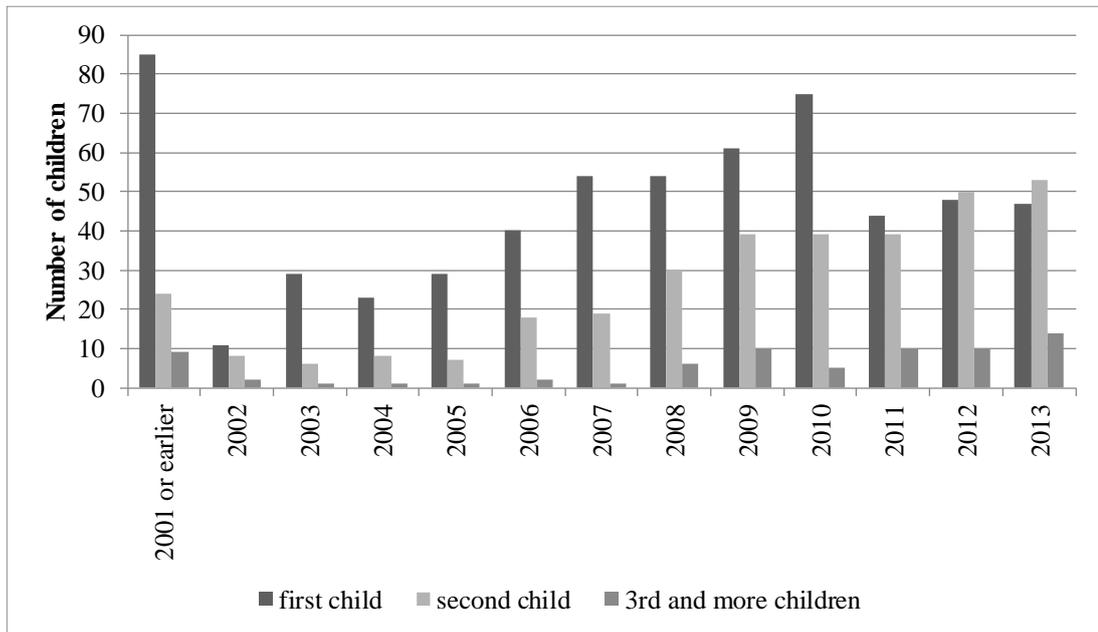
The analysis of the children's age show that a relatively large proportion of respondents' children were born in 2001 or earlier (Table 6.3, Figure 6.11 and Figure 6.12). For children born in 2002 and thereafter, there was an increase in the number of 'first children' until around 2010, and a gradual increase in the number of 'second children' from around 2006-07. This increase in the number of 'second children' started to emerge around the same time when the number of 'first children' reached its peak. The numbers of 'third child' and 'four and more children' were small and did not show a clear trend.

Table 6.3 Demographic information about children

	1st child		2nd child		3rd child		4th child	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Child's country of birth								
<i>in the UK</i>	368	61	255	74	57	75	8	67
<i>in Poland</i>	216	36	84	25	19	25	4	33
<i>in other country</i>	8	1	4	1	.	.	.	.
Total	592		343		76		12	
Child's country of residence								
<i>in the UK</i>	584	96	338	98	75	99	12	100
<i>in Poland</i>	17	3	5	2	1	1	.	.
<i>in other country</i>	2	<1	1	<1	.	.	.	.
Total	603		344		76		12	
Child's year of birth								
<i>2001 or earlier</i>	85		24		6		3	
<i>2002</i>	11		8		2		.	
<i>2003</i>	29		6		1		.	
<i>2004</i>	23		8		1		.	
<i>2005</i>	29		7		.		1	
<i>2006</i>	40		18		2		.	
<i>2007</i>	54		19		.		1	
<i>2008</i>	54		30		5		1	
<i>2009</i>	61		39		10		.	
<i>2010</i>	75		39		5		.	
<i>2011</i>	44		39		8		2	
<i>2012</i>	48		50		9		1	
<i>2013</i>	47		53		14		.	
<i>Not applicable</i>	6		252		488		545	
Total (excl. Not applicable)	600		340		63		9	

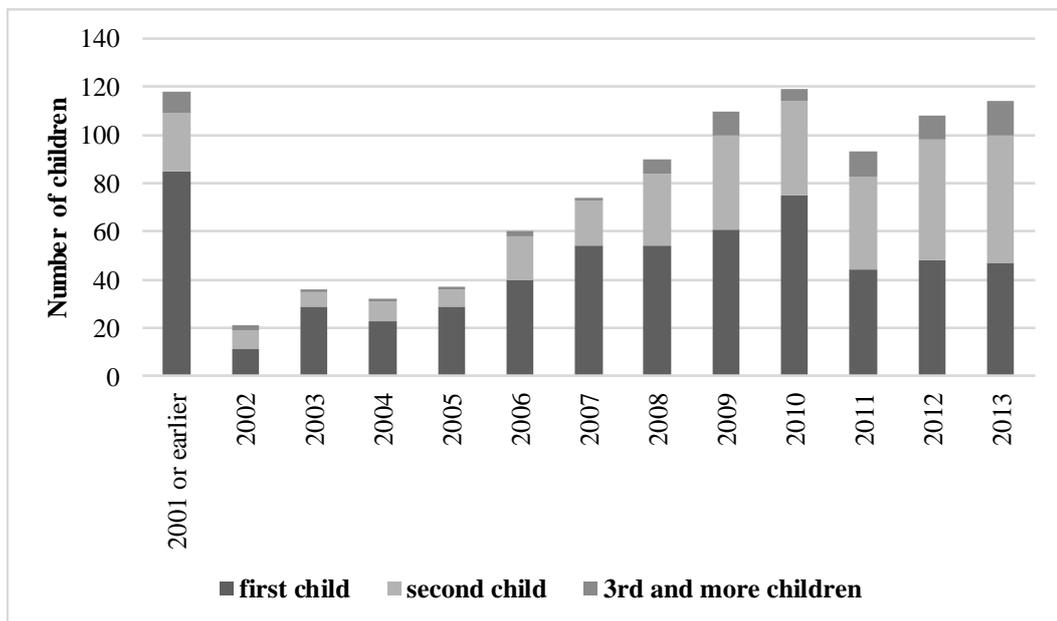
Source: 'Migration and childbearing' online survey data collected in 2013 and 2014.
 Note: All percentages sum to 100 subject to rounding.

Figure 6.11. Children's year of birth (absolute numbers separately for birth orders)



Source: 'Migration and childbearing' online survey data collected in 2013 and 2014.
 Note: N=606.

Figure 6.12. Children's year of birth (absolute numbers cumulative for birth orders)



Source: 'Migration and childbearing' online survey data collected in 2013 and 2014.
 Note: N=606.

Regardless of the country of birth, at the time of completing the survey, nearly all children of respondents lived with their parent(s) in the UK, with only a small proportion of children living in Poland or in other countries (see Table 6.3). Children

born in Poland typically moved to the UK together with their parents. Most of these children migrated between 2005 and 2008, in particular children born in 2001 and earlier. This migratory trend was consistent with the overall pattern of Polish migration to the UK. There were also children who moved to the UK soon after being born. This could indicate that some Polish female migrants might have temporarily returned to Poland for the purpose of childbirth, returning once the child was born. However, it was not feasible to reach a firm conclusion on this aspect due to the small number of observations.

6.2.2 A prevalent pattern of two-Polish parent families

Analysis of the online survey respondents' family composition show that most respondents (82%) lived in a two-parent family with all children sharing both parents. This was a dominant family form regardless of respondents' actual civic status (73% of respondents were married, nearly 20% single and around 7% separated / divorced) (see Table 6.4 and Table 6.5). Nearly all married respondents (93%) and most (71%) single (never married) respondents lived in a two-parent family. Other family forms, such as single parents and patchwork families (two-parent families with children having different fathers/mothers) each constituted about 8% of the respondents' sample. Only 2% of respondents had different family situations, such as childless couples or non-cohabitating families. The likelihood of being a single parent was higher among separated / divorced respondents (51%) than single respondents (18%). The separated / divorced respondents were also more likely to live in patchwork families.

Table 6.4 Family situation of the survey respondents

	Respondents	
	N	%
Civil status		
<i>married</i>	446	73
<i>single (never married)</i>	120	20
<i>separated / divorced</i>	43	7
<i>widowed</i>	2	<1
Total	611	
Family situation		
<i>two parent family and all children have the same parents</i>	505	82
<i>single mothers / fathers</i>	49	8
<i>patchwork family (a two-parent family but children have different mothers / fathers)</i>	48	8
<i>different family situation</i>	10	2
Total	612	
Parents' country of birth		
<i>both parents born in Poland</i>	502	82
<i>father / mother born in the UK</i>	43	7
<i>father / mother born in other country</i>	63	11
Total	608	
Country where parents met		
<i>in Poland</i>	414	67
<i>in the UK</i>	172	28
<i>in other countries</i>	24	4
Total	610	

Source: 'Migration and childbearing' online survey data collected in 2013 and 2014.

Note: All percentages sum to 100 subject to rounding.

Table 6.5 Relationship between respondents' family situation and civil status

		Family situation								Total
		Two-parent family		Single mothers / fathers		Patchwork family		Other family situation		
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	
Civil status	Single	84	71	22	18	9	8	4	3	119
	Married	411	93	3	<1	24	5	5	<1	443
	Separated / divorced	6	14	22	51	15	35	.	.	43
	Total	501	83	47	8	48	8	9	1	605

Source: 'Migration and childbearing' online survey data collected in 2013 and 2014.

Note: All percentages sum to 100, horizontally, subject to rounding. Widowed respondents (N=2) not included in the analysis due to a small number.

Analysis of the parents' country of birth show that most respondents (82%) formed two-Polish parent families,⁸⁸ 7% of respondents had a child(ren) with a UK-born parent, and the remaining respondents had children with a wife / husband from a broad range of countries.

Among all families, two thirds of respondents met in Poland (67%), just over 28% met in the UK, and the remaining 4% met in a range of other countries (see Table 6.6). More specifically, four in five families with both Polish-born parents met in Poland while 18% of such families met in the UK. On the other hand, three quarters of families with a mother / father born in the UK and other countries met in the UK.

Table 6.6 Relationship between parents' country of birth and the country where parents met

		Where did you meet the father / mother of your children?						Total
		in Poland		in the UK		in other country		
		N	%	N	%	N	%	
Where was the father / mother of your children born?	in Poland	397	80	91	18	10	2	498
	in the UK	8	19	33	77	2	5	43
	in other country	5	8	45	73	12	19	62
Total		410	68	169	28	24	4	603

Source: 'Migration and childbearing' online survey data collected in 2013 and 2014.

Note: All percentages sum to 100 subject to rounding.

The parent's country of birth seemed to have an effect on the family composition. The pattern of two-parent families in which all children share the same parents was most prevalent among families with both parents born in Poland, while single parent and patchwork family forms were more likely in families with a father / mother born in the UK or another country. However, due to a small number of observations, this finding should be read with caution (see Table 6.7).

⁸⁸ According to the birth registration data (see Section 5.1) around three quarters of all children born to Polish mothers in the UK also had a Polish-born father.

Table 6.7 Relationship between family situation and parent’s country of birth

		Family situation								Total
		Two-parent family		Single mothers / fathers		Patchwork family		Other family situation		
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	
Where was the father / mother of your children born?	in Poland	419	84	39	8	38	8	3	<1	499
	in the UK	34	79	2	5	3	7	4	9	43
	in other country	49	78	6	10	7	10	1	2	63
Total		502	83	47	8	48	8	8	1	605

Source: ‘Migration and childbearing’ online survey data collected in 2013 and 2014.

Note: All percentages sum to 100 subject to rounding.

6.2.3 Most families had two or three children and many were expecting or planning to have more children

As the survey targeted Polish migrant parents, most respondents were parents (98%): 41% had one child, 44% had two children, 11% had three children and 2% had four or more children (see Table 6.8). Two-parent families typically had one or two children and patchwork families typically had two or three children. Most single parents were raising one child. However, these findings should be treated with caution due to the small number of observations of family forms other than two-parent families (see Table 6.9).

Table 6.8 Childbearing situation of the survey respondents

	Respondents	
	N	%
Having children		
<i>do not have children yet</i>	15	2
<i>1 child</i>	252	41
<i>2 children</i>	271	44
<i>3 children</i>	65	11
<i>4 children or more</i>	12	2
Total	615	
Currently expecting a child	52	8
Plan to have more children in the near future	260	42
Ideal number of children:		
<i>one child</i>	40	8
<i>two children</i>	275	56
<i>three children</i>	150	31
<i>four or more children</i>	26	5
Total	491	

Source: 'Migration and childbearing' online survey data collected in 2013 and 2014.

Note: All percentages sum to 100 subject to rounding.

Table 6.9 Relationship between family situation and the number of children

Family situation	How many children do you have?										
	I don't have children yet		1		2		3		4 and more		Total
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N
Two-parent family	8	2	213	42	226	45	49	10	9	2	505
Patchwork family	.	.	6	13	26	55	13	28	2	4	47
Single mothers / fathers	1	2	30	61	15	31	2	4	1	2	49
Other family situation	4	40	3	30	2	20	1	10	.	.	10
Total	13	2	252	41	269	44	65	11	12	2	611

Source: 'Migration and childbearing' online survey data collected in 2013 and 2014.

Note: All percentages sum to 100 subject to rounding.

At the time of the survey, 8% of respondents were expecting a child and a further 42% had plans to have more children in the future (see Table 6.10). Those expecting children typically had smaller families and were either living in two-parent families or in patchwork families.

Table 6.10 Relationship between current family size and whether families are currently expecting a child

Family situation	Currently expecting a child	How many children do you have?										
		I don't have children yet		1		2		3		4 or more		Total
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N
Two-parent family	yes	7	16	28	64	9	20					44
	no	1	<1	183	40	215	47	49	11	9	2	457
Patchwork family	yes	.	.	4	57	1	14	2	29	.	.	7
	no	.	.	2	5	25	63	11	28	2	5	40
Total		8	1	217	40	250	46	62	11	11	2	548

Source: 'Migration and childbearing' online survey data collected in 2013 and 2014.

Note: All percentages sum to 100 subject to rounding.

Asked about the ideal number of children, 56% of respondents stated that they would like to have 2 children, 31% wanted to have 3 children, 8% wanted to have only one child, and the remaining 5% of respondents declared that 4 or more was their ideal number of children.

A two-child family was an ideal family size for most respondents already having one or two children. However, a considerable share of these respondents also indicated an ideal family size of three children (see Table 6.11).

Table 6.11 Relationship between current family size and the ideal number of children

		What would be the ideal number of children you would like to have?								
		1		2		3		4 or more		Total
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N
How many children do you have?	I don't have children yet	2	14	9	64	3	21	.	.	14
	1	38	17	139	62	44	20	3	1	224
	2	.	.	125	61	74	36	7	3	206
	3	.	.	2	5	29	74	8	21	39
	4 or more	.	.	.	.	.	.	7	100	7
Total		40	8	275	56	150	31	25	5	490

Source: 'Migration and childbearing' online survey data collected in 2013 and 2014.

Note: All percentages sum to 100 subject to rounding.

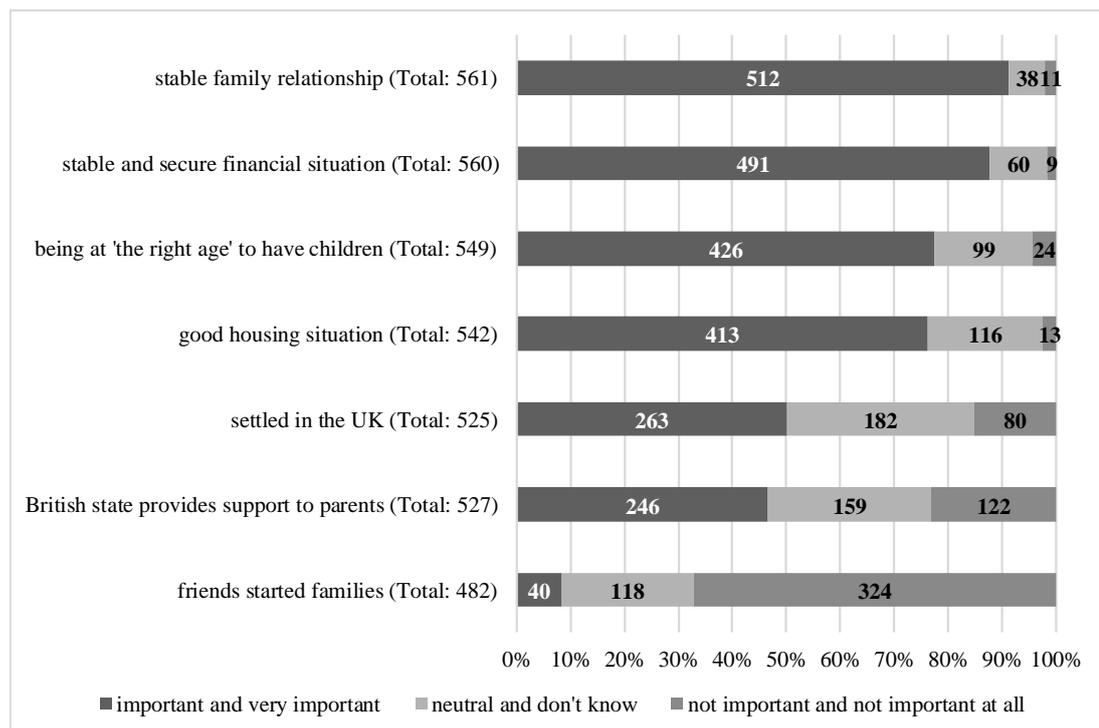
6.3 Factors influencing decisions to start a family

Most respondents (499, 82%) did not change their plans regarding number of children upon arrival in the UK. Among those who changed their plans, nearly 17% of

respondents (103) wanted to have more children and just 1% of respondents (7) wanted to have fewer children than they would have had in Poland.

A stable family situation and a secure financial situation seemed to be the crucial factors influencing the decision to start a family among the survey respondents, with 91% and 88% of respondents, respectively, indicating the importance of these factors for their family formation decisions. Other important factors included being at ‘the right age’ to have children and a good housing situation, each highlighted by about three quarters of respondents. Factors related to living in the UK yielded more mixed results. Being settled in the UK and the fact that the British state provided support for parents were important for half of respondents, but not relevant for another third of respondents. Finally, the fact that friends started families appeared not to play a role in respondents’ decisions to start a family (see Figure 6.13).

Figure 6.13 Factors influencing decision to start a family (%)

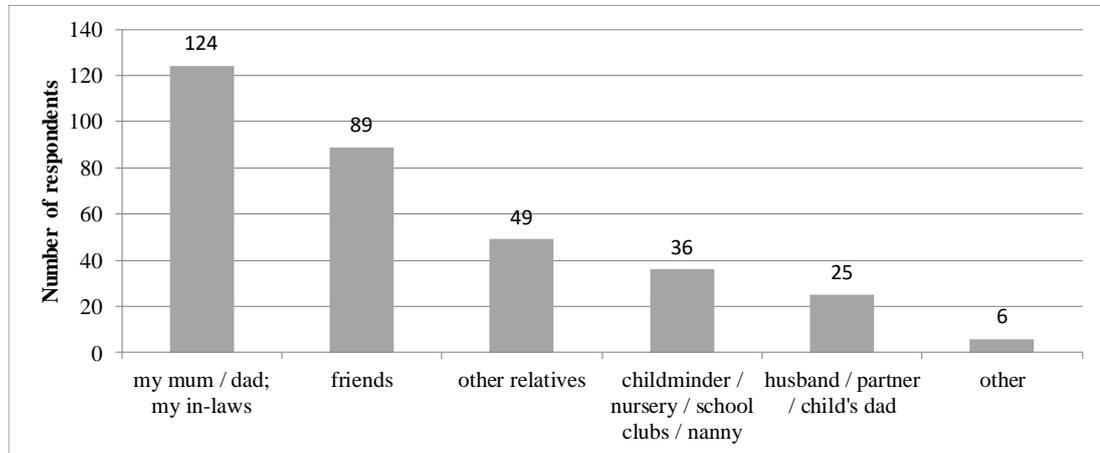


Source: ‘Migration and childbearing’ online survey data collected in 2013 and 2014.

Regarding childcare support, nearly two thirds (65%) of the survey respondents did not receive any support from family and friends. When support was offered, it was mainly received from children's grandparents (124 respondents) and other relatives

(49 respondents), with 89 respondents also receiving support from friends.⁸⁹ Notably, 36 respondents also mentioned formal childcare providers as their support network.

Figure 6.14 Providers of support with childcare (absolute numbers)



Source: 'Migration and childbearing' online survey data collected in 2013 and 2014.

Note: Respondents could select more than one childcare support option.

6.4 Discussion

6.4.1 Despite similarities, respondents were less economically active than Polish migrants as a whole

In general, respondents' age, migration trajectory, migration motivation and time spent in the UK were similar to the overall population of Poles in the UK. However, respondents on average were better educated but less likely to be in employment than the overall population of Polish migrants (see Section 2.4). Several factors can explain the lower economic activity among respondents. Firstly, most respondents were women, and women on average have lower labour market activity rates than the overall population. Secondly, most of these women were in the prime family formation age-groups, and may have decided to temporarily withdraw from the labour market to raise a family. Finally, the relatively stable financial situation of their families, e.g. being able to subsist on one salary, may have encouraged them to assume a primary caregiving role, thus contributing to a lower employment rate among respondents. The interview data provide more insights on aspects related to female labour market attachment (see Section 8.2).

⁸⁹ This may indicate that their friends do not live nearby or are working at the same time. It may also indicate that respondents do not have sufficiently strong relationship with friends to ask them to provide support with childcare.

6.4.2 Migration has influenced the family formation behaviour of respondents

As already emphasised, survey respondents were not a homogenous group and migration experiences affected their family formation patterns differently. For instance, the female respondents who migrated with children born in Poland were on average older than women who started families in the UK. This could be an effect of migration, in line with the *disruption hypothesis* (see Section 3.3). Consequently, children born in Poland were also on average older than Polish migrant children born in the UK. However, this older age of female respondents and their first child could be (at least partially) a statistical artefact because the survey data provide observations at a single point in time.

On the other hand, at the time of first birth, respondents who had their first child born in Poland were on average three years younger than women who became first-time mothers in the UK. For childless respondents, the likelihood of starting a family increased with the time spent in the UK.

There are several factors that can explain this difference in maternal age at first birth. Firstly, the age at first birth has increased considerably over the last decade in Poland (see Chapter 5). Therefore, this observed shift towards family formation at an older age in the respondents' population can be related to a general trend of later childbearing in Polish society. Secondly, the older age at first childbirth among respondents giving birth in the UK is consistent with the *disruption hypothesis*.

This increase in the average age of first childbirth could be also explained by the *adaptation hypothesis*, which assumes that the fertility behaviour of migrants adapts to that of people in the destination country (see Section 3.3). This is because the average age of respondents having their first child born in the UK (27.9 years old) was closer to the British mothers' average age at first childbirth (28.1 years old in 2014) (ONS 2018a) than the average age of Polish mothers' having a first child in Poland (27.4 years old). The phenomenon of having first child at an older age among Polish migrant mothers is noteworthy. It might indicate a convergence towards the UK's societal norms of older childbearing. It can also indicate that older childbearing is also more prevalent in the Polish society, with the pace of this societal change faster in the

migrant population than among women who live in Poland. Finally, it can also suggest that migration disproportionately attracted women who were already showing some characteristics aligned with the norms in the receiving society.

6.4.3 A large number of respondents' children were born and lived in the UK

Consistently with the patterns in family formation among Polish migrants in the UK (see Chapter 5), most children of the survey respondents were born in the UK. The timing of births was also largely similar. In the early years after 2004, there was a rapid increase in the number of children born to respondents, and from around 2009 there has been a relatively stable high number of births.⁹⁰ This may potentially be explained by three factors:

3. A smaller number of new Polish migrants arriving in the UK during the global financial crisis resulted in a smaller increase in the number of Polish women potentially able to have children.
4. The children's birth order. Until around 2010, most births were 'first' children. Since then, children from higher birth orders gained more prominence both in absolute terms and as a share of all children born to Polish migrants.
5. The financial downturn and period of economic instability that followed could have led to migrants postponing or even giving up their procreative plans.

While all these factors could have an impact on the number of children born to respondents in the UK across analysed years, based on available data it was not feasible to assess the extent of each factor's contribution.

However, irrespective of where the respondents' children were born, nearly all of them had lived in the UK at the time of the survey. For children born in Poland, the pattern of moving to the UK was consistent with the timeframe of their parents' migration. And the pattern of respondents' migration was consistent with the trends observed in the overall Polish migrant population in the UK. It means that at the time of conducting

⁹⁰ Among the online survey respondents, there has been a noticeable dip in the number of children born in 2011. However, the numbers returned to the high values already in 2012.

the survey, these children have already lived in the UK for a number of years. Given that Polish-born children were older, they have been already attending British schools, have developed links with other services and local communities, and built friendships. However, the ‘oldest’ of the UK-born children have also already reached the school-age. In line with research literature (see Section 3.4), all these factors were embedding children locally, and this, in turn, was also strengthening their parents’ connection with Britain.

6.4.4 Two-parent families were the dominant form to raise children among respondents

Regardless of their formal civil status, most respondents lived in two-parent families. Getting married seemed not to be considered a prerequisite to start a family, with nearly a fifth (17%) of single (by civil status) respondents forming a two-parent family. This observation is consistent with findings in Chapter 5, which show that parenthood increasingly occurred outside of marriage among Polish migrants.

It is difficult to reach a firm conclusion on the similarities and differences in the patterns of family formation among the survey population and the overall population of Polish parents in the UK, mainly due to two factors:

1. The survey data analysed the situation of all Polish migrant children irrespective where they were born, and there is no comparative official data on the number and characteristics of all children of Polish parents living in the UK.⁹¹
2. There is no consistency in the categorisation of Polish migrants in the official data sources. For example, some sources describe migrants by civil status while others apply categories indicative of the actual family form.

Finally, the small number of observations of respondents outside of the two-parent family category also hinders the formation of firm conclusion.

⁹¹ This is because most data sources group respondents by country of birth, thus Polish children are split into two categories: (1) born in Poland, and (2) born in the UK (e.g. 2011 Census data). In addition, other data sources, e.g. the birth registration data only provide information on Polish children born in the UK, thus again not providing an overall picture of the situation of all Polish children living in the UK.

Nevertheless, the pattern of raising children in non-formal family forms is noteworthy because it raises questions on the likelihood of the return potential of these families, given the more conservative family values in the Polish society. As explained in Chapter 5, single (by civil status) respondents forming a two-parent family may hold beliefs and values that are more aligned to the more liberal British values and norms. It means that their own characteristics and predispositions had the greatest role on their family composition in Britain. On the other hand, there might be families who *adapted* to the British family forms due to migration. For them, the likelihood of return would depend on their ability to conform again to the more conservative Polish norms and, possibly, on the pace of the social change in Poland (this is assuming that the trend in the share of children born outside marriage in Poland will continue converging with the trends observed in the UK). The return potential of these families also depends on the legal factors, e.g. formal recognition of the non-formal family forms in the Polish law to safeguard children's rights.

6.4.5 Could most Polish migrant children have been born in Poland?

The survey data is largely consistent with the birth registration data results showing that most Polish migrant children had two Polish parents who met in Poland. Overall, around two thirds of all 'first' children born in the UK had two Polish parents who mostly met in Poland. This can indicate that such couples were in a stable relationship before migrating, and could have potentially had children in Poland. In the case of respondents in two Polish parent families formed in the UK (18%), it is uncertain whether they would have met in Poland and formed a family, had they not migrated. Similarly, families where one parent was not Polish most likely would have not been formed, as around three quarters of parents in such families had met in the UK.

These findings raise several questions related to: (1) the socio-economic conditions and the family policy set-up and wider social factors encouraging Polish nationals to have children, (2) the return potential of each family type, (3) the impact of Polish migrant decisions on Poland and the UK.

6.4.6 On average, respondents had more children than do women in Poland

Consistent with the pattern of Polish migrant women having on average more children than women in Poland (see Chapter 5), nearly three in five respondents had two or more children. Furthermore, nearly a fifth of respondents (17%) changed their intended family size while living in the UK and wanted to have more children than they might have otherwise had in Poland.

Comparing the individual preferences related to the number of children in a family, as related to the personal ideal and the actual number of children (see Section 2.6.2), it seems that respondents were more likely than women in Poland to realise their ideal family size. However, because the survey data included children born in Poland and in the UK, it may have only captured part of the change in the discrepancy between personal ideals and the actual family sizes. Additionally, parents were overrepresented in the survey population, which may have skewed the survey results. Nevertheless, the finding that respondents were more likely than women in Poland to realise their ideal number of children underlines the importance of the socio-economic context for family formation decisions. Given the still relatively young age profile of Polish migrants, these findings in relation to migrants' family structures and fertility are noteworthy as they may have some implications for the demographic situation in Poland and in the UK (see Section 9.2).

6.4.7 Financial stability encourages Polish migrants to have children

Research literature suggests that economic factors are one of the most important barriers for Polish women to realise their intended family sizes (Hoorens *et al.* 2011; Kotowska *et al.* 2008). Given that Polish migrants in the UK have more children on average than women in Poland, this may suggest that for Polish migrants, the perceived economic barriers to family formation are lower in the UK than in Poland. Consequently, it is possible to conclude that favourable economic conditions enable Polish people to realise their intended family sizes, and subsequently cause fertility levels to increase. From a public policy perspective, all of these factors highlight the crucial role that economic circumstances play in family formation decisions, and may therefore provide a direction for further improvement both in child and family policy, and in wider employment and social policy in Poland.

However, the relationship between family formation patterns and Polish migrants' decisions to settle/return should be investigated more closely. It is possible that economic factors have influenced family formation decisions and migration patterns independently. On the other hand, these decisions may have reinforced each other at various stages of the migration process. Yet, irrespective of the dynamics between the family formation and migration decisions, questions also remain about the outcome of these decisions. These aspects are analysed and discussed in all subsequent chapters of the thesis.

6.5 Conclusions

This chapter analysed the socio-demographic characteristics of the survey respondents, focusing on patterns of family formation and family composition. Where feasible, the survey data findings were compared with the characteristics and trends observed in the overall Polish migrant population in the UK, and national trends in Poland and in the UK.

The majority of survey respondents were young Polish women who migrated to the UK to work and/or to join their partners. They came from across Poland and moved to various parts of the UK. Typically, they were reasonably well-educated and working, but a substantial minority of respondents was also looking after family full-time.

The family building patterns of the survey respondents were largely similar to the patterns observed in the overall Polish migrant population in the UK (see Chapter 5). Most female respondents were childless on arrival but became mothers within a relatively short time in the UK. It seems that *migration affected their family formation patterns*, with respondents on average *starting families later in life but wanting and having more children in total than women in Poland*. The decisions to start a family were mostly influenced by a stable family situation and a secure financial situation, with being at 'the right age' to have children and a good housing situation also indicated as important by most respondents. This indicates that Polish migrants might have assessed their socio-economic situation in the UK as being better than in Poland, which helped them to make decisions to start families. However, the decision to start

a family could have also been made independently of respondents' financial situation and related to their age.

The *dominant family pattern* among respondents was *two Polish parent married families who met in Poland but had children born in the UK*. This raises questions over whether these children could have potentially been born in Poland, should their parents not have migrated.

However, a pattern of *raising children by parents who were not married but lived together as a two-parent family* was also common. This may indicate that some respondents adapted to more liberal British norms and values. Similarly, *the older age of first childbirth* can be also interpreted as a convergence towards the UK's norms of older family formation. On the other hand, this older family formation pattern could have also been affected by the disruptive migration experience.

Irrespective of their family situation, most respondents and their children had lived in the UK for a number of years already at the time the survey was completed. This means that they have long been part of the British system (e.g. labour market, education), which most likely strengthened their relationship with Britain. This may present a challenge for their return potential if their desire to return and links with Poland are not sufficiently strong.

Further analysis of the survey data focusing on the importance of factors relevant for respondents' settlement/return decisions, and the relationship between family composition and respondents' return intentions and decisions are presented in Chapter 7.

7 Relationship between migration, settlement and family formation

The purpose of this chapter is to examine the relationship between migration to the UK, family formation, and decisions to settle in the UK/return to Poland among the online survey respondents. These analyses provide evidence on whether and how the experiences of migration and becoming a parent changes the intentions of Polish migrants to settle or return, and the circumstances under which migrants turn their plans into concrete actions. The chapter examines the experiences of several family types in assessing the importance of family composition for social integration and permanence of migration.

Section 7.1 outlines how migration, settlement and family formation decisions are interlinked. Section 7.2 examines migrants' settlement/return plans, and the timeframe and location of the potential return. Section 7.3 provides a detailed investigation of a wide range of factors and their perceived importance for making decisions about staying or moving, and Section 7.4 provides a comparative analysis of these factors as related to the situation in Poland and in the UK. Using the logistic regression methodology, Section 7.5 provides estimates of the likelihood of settlement/return for particular family types. Finally, Section 7.6 discusses key research findings from the analyses in this chapter and links these findings to the broader scientific evidence on Polish migrants. Section 7.7 provides final conclusions.

7.1 Relationship between migration, settlement and family formation

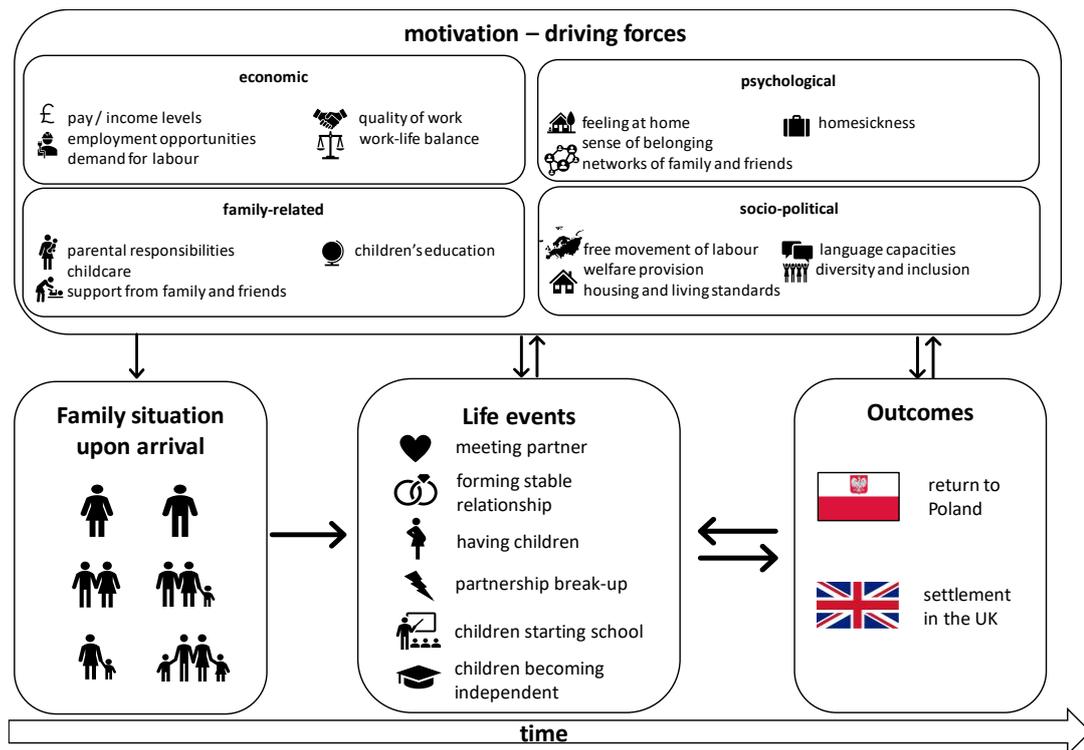
Due to their complex and dynamic nature, the relationships between migration, settlement and family formation are challenging to capture and disentangle. This is because the importance and weight of particular factors in influencing migration and family formation may change over time, and affect various types of migrants in different ways.

At the outset, similarly to the earlier waves of Polish migration, Polish post-accession migrants typically did not plan long-term settlement in the UK. However, many of

them often lacked concrete return plans and consequently prolonged their stays (see Section 3.4). There were several factors that might have contributed to these longer stays as related to socio-economic motivations and family formation. On the one hand, a stable position in the labour market and financial self-sufficiency may have driven some Polish migrants to form relationships and start families in the UK. On the other hand, some migrants may have started families in Britain and subsequently prolonged their stays once they realised that supporting their families was easier in the UK than in Poland (see Section 3.3). This way, even if the economic environment or family situation were not driving forces of the early days, they started reinforcing each other and strengthening motivation of Polish parents to stay and ultimately settle in the UK. Subsequently, other factors related to bringing up children started to play a role, and also had to be considered by migrants.

This PhD project captured views of Polish migrants in two particular moments in time: at the time of conducting an online survey and when conducting interviews. This asynchronous data collection enabled gathering information about the changing situation of some study participants. At the same time, the data captured perspectives of different types of migrants, and thus allowed examining factors important for various groups of Poles. Whenever feasible, Chapters 6, 7 and 8 aim to show this dynamic perspective of the decision-making process for migrants representing different socio-economic characteristics, and over time. Figure 7.1 presents a graphic representation of this process.

Figure 7.1 Migration, settlement and family formation process



Source: Author's own elaboration.

7.2 Majority of respondents were not considering return to Poland

In response to the question: “Are you considering returning to Poland?”, over 70% of respondents declared that they were not considering moving back to Poland, representing 431 respondents out of a total of 612.

Literally, ‘considering’ (in Polish – ‘rozważać’) means taking into consideration while maintaining awareness of the full range of options. However, it can also be understood as a vague aspiration. As indicated by answers to the open-ended questions in Section 3 of the survey questionnaire (see Annex 2), most respondents had a flexible understanding of the return concept regardless of whether they were considering return or not. They therefore held the perception that it was possible to ‘consider’ return as considering did not have to be followed by any immediate plans or decisions. A state of ‘considering’ allowed for being flexible and adjusting plans in response to changing circumstances (see Section 8.1 and Section 9.1).

This understanding of the concept of ‘considering’ is helpful to explain the differences in the number of responses to various questions focused on return (see Table 7.1). For instance, some of the questions about return could have been interpreted by respondents as meaning ‘concrete plans’, e.g. a question about the timeframe for return, while others understood it as a vague *aspiration*, e.g. a question about a place of return in Poland or a question about moving somewhere else.

Table 7.1 Timeframe for returning to Poland

		Are you considering returning to Poland?				Total
		yes		no		
		N	%	N	%	
Timeframe for return	I don't know precisely when I will go back but I want to return	114	67	34	51	
	in the next 5 years	42	25	1	1	
	when I retire / older age / in 10-20 years	8	5	21	32	
	when my children finish school	3	1	5	8	
	other	4	2	5	8	
	Total	171		66		237
Place of return in Poland	to my local area	135	77	116	74	
	to wherever I can find a job	27	15	18	12	
	sentimental reason	4	2	5	3	
	other	9	5	18	12	
	Total	175		157		332
Consideration to move to other country	no	141	81	376	88	
	yes, specific country mentioned	24	14	38	9	
	yes, but no concrete plans yet	10	6	13	3	
	Total	175		427		602

Source: ‘Migration and childbearing’ online survey data collected in 2013 and 2014.

Note: All percentages are rounded so the totals might not equal 100%.

In general, respondents did not have a specific timeframe for return to Poland. Two thirds (67%) of respondents considering return did not know precisely when they would go back. Yet, a quarter of these respondents wanted to return within the next 5 years. Some respondents indicated a timeframe for return despite not considering return, but most of these respondents did not plan to return in the near future.

When asked about return location, there was little difference between the answers of respondents who were and were not considering return. Around three in four respondents stated that they would like to move to their local area, defined as the place where they were brought up or where their parents or in-laws lived. Work-related

factors were important for one in eight respondents, with the remaining share of respondents providing various other reasons for considering return to a particular location.

Regardless of whether respondents were considering return or not, around four in five of them ruled out moving to any other country. The remaining respondents were open to relocating, including the tenth of respondents who already had a specific country in mind. English-speaking countries and a range of Western European and Scandinavian countries were the most popular potential destinations.

7.3 Importance of factors for decisions to settle / return

7.3.1 Several factors are considered important by respondents for their settlement/return decisions

The reviewed literature (see Section 3.3) indicated that Polish migration to the UK was motivated by a wide range of factors, including economic and family-related, socio-political and emotional factors, which each played different roles in the migration process.

Overall, the answers provided by survey respondents suggest that there are five main factors considered by Polish migrants: employment, education of children, reconciliation of work and family life, and housing- and family-related factors (see Figure 7.2). It must be noted that this figure presents response from all respondents at different stages of the migration process and with a variety of socio-economic characteristics and family forms (e.g. the number and age of children, years spent in the UK).

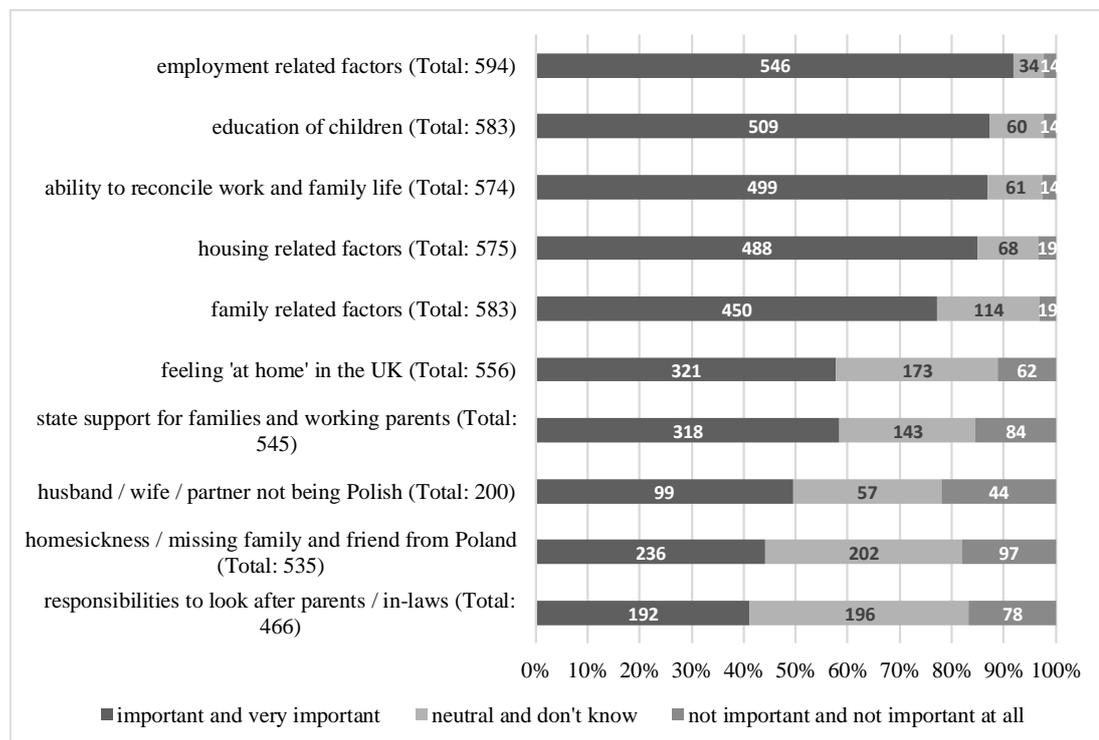
The employment-related factors were by far the most significant. 91% of respondents indicated them as important, including 67% of respondents for whom it was a very important factor. The second most significant factor was the education of children, with over 86% of respondents marking it as important (including 56% of respondents for whom it was a very important factor). The ability to reconcile work and family life, and other housing- and family-related aspects were also considered major factors by more than three quarters of respondents (86%, 83% and 77% of respondents,

respectively), with each of these factors marked as very important by over 40% of respondents.

Over half of the survey population (54%) also pointed to feeling 'at home' in the UK and the state support for families and working parents as key factors. On the other hand, around a quarter of respondents considered these two factors as neutral.

Other factors, such as homesickness/missing family and friends from Poland (40%), and responsibilities to look after parents and in-laws (34%) were marked in nearly equal shares as important and neutral (around a third of respondents). Finally, nearly 65% of respondents endorsed the statement that a non-Polish husband/wife/partner was not applicable to their family situation. This most likely reflected the family composition of respondents, with 82% of respondents living in families with two Polish parents (see Section 6.2.2).

Figure 7.2 Importance of factors for decision about settling in the UK or returning to Poland



Source: 'Migration and childbearing' online survey data collected in 2013 and 2014.

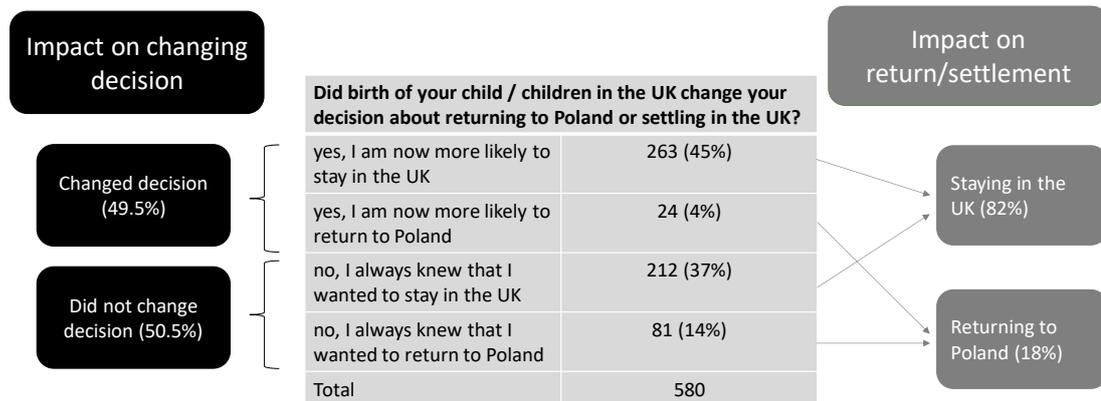
7.3.2 Birth of a child makes respondents more likely to stay in the UK

The research literature shows that the presence of children in migrant families facilitates integration and decreases the likelihood of return to a home country (see Sections 3.3 and 3.4). The survey results are largely in line with this finding, as respondents considered child- and family-related factors to be among the most important aspects for their decisions about staying/returning.

Respondents were also asked specifically whether the birth of a child/children had an impact on their return decision (see Figure 7.3). Their answers to this question can be interpreted in two ways. Firstly, the answers can be analysed from the planned settlement/return perspective. Overall, nearly 82% of respondents declared that they wanted to stay in the UK, while the remaining share of respondents (18%) declared plans to return to Poland. Secondly, the answers can be analysed from the perspective of whether or not the birth of a child had changed their settlement/return decisions. The answers are divided in two nearly equal parts: those who changed decision (49.5%) and those who did not change decision (50.5%).

While just over a third of respondents (37%) always knew that they wanted to stay in the UK, nearly half of respondents (45%) changed their decision following the birth of their child(ren) and were now more likely to settle in the UK. The share of respondents who declared return plans was considerably smaller: just 4% become more likely to return due to becoming a parent and 14% always knew that they wanted to return to Poland.

Figure 7.3. Relationship between the birth of a child in the UK and the probable settlement/return decision



Source: ‘Migration and childbearing’ online survey data collected in 2013 and 2014.

Note: The survey question was as follows: Did birth of your child / children in the UK change your decision about returning to Poland or settling in the UK?

7.3.3 Return is unlikely when children are well-settled in the British education system

As noted in Section 7.3.1, the education of children was among the most important factors influencing settlement/return decisions of Polish migrants. However, the importance of education-related factors for particular respondents often depended on the age of their children and their stage of schooling. In general, parents of younger children⁹² often had a less clear view on many of the education-related aspects than parents of school-aged children.⁹³ This was evidenced by the considerable number of respondents selecting answers “neither agree, nor disagree” and “not applicable” for a number of education-related questions. For instance, while on average each question generated around 580 to 600 responses, many respondents found questions about the education of their children not applicable to their situation, e.g. a statement about children still attending schools in Poland was not applicable to 488 respondents and a statement about returning before children reach compulsory school age was not applicable to 352 respondents. These “not applicable” answers were not included in the analyses and the percentage values reported. All results presented in Figure 7.4 should be read with this caveat in mind.

Overall, three quarters of respondents (75%) agreed that they did not want to disrupt their children’s education in the UK and that their children had many friends in the

⁹² This refers to children aged 4 and under, in line with the compulsory minimum schooling age in England

⁹³ This refers to children aged 5 and above.

UK (69%). The answers to this last question differed depending on the children's ages. The responses of respondents with children aged 4 and younger were nearly equally split between parents who said their children had many friends in the UK and parents giving a "neutral" or "don't know" answer (48% and 46% respectively). In comparison, 76% of parents of the school-aged children agreed that their children had many friends in the UK, with only 17% of them providing a "neutral" or "don't know" answer to this question.

The fact that 83% of respondents disagreed with the statement that their children had difficulties in learning English could indicate that these children were well-integrated in schools, thus may prefer to stay in the UK. In addition, nearly half of respondents (49%) stated that their children wanted to stay in the UK. However, answers to this question largely depended on the children's ages, with 29% of parents with children under the age of 4 and 55% of parents with school-aged children agreeing with this statement respectively, and 67% and 36% parents respectively giving a "neutral" or "don't know" answer. This may indicate that attachment to the UK grows stronger with the age of a child. The role of children's ages in the settlement / return decision was further investigated in the logistic regression model (see Section 7.5).

Answering on behalf of their children, 39% of respondents disagreed with the statement that their children wanted to return to Poland. This could indicate that parents perceive that their children have a preference to stay in the UK. Yet, these answers should also be read with caution due to a large share of "neutral" and "don't know" answers (57% for parents of children aged 4 and under, and 39% of parents of the school age children). In contrast, respondents were split nearly equally in their opinions on whether their children would find it easy to move to Poland, with 38% agreeing, 33% giving a "neutral" or "don't know" answer and 30% disagreeing.⁹⁴

In addition, 53% of respondents disagreed and 28% gave a "neutral" or "don't know" answer to the statement that they wanted to return before their children reach compulsory school age. Yet, there were no substantive differences between parents of school-aged children and younger children.

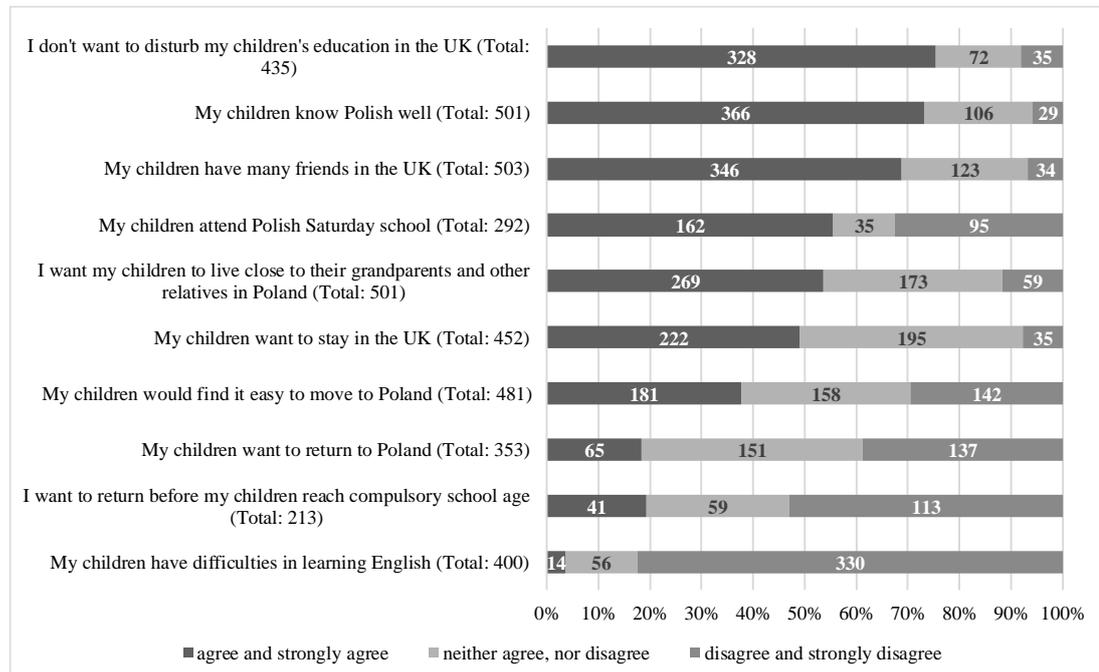
⁹⁴ This included 18% of respondents with children aged 4 and under and 34% of respondents of school-aged children.

Among the child-related factors facilitating return to Poland, children knowing Polish well seemed to be the most important factor for respondents. Overall, 71% of respondents declared that their children knew Polish well and only 6% of respondents disagreed with this statement, but 21% of respondents gave a “neutral” or “don’t know” answer.⁹⁵ With 56% of respondents declaring that their children attended Polish Saturday schools, this could be one of the factors explaining the good command of Polish among children. However, the responses to this question again largely depended on the age of children, as 61% of parents with school-aged children and 35% of parents of children aged 4 and under declared that their children attend Polish Saturday schools.

Finally, returns could also be encouraged by the respondents’ wish to live closer to grandparents and other family in Poland as declared by 54% of respondents. However, nearly 35% of respondents gave a “neutral” or “don’t know” answer to this question, which may indicate the relative unimportance of this factor for their decisions. In addition, 11% of respondents clearly indicated that they did not want to leave close to family in Poland.

⁹⁵ This was 31% for parents of children aged 4 and under and 17% for parents of school-aged children.

Figure 7.4 Importance of child-related factors for decision about settling in the UK or returning to Poland



Source: 'Migration and childbearing' online survey data collected in 2013 and 2014.

Note: Statement "My children are still in schools in Poland and I don't want to disturb their education" is not included in the analysis as 488 respondents marked it as not applicable (see Annex 2, question 30).

7.3.4 Good command of English and having friends living close-by strengthen attachment to the UK

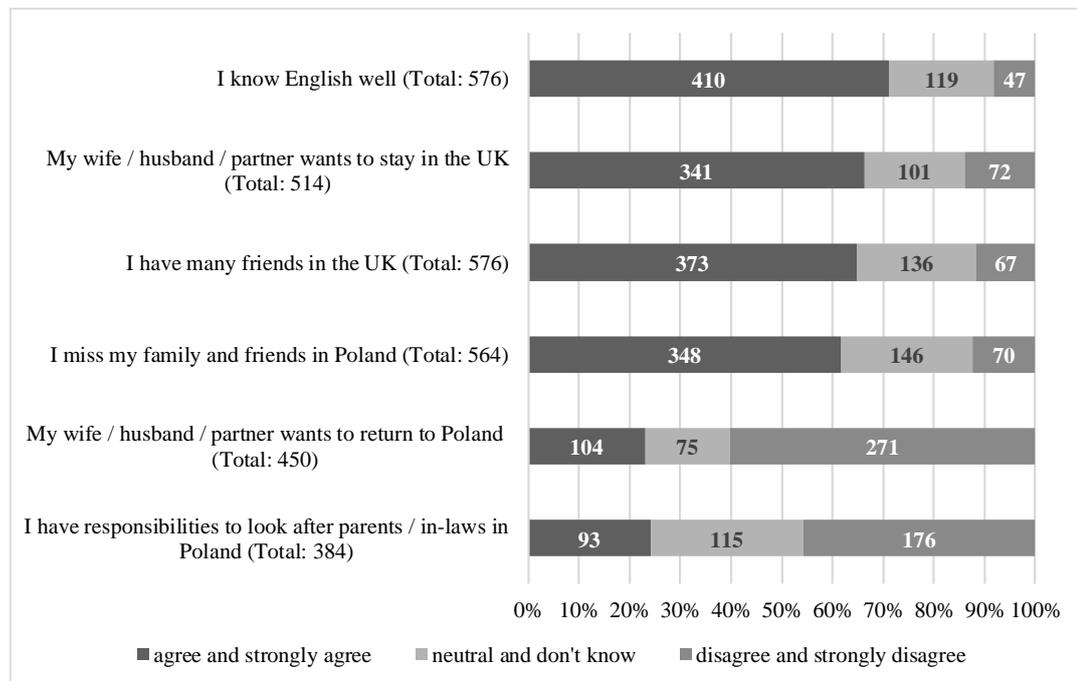
A wider range of factors seemed to play a role in the settlement/return decisions (see Figure 7.5). A good knowledge of English (71% of respondents), having a wife/husband/partner wanting to stay in the UK (66% of respondents) and having many friends in the UK (65% of respondents) seemed to be the most important factors facilitating decisions to stay in the UK. On the other hand, 20% and 24% of respondents, respectively, gave a "neutral" or "don't know" answer to these last two statements.

Despite missing family and friends in Poland (indicated by 62% of respondents), the fact that three quarters of respondents were not actively looking for a job in Poland suggests that most of them did not have plans to move in the near future.

Overall, it appears that most respondents considered their stay/return decisions together with their partners. The level of attachment to the UK, as expressed by a good command of English and having a network of friends in the UK, were among the most

important factors influencing respondents' decisions. Other factors, albeit still relevant, seemed to play a less important role.⁹⁶

Figure 7.5 Importance of family-related factors for decision about settling in the UK or returning to Poland



Source: 'Migration and childbearing' online survey data collected in 2013 and 2014.

Note: The total number of answers differ slightly for each of the analysed statements as indicated in the figure.

7.4 Decisions are made by comparing the situations in Poland and the UK

The survey included open-ended questions which gave participants an opportunity to further explain and clarify their standpoints. In total, over 110 respondents (over a fifth) provided comments, indicating that the topic of this research was of great interest to them and resonated with their own experiences and reflections. In general, answers to the open-ended questions fell into two main categories, identifying:

1. positive factors that made respondents want to stay in the UK, mainly aspects related to the education of children, provision of free healthcare services for

⁹⁶ Similarly to the analysis presented in Section 7.3.3, many respondents gave 'not applicable' or 'don't know' answers to a number of statements presented in this section, and these answers were not included in the analysis. This refers to statements about responsibilities to look after parents/in-laws, having parents living closely to respondents in the UK, actively looking for a job in Poland, and having a house/flat in Poland (see Annex 2, question 31). All the analysis presented in this section and Figure 7.6 have to be read with this caveat in mind.

children (in particular support for disabled children) and aspects related to the employment opportunities,

2. negative aspects deterring migrants from moving back to Poland, such as uncertainty in the labour market and employment instability and the general level of everyday stress due to economic pressures.

The dichotomous replies suggest that choices were being made by comparing the situations in Poland and the UK, regarding what was perceived to be best for their children and family. The following parts of this section provide an overview of respondents' comparisons of specific aspects of family and professional life in Poland and in the UK, drawing on the full survey responses.

7.4.1 Most work-life balance, child- and family-related aspects considered to be better in the UK

In general, all aspects but one were considered by respondents as being better in the UK (see Figure 7.6).⁹⁷ In particular, this related to the work-life balance aspects indicated by four in five respondents as better in the UK (opportunities of working part-time 84%, working flexible hours 89%, a general statement about the reconciliation of work and family life 76%, generosity of child-related benefits 92%, and state support for working parents 90%). It is noteworthy that nearly half of respondents assessed all these aspects as being much better in the UK.

Respondents were also in agreement that aspects related to living and housing conditions were better in the UK, in particular living independently as a family (76%), being able to buy a house/flat (75%) and getting access to social housing (88%). More mixed opinions were expressed about the necessity to share a house/flat with other people, with over a third of respondents not seeing a difference between the two countries.

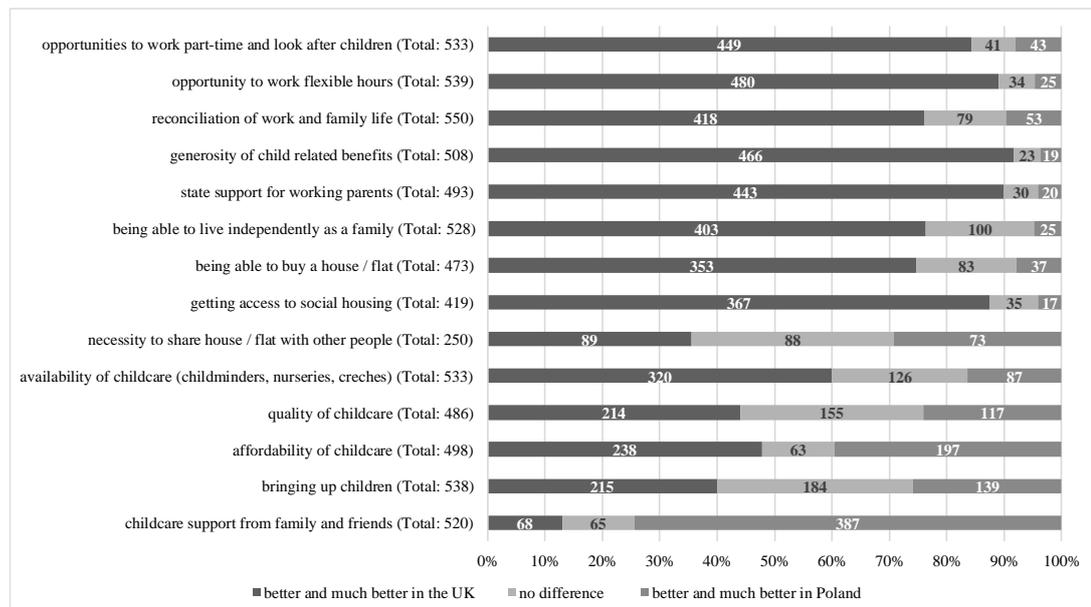
While the availability of formal childcare was considered better in the UK by most respondents (60%), there were mixed views on statements related to quality and affordability of childcare. Both childcare affordability and quality were still perceived as being better in the UK (48% and 44% of respondents respectively). However, a

⁹⁷ Totals in Figures 7.6, 7.7 and 7.8 do not include answers 'don't know' and 'not applicable'.

considerable share of respondents did not see a difference (13% and 32% respondents respectively) or did not know the answer to these statements (83 and 101 respondents respectively). The responses were also split for a general statement about bringing up children (26% better in Poland, 34% not seeing a difference, and 40% better in the UK). Finally, most respondents agreed that informal childcare support from family and friends was better in Poland (74% of respondents).

It is worth noting that the number of respondents who indicated that statements were not applicable to them was relatively small. The only two exceptions were statements about sharing house/flat with other people and getting access to social housing, which were marked as not applicable by 196 and 61 respondents respectively.

Figure 7.6 Comparison of the work-life balance and family-related aspects



Source: 'Migration and childbearing' online survey data collected in 2013 and 2014.

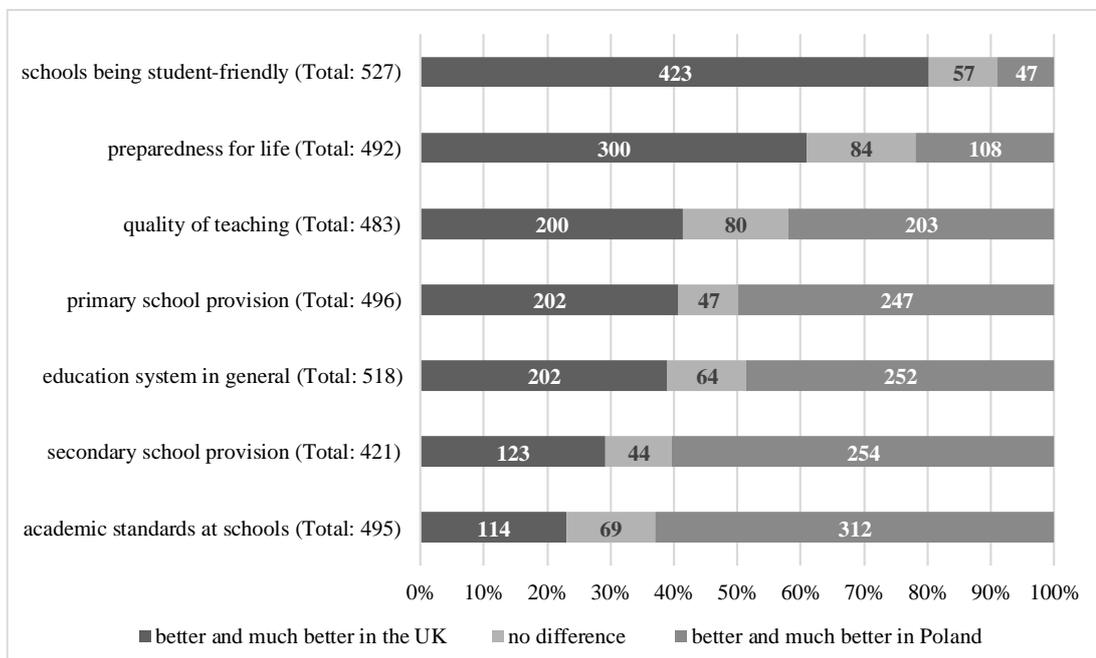
7.4.2 Respondents had mixed views about aspects related to the education system

Asked about their view on the education system,⁹⁸ nearly half (49%) of respondents stated that it was better in Poland while over one third (39%) thought that it was better in the UK (see Figure 7.7). Overall, the academic standards at schools (63%), the

⁹⁸ This section reports together views of respondents with school-age children and respondents with younger children because there was only a moderate difference between their views. In general, respondents of school-age children were slightly more likely to perceive the British education system and schooling as better than the Polish system.

primary school provision (50%), the secondary school provision (60%) and the quality of teaching (42%) were all considered by respondents as better in Poland. On the other hand, aspects related to the preparedness for life (61%) and, in particular, the view that schools were student-friendly (80%) were considered as better in the UK. It is worth noting that a considerable share of respondents (10% to 17%) did not see differences between the Polish and British education systems, or did not know answers to these questions (most notably, 156 and 102 respondents respectively did not know the answer for questions about the secondary school provision and the quality of teaching).

Figure 7.7 Comparison of education-related aspects between the UK and Poland



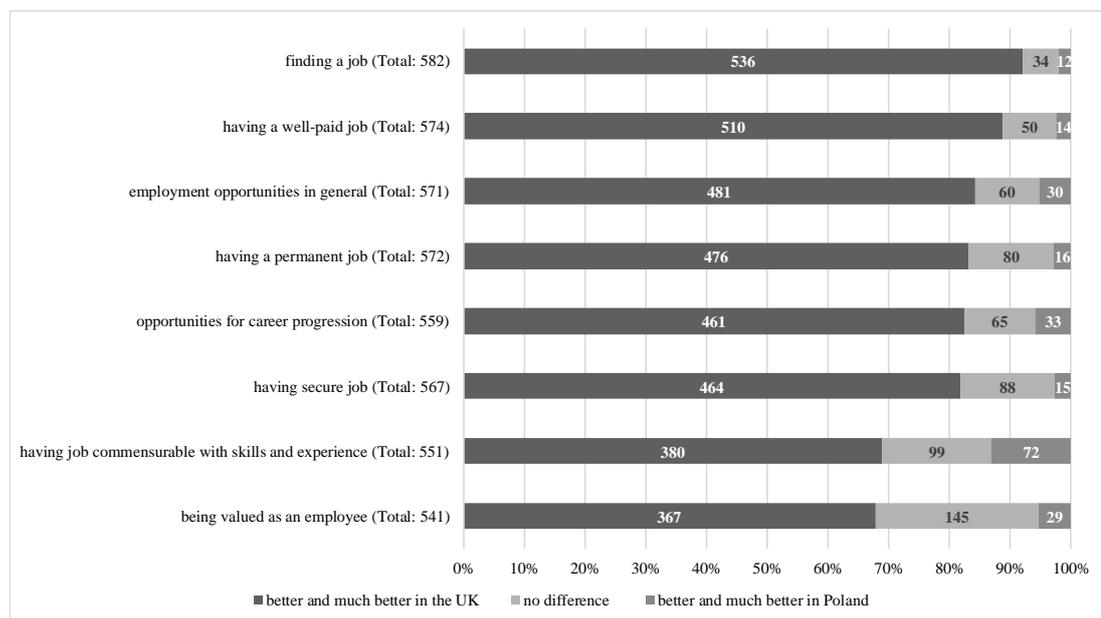
Source: 'Migration and childbearing' online survey data collected in 2013 and 2014.

7.4.3 All employment-related aspects considered to be better in the UK

The vast majority of respondents considered employment-related aspects to be better in the UK (see Figure 7.8). Over four in five respondents stated that the UK provided better chances for finding a job (92%), having a well-paid (89%), permanent (83%) and secure (82%) job, and having opportunities for career progression (82%). Having a job commensurable with skills and experience (69%) and being valued as an employee (68%) were also assessed to be better in the UK, but a substantial share of respondents (18% and 27% respectively) did not see a difference.

It is also worth noting that only a small share of respondents assessed employment-related aspects as better in Poland (under 6% for all but one statement – having job commensurable with skills and experience). Also notably, there were only 2-3 ‘non applicable’ answers given to each of these statements. This small number of non-applicable answers shows the importance of employment-related factors for Polish migrants, and confirms observations from the literature review indicating that economic factors were very important for most post-accession Polish migrants (see Section 3.3.1).

Figure 7.8 Comparison of employment-related aspects



Source: ‘Migration and childbearing’ online survey data collected in 2013 and 2014.

7.5 Migrants' settlement decisions

This section explores the relationship between family formation and migration permanence, and whether and how becoming a parent changes the intentions of Polish migrants regarding their length of stay in the UK and conditions to return to Poland. It aims to provide estimates of the likelihood of settlement/return among particular groups of migrants as related to their socio-demographic characteristics and family situation.

Key statistical concepts used in this section are explained in Box 7.1.

Box 7.1 Definitions of key statistical concepts

Logistic regression: multiple regression with an outcome variable that is a categorical dichotomy and predictor variables that are continuous or categorical. Logistic regression model predicts the probability (chance) of an event occurring for a given person, e.g. which of two categories a person is likely to belong to, given certain other information.

Likelihood: the probability of obtaining a set of observations given the parameters of a model fitted to those observations.

Log-likelihood statistics: an indicator of how much there is of unexplained information after the model has been fitted.

Odds: the probability of an event occurring divided by the probability of that event not occurring.

Odds ratio: the ratio of the odds of an event occurring in one group compared to another.

B or **b:** unstandardized regression coefficient. It indicates the strength of relationship between a given predictor and an outcome in the units of measurement of the predictor. It is the change in the outcome associated with a unit change in the predictor.

Exp(B): an indicator of the change in odds resulting from a unit change in the predictor in logistic regression.

Dummy variable: a way of recording a categorical variable with more than two categories into a series of variables all of which are dichotomous and can take on values of only 0 and 1.

Sig. or **statistical significance:** the extent to which a result is unlikely to be due to chance alone. When the probability falls below 0.5, it is assumed that the model explains a sufficient amount of variation to reflect what is genuinely happening in the population.

Predicted probability: probability of event occurring given the values of each predictor for a given participant.

Multicollinearity: a situation in which two or more variables are very closely linearly related.

Outcome variable: dependent variable

Predictor: independent variable

Source: Field (2005: 27, 218, 221, 724, 729, 730, 736, 738, 739).

7.5.1 Analytical approach to examine factors having impact on the settlement/return decisions

Reviewed literature (see Section 3.3 and 3.4) indicates that a broad range of factors, including demographic and socio-economic aspects, factors related to family life and work-life balance, and psychological factors play a role in the migration decisions of Poles. All of these potentially relevant factors were put into the statistical model, taking into account practical and methodological considerations.

A survey question examining whether respondents were considering return was selected as a key indicator of return intentions. As the answers to this question were dichotomous (yes/no), the analyses were conducted through a logistic regression

model using the return question as an outcome (dependent) variable (Field 2005). The next analytical step towards building a regression model included selecting independent variables - factors known from the literature as having an impact on return decisions. Variables capturing socio-demographic information about respondents were selected in order to examine similarities and differences in the migration strategies among various family types.

All potentially relevant independent variables were examined for multicollinearity to ensure the individual importance of each independent variable. This is because high levels of collinearity increase the probability that relevant predictors of the outcome would be found non-significant and rejected from the model (Field 2005).

Subsequently, the following independent variables⁹⁹ were included in the logistic regression model (see Table 7.2):

1. number of children in a family,
2. age of first child,
3. first child's country of birth (first child born in the UK or elsewhere),
4. other parent's¹⁰⁰ country of birth (other parent born in Poland or elsewhere),
5. number of years spent in the UK (calculated on the basis of information when respondent moved to the UK),
6. respondent's education level,
7. respondent's civil status,
8. respondent's family situation,
9. respondent's age.

The analysis indicated that some of these variables were not statistically significant. To improve the strength of the model, these variables were removed from the model one by one in the following order: the age of a child,¹⁰¹ respondent's family situation and respondent's education level. After the removal of a variable related to respondent's family situation, the variable related to the number of children in a family

99 The following variables were re-coded into the dummy variables: first child born in the UK, respondent's education level, civil status and family situation.

100 Respondent's wife / husband / partner.

101 Before excluding 'the age of a child' variable, the model also tested one by one re-coded variables related to the schooling age in England (0-4, and 5+ years old) and in Poland (0-6, and 7+ years old) but neither of these variables were statistically significant in the model.

become statistically significant. For that reason, this variable was kept in the model in all subsequent analysis. The values of Exp(B) did not change much between initial and subsequent models. This can indicate that the independent variables that are not statistically significant were indeed not having an impact on the overall model fit.

The subsequent parts of this section discuss a set of factors that were found to have impacts on the survey respondents' settlement/return decisions.

7.5.2 Several factors have impacts on the settlement / return decisions

The logistic regression analysis (see Table 7.2) indicated that several factors were relevant in explaining the survey respondents' return decisions.

Table 7.2 The logistic regression results

		Initial model		Final model	
		B	Exp(B)	B	Exp(B)
Number of children in a family		-0.252	0.777	-0.319*	0.727
Age of first child		0.021	1.021		
First child born in the UK		0.835*	2.306	0.739**	2.094
Other parent born in Poland		0.997**	2.711	0.962**	2.618
Number of years spent in the UK		-0.103*	0.902	-0.084*	0.919
Education	university	0.021	1.022		
	secondary	-0.622	0.537		
Civil status	married	1.798*	6.04	1.956**	7.071
	single (never married)	1.690*	5.421	1.765**	5.841
Family situation	two-parent family	-0.141	0.869		
	patchwork family	-0.835	0.434		
	single parent family	-0.024	0.976		
Respondent's age		0.026*	1.026	0.029*	1.03
Constant		-3.478*	0.031	-3.858**	0.021

Source: 'Migration and childbearing' online survey data collected in 2013 and 2014.

Note: Sig. indicated by * p<0.05, ** p<0.01

This table is based on the following online survey questions: (1) dependent variable – 'Are you considering return to Poland? (0 – no, I do not consider return; 1 – yes, I consider return), and (2) independent variables: (a) How many children do you have? (number of children in a family), (b) Where was your first child born? (first child born in the UK), (c) Where was the father / mother of your children born? (other parent born in Poland), (d) When did you last move to the UK? (number of years spent in the UK), (e) What is your civil status? (civil status), (f) When were you born? (respondent's age).

The following variables were coded into dummy variables: (1) Education (a) university, (b) secondary, (c) primary and vocational); (2) Civil status: (a) married, (b) single (never married), (c) other civil status; (3) Family situation: (a) two-parent family, (b) patchwork family, (c) single parent family, (d) other family forms. In the Initial Model, the variable Education: primary and vocational, and Civil status: other civil status were statistically significant (p<0.05). In the Final model only the variable Civil status: other civil status was statistically significant (p<0.01).

After taking account of other variables in the model, the final analyses show that:

- Having more children reduces the odds of considering return to Poland, with each additional child decreasing the likelihood of considering returning to Poland by 38% ($1.38=1/0.727$). It means that those Poles who have larger families are less likely to return.¹⁰²
- Having a child born in the UK rather than in Poland or another country increases the odds of considering return to Poland by 2.094. Thus, the likelihood of considering returning to Poland is twice as high for those Polish migrants who had their first child born in the UK than for Polish migrants who had their first child born in Poland or another country.
- Having both parents (survey respondents and the other parent) born in Poland increases the odds of considering return by 2.618. Thus, the likelihood of considering returning to Poland are over two-and-a-half times greater for those Polish migrants who are in a two Polish-parent family.
- Having spent more years in the UK reduces the odds of considering return to Poland, with each additional year in the UK decreasing the likelihood of considering return by 9% ($1.088=1/0.919$).
- Being married as opposed to being single increases the likelihood of considering return to Poland by 21% ($1.21=7.071/5.841$).
- Being older increases the odds of considering return to Poland, with each additional year increasing the likelihood of considering return by 3% (1.030). However, despite being statistically significant this factor may be of little substantive importance due to its small impact on the dependent variable. In addition, the age of respondents' variable had a bell curve distribution (and a small number of older migrants), which could have affected the strength of the considering return likelihood. It was also likely that responsibilities towards children wane with age, meaning that parents of older children were less tied to the UK. Finally, older people might have been under less financial pressure

¹⁰² It could be potentially argued that the lower likelihood of return among those who had more children results from the fact that those Polish migrants who wanted to go back have returned already, thus are not included in the sample of the survey participants. On the other hand, the official migration data (see Chapter 2) indicate that most of Polish post-2004 migrants have still been residing in the UK at the time when the online survey was conducted, with a relatively small scale of returns pre-2016.

compared with younger migrants because they might have already accumulated financial resources to have a comfortable standard of living. Therefore, their potential return to Poland was less dependent on finding well-paid jobs in Poland.

7.5.3 Types of families returning to Poland and settling in the UK

This section presents the likelihood of return to Poland for different family types of Polish migrants. The analyses are based on the predicted probabilities of variables in the model assessing how different socio-economic characteristics affect return migration decisions.

The prevalence of particular family types among Polish migrants living in the UK was established on the basis of the cross-tabulation of factors included in the logistic regression analysis. The ten most numerous family types among the online survey respondents were selected for further analysis (see Table 7.3, ten highest values in *bold and italic*).

Table 7.3 The prevalence of particular family types among Polish migrants in the UK

Civil Status	Other parent's country of birth	First child's country of birth	Number of children in a family				Total	
			I don't have children yet	1	2	3		4 or more
married	non-PL	non-UK		5	6	4	2	17
		UK		22	25	4	1	52
	PL	non-UK	5	24	86	35	8	158
		UK	1	105	88	11		205
single (never married)	non-PL	non-UK				1		1
		UK		17	9			26
	PL	non-UK	1	10	10	5		26
		UK	1	44	15			60
other	non-PL	non-UK						
		UK		1	3			4
	PL	non-UK		7	13	1	1	22
		UK		10	6			16
Total			8	245	261	61	12	587

Source: 'Migration and childbearing' online survey data collected in 2013 and 2014.

Note: N=587. All these factors are statistically significant. Analyses presented in this table are based on the same variables as Table 7.2.

Table 7.4 presents results for all analysed family types, showing the predicted probabilities of return to Poland after 1 year, 5 years and 10 years of living in the UK.

Based on the survey results, the families with the highest likelihood of considering return to Poland have both Polish-born parents and the first child born in the UK. Among those migrant parents with one child living in the UK for one year, this likelihood is 35% for married couples and 31% for migrants with a single civil status. This likelihood decreases to 20% and 17% respectively after 10 years of living in the UK. The birth of the second and third child also decreases the likelihood of considering return for these migrants, with 28% of married couples and 25% of single migrants still likely to consider return after one year, and 16% and 13% respectively likely to consider return after 10 years of living in the UK.

The likelihood of considering return for a Polish-born married couple with one child who was not born in the UK is 21% after one year of living in the UK, decreasing to 11% after 10 years spent in the UK. When such a couple has two children, the likelihood of considering return is 16% after one year, decreasing to 8% after 10 years of living in the UK. Finally, when such a couple has three children, the likelihood of considering return is 12% after one year and only 6% after 10 years of living in the UK.

For migrant families with one non-Polish-born parent and the first child born in the UK, the likelihood of considering return to Poland is 17% for married couples and 15% for migrants with a single civil status after one year of living in the UK, decreasing to 9% and 8% respectively after 10 years of living in the UK. For married couples with two children, the likelihood of considering return is 13% after one year, decreasing to 7% after 10 years spent in the UK.

Table 7.4 The predicted probability of considering return for different family types of Polish migrants in the UK (%)

Civil status		married			single (never married)	
Other parent's country of birth		non-PL	PL		non-PL	PL
First child's country of birth		UK	non-UK	UK	UK	UK
Number of children	Number of years spent in the UK					
1	1 year	17	21	35	15	31
	5 years	13	16	28	11	24
	10 years	9	11	20	8	17
2	1 year	13	16	28		25
	5 years	10	12	22		19
	10 years	7	8	16		13
3	1 year		12			
	5 years		9			
	10 years		6			

Source: 'Migration and childbearing' online survey data collected in 2013 and 2014.

Note: N=587. All these factors are statistically significant. Analysis presented in this table is based on the same variables as Table 7.2.

7.6 Discussion

7.6.1 Most survey respondents were not considering return

In general, over 70% of the online survey respondents were *not considering return* and over 80% were not planning to move to any other country. Typically, these respondents had a flexible and adjustable approach to return to Poland as, in their view, considering return did not have to be followed by any concrete actions or plans. This flexible attitude was also demonstrated by *respondents considering return* as even they did not have a specific timeframe for return. However, there was not much flexibility in the potential return location, with most respondents stating that if they return, they would most likely return to the local areas where they came from in Poland.

7.6.2 Each year spent in the UK decreased the likelihood of considering return to Poland

Migration literature shows that the length of stay abroad has an impact on the probability of return, with longer stays increasing the likelihood of settling abroad and

decreasing the chances of return (see Section 3.4). The survey results confirmed this finding, showing that each year spent in the UK decreased Polish migrants' chance of return by 9%. Given that most respondents had been residing in the UK for about 7 years at the time when the survey was conducted,¹⁰³ their likelihood of considering return and, hence, actually returning was relatively small. Furthermore, analysis of the UK's population data show that most of the post-2004 Polish migrants still lived in the UK in 2019, despite the decline in the Polish population in the UK observed in 2018 and 2019 (see Section 2.4). This means that a large number of Poles have been residing in the UK for over a decade. Extrapolating the survey finding to the overall Polish population in the UK, it could be concluded that many of these migrants have already settled in the UK.¹⁰⁴

7.6.3 Families with younger children were most likely to return

The child's age is an important factor for return decisions, with many research studies showing that the possibility of returning was still considerable before children reach school age (see Section 3.4). This was because education of children was among the most important factors considered by Polish migrants, with 86% of survey respondents marking it as important. Overall, 75% of respondents stated that they did not want to disturb their children's education in the UK. In general, the survey respondents considered British schools to be more student-friendly and better at preparing children for life than schools in Poland. This finding was consistent with the existing literature (see Section 3.4).

Although this research project was not able to analyse the direct impact of the child's age on the return probabilities (see Section 7.5.1), the study findings show that families who had their first child born in the UK were more likely to consider returning than families with children born in Poland or in other countries. The child's country of birth could serve as an indication of this child's age because children born in the UK were on average younger than children born elsewhere. Consequently, it could be concluded

¹⁰³ Most of the survey respondents migrated around 2006-7. The online survey was conducted towards the end of 2013 and in the early months of 2014.

¹⁰⁴ It has to be noted that Brexit could not have been considered as one of the factors that may have affected the return decisions of Polish migrants because all primary data for this project were collected before summer 2015.

(subject to other factors operating) that parents with older children were less likely to consider returning to Poland than parents with younger children.

The family history of migration could also provide an additional explanation for this finding. Moving to the UK with children is often a difficult experience as it disrupts family life and children's education. Families who went through this process when coming to the UK would have had a good understanding of the complexities of such a move, and may therefore be less likely to think of moving back to Poland. In addition, these families would have had a direct experience of the challenges related to raising children in Poland, and may therefore be more realistic in their assessment of a potential return compared with families who had their children born in the UK. These explanations are in line with other studies that examined migration of Polish families with children and showed that parents did not want to disturb (often again) their children's lives (see Section 3.5.4).

7.6.4 Having children outside of marriage decreased the likelihood of considering return

According to the survey results, formal civil status played a role in return migration decisions, with married Poles having higher chances of considering return than single (never married) Polish migrants. As discussed in Chapter 5, around 40-46% of children born to Polish mothers in the UK were born to parents who were not married. This share of Polish migrant children born in non-formal relationships was similar to the overall level in the UK (48% in 2016) but much higher than in Poland (25% in 2016). Even if the socio-cultural acceptability of having children outside of marriage was increasing in Poland, as the survey results indicated, having a child in a non-formal relationship decreased the likelihood of considering return to Poland.

The return considerations of single parents could have also been influenced by the physical location of the other parent. It was possible that some single parents wanted to return to Poland but were constrained by the plans of the other parent, in particular if the other parent was not Polish. For instance, even if a child's parents were no longer together but the other parent wanted to maintain a regular contact with a child, the child's relocation to Poland could have impeded this parental right. In such cases, the Polish parent could have been involuntarily required to stay in the UK.

7.6.5 Economic stability facilitated family formation and settlement, and larger families were less likely to return

The research literature indicated that financial aspects were important for decisions of Poles to move to the UK and also facilitated their settlement abroad (see Section 3.4). Overall, the majority of the survey respondents found that the employment-related factors, work-life balance, child-related benefits and state support for working parents were better in the UK. Together with the availability of the welfare support, a secure situation in the labour market providing a feeling of financial stability may have encouraged some Polish migrants to have more children in the UK than they would otherwise have had in Poland. Having larger families, in turn, might have encouraged Polish families to settle in the UK, which would have impacted their return considerations. The results of this study show that having a larger family decreased the likelihood of return among Polish families, with each additional child decreasing the likelihood of considering returning to Poland by 38%.

Because the data collection phase of this PhD project was completed before the Family 500+ programme was introduced in Poland in 2016, it was not feasible to assess the potential of this programme to influence return migration decisions. A broader discussion on the Family 500+ programme and its impact on the family policy in Poland is presented in Chapter 2 and 9.

7.7 Conclusions

This chapter explored the dynamic relationship between a wide range of socio-economic factors and the patterns of family formation among the survey respondents, and whether and how the experience of becoming a parent had an impact on the respondents' settlement/return decisions. The chapter also assessed the likely permanence of migration among several Polish migrant family types.

Overall, the majority of the respondents were not 'considering' return to Poland. Most respondents demonstrated a flexible understanding of the return concept, allowing them to adjust their plans to changing circumstances. For instance, even those 'considering' return did not have a specific return timeframe in mind.

The survey respondents' migration decisions were motivated by a range of factors, with issues related to employment, work-life balance, child- and family-related aspects, and housing having the most prominent roles. In fact, employment opportunities and aspects related to the reconciliation of family and professional life were all considered by respondents to be better in the UK. However, respondents had more mixed views on aspects related to the education systems in Poland and the UK. The job security and financial stability could have encouraged some Polish migrants to change their intended family size (see Chapter 6.3), and consequently have more children in the UK than they would have had if they had stayed in Poland. This, in turn, could have affected respondents' settlement/return decisions. In fact, 82% of respondents were planning to stay in the UK, including 45% of respondents who changed their approach to a settlement/return decision following the birth of a child/children in the UK (see Figure 7.3). This shows the interlinked relationships between particular factors: first, the socio-economic factors encouraging migration to the UK and then facilitating family formation, and subsequently, the experience of becoming a parent in the UK having an impact on settlement/return decision.

The results of the logistic regression analysis focus on the determinants of whether or not the individual is *considering returning*. An important caveat is that it is assumed that this is positively related to the *probability that returning will be the outcome*. The results thus indicate that the number of children in a family, first child's country of birth, the country of birth of a second parent, parents' marital status, and the number of years spent by respondents in the UK all have a significant impact on the likelihood of considering return to Poland. In general, the likelihood of considering return is the greatest for two-Polish parent married couples who had their first child born in the UK. The chances of such a couple returning to Poland decrease with time spent in the UK and with each additional child born in their family.

Due to the survey data limitations, some of the potentially relevant factors for return decisions could not be included in the statistical model. These factors were examined during the interviews and are explored in Chapter 8.

8 Analysis of interviews

This chapter provides insights into the relationship between the family formation behaviour of Polish migrants to the UK and their settlement intentions and decisions. Giving voice to migrants interviewed for this study, it explores hypotheses drawn from the literature and seeks to contribute to a deeper understanding of the quantitative findings presented in earlier chapters. It focuses on individual perceptions relating to the micro-, meso- and macro-level factors that shape migrants' decisions, thus exploring the meanings, purposes and evolving strategies that lie behind those decisions.

The chapter starts with Section 8.1 presenting the analytical approach to the analysis of the interview data. It is followed by Section 8.2 outlining the main settlement and return considerations of interviewees. Section 8.3 then discusses economic and work-related factors, Section 8.4 focuses on child-related factors, Section 8.5 analyses aspects related to home and feeling of belonging, and Section 8.6 turns to a wider range of socio-political and emotional factors. Section 8.7 discusses key findings from the interviews and how they contribute to a better understanding of the phenomena of Polish migration and family formation in the UK, and the links between factors. Section 8.8 provides final conclusions.

8.1 Approach to the analysis of interview data

The process of coding and analysing the interview data included several interlinked steps and deployed deductive and inductive elements, as outlined in Section 4.4.2. Firstly, the collected evidence was analysed using a deductive method. The aim of this approach was to explore the extent to which the interview data confirmed and contradicted the current understandings and explanations of the particular phenomena. This process was executed iteratively and involved examining the interview narratives against the main findings from the reviewed literature and findings from the survey data, and (re-)grouping the verbatim interview material into several initial clusters.

For instance, the reviewed literature and initial survey data analysis suggested that aspects related to the education of children were of paramount importance to Polish

migrant parents. The interview data confirmed some of the earlier findings (e.g. highlighting the importance of children's command of Polish, parents' and children's perceptions and experience of the British and Polish schools, and Polish pupils' learning trajectories) and also provided additional new insights on the relevance of aspects related to children's and parents' identities and senses of belonging, and how these, in turn, anchored Polish migrants in the UK. This initial clustering of the interview data also indicated that some aspects discussed in the literature as being important for return decisions may have a less significant role for migrant parents compared with other factors (e.g. emotional factors related to homesickness and responsibilities towards ageing parents). Finally, this initial clustering of the interview data outlined topics that did not gain much attention in the research literature thus far (e.g. the implications of continuously extending stay).

The analysis of the new emerging topics included an inductive, grounded theory inspired, method. It first focused on identifying interview narratives that discussed topics not previously represented in the research literature, and clustering them into "more directed, selective, and conceptual" codes (Charmaz 2006:57). This approach allowed for capturing elements visible in the interview narratives that were not covered in previous studies. The process of coding involved a number of revisions, merging, re-grouping and re-coding of relevant extracts of text. It progressed from codes referring to substantive, specific issues to codes of higher levels of abstraction. This allowed selecting new core concepts and integrating new emerging themes around these core concepts.

For instance, the research literature indicated that aspects related to housing and the feeling of 'being at home' were important for Polish migrants' decisions. However, these aspects were not yet comprehensively and systematically examined. Therefore, it was deemed necessary to create a long list of codes and group them into clusters to cover insights coming from the interview data as related to aspects of physical housing and the interrelationship between migrant parents' and children's identity and their sense of belonging.

The process of analysis of the interview data involved several iterative steps to ensure that all clusters and codes were well-defined and mutually exclusive (Bernard 2000).

During the initial analysis, specific parts of the interview narrative were indexed into themes and labelled into codes. At this stage of the analysis the same parts of the text were often included and labelled into several codes recognising the explicit meanings of the raw material. Initial codes that did not fit under any specific cluster were collated together and revisited again. As the analytical process proceeded from description to interpretation, the emerging identified patterns were placed within theoretical context and their meanings and implications were interpreted (Patton 1990). Table 8.1 below presents an example of how the interview transcript was broken down into passages, coded and assigned to different clusters.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰⁵ Please note that the interview transcripts in Polish were used to assign the initial codes, and once the codes were clustered, the pre-selected extracts were translated into English.

Table 8.1 Sample coded interview

Interview narrative (Kinga)	initial codes	higher level clusters	overarching theme / theoretical aspect
<i>I think that many people make this decision whether to stay in the UK or return to Poland on the basis whether their parents are in the UK. In that sense... For instance, we have... My parents live with us [in the UK] and we do not miss Poland that much at the moment because we have family here with us, and we skype other family members</i>	living close to family as a factor why Polish migrants feel 'at home' in the UK	migrants feel 'at home' in the UK	feeling 'at home' social network theory
<i>If my parents leave, I do not know how it would all go on. Will we really still feel 'at home' here?</i>	uncertainty of where belongs to	understanding of belonging	sense of belonging
<i>It is not that we entirely feel 'at home' here because of the attacks on Polish people, that Polish people are taking the work of the English, or because Polish women give birth to a lot of children here, that we are a social burden to this country. It is always in your consciousness.</i>	social factors explaining why Polish migrants do not feel 'at home' in the UK	migrants do not feel 'at home' in the UK	feeling 'at home' the structural approach
<i>You always feel more 'at home' in Poland. You know that this is where you come from, and that your roots are there.</i>	roots in Poland	migrants feel 'at home' in Poland	sense of belonging
<i>We still do not know how it would be for us.</i>	uncertainty of where belongs to	understanding of belonging	sense of belonging
<i>We are not sure whether buying a house here [in the UK] would make us more rooted here. Would it make us more determined to stay here? Perhaps when we buy a house here we would make that decision to stay here [in the UK]".</i>	homeownership as a factor why Polish migrants feel 'at home' in the UK uncertainty of where belongs to	migrants feel 'at home' in the UK understanding of belonging	in contrast to evidence from Parutis (2006; 2013) showing that homeownership often translates into emotional and symbolic connection of belonging to Britain (see Section 3.4.4)

The second analytical step involved reviewing and refining preliminary themes. The process included going back to the coded interview data and revising each code under the selected themes to ensure that each narrative gathered under a specific theme formed a coherent pattern. For instance, during the first stage of coding, all narratives providing reasons for not returning were grouped together under one broad category. However, after initial coding, this theme was divided into several sub-themes (when there was enough data to support it) providing a more nuanced picture for not considering return.

Once all the patterns were determined, they were arranged into a coherent description. This stage of the analysis also involved identifying consistencies and inconsistencies between particular interviewees and examining the role of the interviewees' socio-demographic characteristics on their views and decisions related to settlement/return migration. The final stage of the analysis included translating the selected parts of the interview narratives and writing up this chapter organised across main themes coming up from the interview narratives, as shown in the next section.

8.2 Settlement and return considerations

As indicated in the research literature, a considerable share of Polish migrants came to the UK with open-ended plans regarding their intended length of stay and many decided to remain abroad long-term, with a broad range of socio-economic, political, and emotional factors impacting their decisions (see Section 3.4). This section provides insights into why only small numbers of Poles are returning, why most Polish migrants were not considering return and the implications of this for their settlement in the UK.

8.2.1 Small scale of returns to Poland

The patterns of temporary, back-and-forth and circular migration established before EU accession continued in the early post-accession years, despite the institutional and structural barriers to settlement having been removed. However, patterns of long-term settlement started to emerge. Overall, despite the assumed temporariness of Polish post-accession migration, the scale of return migration to Poland was relatively small until the Referendum vote (see Section 3.5.3, in particular European Commission

2012; Barcevičius *et al.* 2012; Iglicka 2009, Pollard *et al.* 2008), and the interviewees' observations were consistent with this finding from the literature. As noted by Natalia: *"the number of people who returned is smaller than the number of people who stayed"*. Examples provided by Ada, Natalia and Artur, and Kamila described returnees as people with clearly defined economic goals, e.g. coming to the UK to earn money to buy a flat or construct a house in Poland. Securing a well-paid job in Poland was an additional return factor. In this way, a good housing situation and a secure employment situation were the dominant factors facilitating returns.

Interviewees also mentioned more complex (return) migration stories, with people moving back to Poland only to move abroad again, and/or other circular and temporary migration paths. Interviewees also agreed that returns with children were not common, regardless of whether these children were born in Poland or in the UK, because children were perceived as the most pronounced factor making migrants stay in the UK. As emphasised by Maria: *"I do not know a single family that have decided to return to Poland (...) with children born in the UK"* (see Section 8.4 for a discussion on the role of children in migration).

8.2.2 Not 'considering' return due to belief that return is always possible

In line with the findings from the research literature showing a small number of the actual return migrants (see Section 3.5.3, e.g. Iglicka 2009, Pollard *et al.* 2008) and the results of the survey with over 70% of respondents indicating that they were not considering moving back (see Section 7.2), the majority of interviewees were not considering returning to Poland. This is because, as also suggested by the survey respondents (see Section 7.4), regardless of whether they were actively considering return or not, a state of 'considering' allowed them to remain flexible and to adjust plans when circumstances change.

Despite admitting that the topic of return was often discussed among Poles, only a small number of interviewees were able to give examples of people who have actually returned. As suggested by Kinga, these discussions were more about a possibility of return than about decisive plans.

"In general, there are many people that are saying that they are returning (...). But this is just saying that they are returning". (Kinga) [BJ's emphasis]

As suggested by several interviewees, there was a general perception among Polish migrants that return was always possible, regardless of the life stage. Therefore, a precise timeframe for return was rarely set. Ula captured this attitude of gradually extending stays, often indefinitely.

“Since we arrived, everybody seems to be staying 'for the time being/for now' [každy jest na razie]. There are many people who are planning to return but they are planning their return from one year to another [z roku na rok]. So next year, we are closing up everything and we are returning. But they are staying for yet another year, one more year, and year after year and they are still here (in the UK)”.
(Ula)

These extensions of stay were often a consequence of not setting a clear return timeframe, e.g. migrating only *“for a short while”* (Agata) but staying long-term, or planning to return when making *“enough money”* [kiedy sie dorobi] (Ula) but never specifying what constituted enough money. For instance, Daria *“came only to earn and to return (...) to study in Poland”* yet she had already lived in the UK for 10 years. This phenomenon of migrants not confronting themselves and/or not admitting that one will not return is known in the wider migration literature (see Section 3.5, for instance Eade *et al.* 2006; Iglicka 2010; Grabowska-Lusińska *et al.* 2009; Ryan 2015a). The interview data suggest that these extensions of stay may have never been consciously decided by migrants, as confirming that one would not return was often considered to be a betrayal of their home country, and a final sign of permanent settlement abroad. For instance, Agata could not confirm that she was excluding return completely, despite having already decided to stay in the UK long-term.

“I cannot say that I will never return as you never know. But for me to decide to return... I do not think so”. (Agata)

To some extent, this attitude of indecisiveness resulted from external factors and a changing family situation. For example, Kamila started building a house in Poland. However, once her children were born, her family’s financial situation deteriorated, and she was no longer able to complete construction of this house. She was also discouraged from returning by distant family members due to the difficult economic situation in their region in Poland. Her story shows how migrants may be torn between emotional factors (e.g. wanting to live closer to family) and pragmatic considerations of ensuring financial means for the family. Even if return was highly unlikely in

Kamila's case, she still held a view that "*it was not all set in stone*", hoping to adjust plans at a more financially favourable timing.

Keeping options open was explicitly expressed by some interviewees as their conscious attitude. For instance, Maria admitted that she did not like "*forever plans*", and Gabriela explained she "*doesn't like (...) final decisions*" as this would compromise "*some [of her] inner freedom*". For Gabriela, renting a house (rather than buying) was a source of independence and choice. However, as shown in the migration literature and argued later in this chapter, this feeling of freedom might be a false impression given the multiple factors that embed and attach migrants to their places of residence.

Furthermore, the extent to which migrants are able to exercise their agency in the social structures they operate within is also questionable. This is because the socio-economic and political structures impose restrictions on migrants, which may in turn limit migrants' future options (Bakewell 2010). In that sense, interview data confirm what is known in the migration literature as the "migration trap" / "migration loop trap" (see Iglicka 2010 in Section 3.5.1 and 3.5.3). Many Polish migrants may be 'stuck' between Poland and the UK because of a variety of attachments that restrict their future options, e.g. labour market attachments, childcare, children's schooling, and housing situations. These aspects are discussed in detail in the subsequent sections of this chapter.

8.2.3 Constantly postponing return detrimental to migrants' integration and well-being

Research literature suggests that settling may be a gradual process of extending stay, meaning that there may not be a specific moment when migrants make a conscious decision to settle (see Section 3.4, for instance Eade *et al.* 2006; McGhee *et al.* 2017; Ryan 2015a). However, less is known about the consequences of continuously extending stay and postponing return (see Section 3.4).

The interview data suggest that continuously and consciously maintaining perceptions that their stay abroad is temporary may be detrimental for migrants' settlement and integration in the UK. Maria described this openness of mindset/non-committal mindset in the following way:

“Many families give themselves such an openness, such an attitude ‘Oh, we will see. We are here for the time being, we are saving up, children go to school, they learn second language, it is all fine. All of this will give them better opportunities. We can always return’”. (Maria)

However, there may be a specific point in time when migrants are confronted with the staying/returning dilemma. As suggested by Maria, children essentially ‘forced’ migrant families to make this decision.

“It is not that you give birth and you know whether you are staying or not... I think that you are confronted at some point in your life with this choice [about staying / returning] and you need to say to yourself [what you would do]”. (Maria)

For instance, Dorota’s family had a relatively short timeframe to decide about their future as her younger daughter was about to start school and the family needed to move to a bigger house. In addition, she was aware that staying longer would allow her children to settle in the UK, which she viewed as a serious return obstacle.

“I think if we do not return within the next two years, we will never return. (...) I am weighting everything in - whether to stay here [in the UK] and children will simply sink in here [meaning get immersed in the UK] and we will never return”. (Dorota)

However, the interview data suggest that settlement typically resulted from continuously postponing decisions to return rather than from a conscious decision. Kinga could understand this attitude, as she believed that confronting oneself that one was not moving back to Poland would imply that further effort is required to integrate in the UK.

“There are individual people who are not returning. But the rest... Most of the people are returning to Poland (...). But they will stay and continue saying that they are returning even when they are 60 years old (...). I think I understand it to some degree. If you state that you are staying, you need to do something to make it work. Not making a decision gives you time to think about it ‘tomorrow’. It gives you a bit more time”. (Kinga)

Some academic sources suggest that, aside from not actually moving to Poland, this attitude of ‘constant’ return may have negative emotional and economic consequences for a migrant family (see Section 3.5.3, for instance Karolak 2016 showing the employment-related implications for migrant workers, and the studies by White 2011a, 2013a, 2013b indicating consequences for the migrant families’ livelihoods).

Hanna, a psychologist supporting migrant children at schools, noted that an attitude of “*getting your roots there*” was necessary for migrants to make relationships with new friends and feel like part of a new community (see also Section 8.4). In her opinion, constantly believing that migration was only a temporary experience had a negative emotional and social impact on children’s and adults’ wellbeing.

“Even if it [staying abroad] is for 3 years, you cannot think that you will be leaving in 3 years’ time. I sometimes observe that children, for instance, do not make friends or do not join any clubs because parents always bring up the topic of returning”. (Hanna)

Olga also mentioned that integrating can be a challenge if parents focus too much on Polishness. Her friends were raising a daughter completely detached from the British context and once the girl started school, she could not acclimatise to British education system. After a year of emotional strain, the family decided to return to Poland.

It seems that the attitude of constantly postponing return may be a ‘double-edged sword’. On one hand, it can give migrants a sense of flexibility and control over their lives without making difficult decisions. On the other hand, gradual extension of stay can make migrants ‘unconsciously’ settled in the UK, making the actual return unfeasible due to the multiple factors that anchor them to the UK. Consequently, the attitude of ‘keeping the options open’ might have unintended consequences for migrants’ psycho-social well-being and their integration in British society.

8.2.4 Excluding return completely is rare among Polish migrants

According to the reviewed literature (see Section 3.5.5, Eade *et al.* 2007; Engbersen *et al.* 2013) and survey findings (see Chapter 7), migrants committed not to return and oriented towards the receiving country constituted only a small share of all Polish migrants. Among interviewees, only four persons were clear that they wanted to stay in the UK permanently. For instance, Karolina’s family was not returning as they had “*a plan to stay here [in the UK] and bring up our [their] children*”. Likewise, Patrycja stated that she would never move back.

“We will never return (...). I like going to Poland, visit family, have a good laugh, do some silly things, but this is my home now”. (Patrycja and Oskar)

Other interviewees, despite not actively making any return preparations, were more open to ‘consider’ return, even if this option was highly unlikely in their circumstances.

The possibility of return brought a sense of anxiety for some interviewees. For instance, Aleksandra noted that she *“always tried not to think in a negative way about what would have to happen to make [her] return”*, as she would rather consider other options first. For Agata, this feeling of insecurity resulted from becoming a mother with responsibility for a child. Yet, she still found it difficult to rationalise her feelings. *“When we did not have our son and we were considering return, there were some doubts already. When our son was born... Even a thought about return to Poland was, I do not want to say that it was negative, but all potential problems were coming to mind. (...). It is silly but, at some point, I was thinking that I was more petrified about the thought to return to Poland that I was when I was coming to England. (...) I think, it was silly, it should not be this way as you are returning to your own country, you know everything there (...) So why was it so petrifying? I do not have positive thoughts when I think about returning to Poland but as I was saying, I now think about my son and what I can provide to him there. (...) You know, children adapt easily but for me it is all the negative thoughts that come to mind straight away. (...) I cannot give you a reason why it is this way. I feel some anxiety, some insecurity when I think that I would have to return to Poland”*. (Agata)

Overall, only a small number of interviewees excluded return completely. For others, even if return was very unlikely, they still preferred to keep their options open.

8.2.5 ‘Double return’ migration patterns

The studies by White (2011a; 2013a; 2013b; see Section 3.5.3) noted that some Polish return migrants move back to the UK when facing unanticipated challenges in Poland. The interview data convey a belief among respondents that the scale of ‘double returns’ is high.

In fact, none of the interviewees were ‘double return’ migrants themselves. However, nearly all were able to provide stories of friends who had this experience. These stories, full of disappointment and bitterness that a long-awaited return did not turn out as planned, often discouraged other Poles from even attempting to return. These stories of ‘failed’ returns of friends can also be interpreted as a self-justification of interviewees who, not wanting to return themselves, needed a reason re-affirming their

decision to stay in the UK. For instance, Natalia and Artur perceived ‘double returns’ as yet another good reason to settle in the UK.

(Artur) *“We were convinced [not to return] by the example of our friends. There were possibilities for some fantastic work (in Poland) but often, in reality, these people were always returning [to the UK]. My friend and his friends who live near us, they all returned back to the UK. (...) (Natalia) Polish reality did not turn out as they thought it would be (...). So after a year and a half they decided that it was time to return to England. This move was not about going but about returning”.* (Natalia & Artur)

Dorota, who was planning to return, was aware of the disappointment resulting from a failed return. Whenever she mentioned her plans, *“people are [were] saying that it is [was] not worth returning”*. She personally knew two families who returned to Poland with optimism and hope for a better future, but returned to the UK with bitterness and plans to stay permanently. As they *“sold everything in Poland”*, they advised Dorota not to *“make the same mistake”* of returning to Poland. Nevertheless, Dorota still had *“this dream”* and wanted to have *“a chance to get burned”*, even if the return could turn out to be a negative experience. Because Dorota was risk-averse, she did not want to sell her British home¹⁰⁶ but instead let it out to have additional income. However, this caused arguments in her household because her husband believed that this was her *“door to return back to the UK”*. Being so determined to live permanently in Poland, he did not want to give himself the slightest chance or temptation to ever move back to Britain. As Dorota explained, he believed *“it was better to sell everything, (...) burn all bridges behind you (...) so there is no wish to return”*.

Dorota’s example confirms migrants’ determination and strategies to make ‘return’ permanent, whether it is a return to Poland or a ‘double return’ to the UK. As a step towards permanent settlement and having stability in their lives, migrants invest to re-integrate in Poland while ‘double return’ migrants often start building closer social networks and connections with British people.

¹⁰⁶ The family could financially afford it.

8.2.6 Return as a ‘risky’ strategy

Several interviewees framed return as a risky strategy.¹⁰⁷ Thinking about return triggered a variety of emotions, including fear and anxiety but also motivation and strength to face the challenge. These emotions, in turn, translated into risk management strategies related to migration.¹⁰⁸

Some migrants adopted mixed risk management strategies as, in a world of uncertainty, these strategies seemed optimal.¹⁰⁹ For instance, Dorota was initially thinking of returning to her husband’s local area in Poland. However, “*after some thinking we [they] rejected this idea*” because the high cost of living and poor employment prospects in this region made it a risky strategy. Deciding to move to Dorota’s prosperous local area near Warsaw was a conscious risk-reduction strategy for her family.

The aspect of weighing risk was also evident in Izabela’s and Daria’s narratives. Izabela explained that her husband “*was tempted*” to move to a third country when he was made redundant in the UK. However, since becoming parents and in particular since their children started school, they wanted to avoid the potential risks associated with relocating as a family.

“Perhaps, if our children were small and not going to school yet, or not having children at all, we would probably go to try it out. Just to try it out. But I do not think we would risk such big changes in our life now, especially in children’s lives”. (Izabela)

Despite always having a rough idea about returning, Daria bought a house in the UK, had children and settled with her family. She believed that many of the unsuccessful return stories were due to migrants moving to Poland and spending all of their money on property before securing a job offer. Wanting to avoid this misfortune, her plan was

107 Risk, defined as the possibility of a loss or something bad happening, can be a consequence of both foreseen and unforeseen uncertainties. These uncertainties can result from action or inaction and can be internal or external to the subject (Cambridge Dictionary n.d.). In the social sciences, the concept of risk has been applied to examine and understand the processes and the dynamism of the new social orders, for instance changes in individual biographies and societal characteristics, changes in lifestyles and norms, changes in the forms of political participation and in the structures of power (compare with the concept of a ‘risk society’ by Beck 1992).

108 These risk management strategies employed by migrants when accessing the probability and impact of risks included: risk acceptance, risk avoidance, risk reduction, risk transfer, risk exploitation, risk sharing, and ignoring the risk (De Loach 2000). This terminology has been borrowed from the business risk management literature.

109 For instance, a mixed strategy is optimal when facing risk, according to a game theory.

to manage their successful British business from Poland, with her husband staying on and off in the UK until all administrative and management aspects were fully established.¹¹⁰ Despite looking forward to living in Poland again, Daria did not rule out a ‘double return’ migration. Letting out their British house was a risk-reduction strategy that could facilitate their potential return to the UK. Being aware of the risks related to moving, Daria still believed that she had “*nothing to lose*”. Poland could give her new opportunities to “*take a different path*”, and she would regret it if she did not try.

“So we are returning. (...) My husband will be flying over every month, every two months. If we like it in Poland and it will all work out for us, we would like to stay in Poland. If not, we have something to return to. (...) We would like to return for good but if anything changes, we would not be cross with ourselves that we did not try. (...) I will do everything so we do not have to return to the UK. But as I am saying, I would live to the end of my life with this consciousness that I would like to return to Poland”. (Daria)

Because Daria was mentally ready to ‘double return’, she worried “*just a bit*”, mostly about disturbing her son’s education in the UK and his reaction to a new school in Poland.

“I am not risking much. (...) Not much, practically not at all. The only risk is with my son”. (Daria)

Overall, the reviewed Polish migration literature does not explore in detail the concept and categories of social risks related to migration. Yet, the concept of risk offers a potentially fruitful analytical framework to explore migrants’ strategies when facing uncertainties, and it would be helpful to explore this concept in further research studies.¹¹¹

8.3 Economic and work-related factors

Academic and policy literature (see Chapters 2 and 3) and the results from the online survey (see Chapter 7) indicate that employment-related factors are among the most important aspects for Polish migrants’ settlement and return decisions. In fact, survey

¹¹⁰ It has to be noted that this was a risky strategy in itself as Daria’s family did not have a clear plan how long her husband will have to navigate between Poland and the UK. Therefore, it seems that a strategy of minimising some risks could bring in additional risks.

¹¹¹ The CEEYouth study comparing strategies of young Polish and Lithuanian migrants in the context of Brexit seems to be one of the first studies directly anchoring some of its analysis on the concept of social risks. See: <http://youth.swps.pl/ceeyouth/?lang=en>, last accessed 19.07.2019.

respondents considered the British labour market to offer considerably better professional opportunities and work-life balance than working in Poland. Similarly, interviewees also indicated that employment-related factors were the dominant reason for them remaining in the UK. This section offers further insights into their assessments of work-related factors, comparing their perceptions of the situations in Poland and the UK

8.3.1 Perceived and actual lack of work in Poland

There are pronounced differences between Poland and the UK regarding key economic and employment-related indicators (e.g. the unemployment levels, in particular among young people, the level of temporary and precarious contracts, and the level of earnings, see Chapter 2). Even if the macroeconomic indicators for and employment opportunities in Poland have improved in recent years, the situation in the Polish labour market still deterred many interviewees from returning.

According to Dorota, many Poles were “*saying that if they had jobs, they would return straight away*”. However, according to interviewees, the job vacancies were often filled through informal recruitment channels, meaning that potential workers without local links (*znajomości* in Polish) had limited opportunities to find work. This reliance on informal links was apparent in many post-socialist countries (see White 2013b) and also for people in manual, casual and lower-paid jobs. In addition, interviewees suggested that many people in Poland had a constant fear at the back of their minds about losing their job and struggling to find other employment. Alicja described this further: “*This Polish mentality... Oh gosh, what would it be if I lose my job?*”.¹¹² In this way, the lack of information about job opportunities, and the perceived and the actual difficulty in finding employment in Poland, was discouraging returns.

The reluctance to return was particularly evident among interviewees coming from less economically prosperous Polish regions (see Section 3.5.3, notably Barcevičius *et al.* 2012; Lubbers & Kaliszewska 2013; White 2011). Anna, coming from so called ‘Poland B’, complained that her region suffered from a high level of unemployment and limited job prospects. For that reason, she was “*thinking about staying [in the UK]*

¹¹² The extent to which this was a perceived versus an actual difficulty in finding employment was not clear during this interview.

as long as I have [she had] a job". Similarly, Agata, and Patrycja and Oskar, having come from the Silesia region which was once a powerhouse of the Polish economy known for their coal mines and the provision of good employment opportunities, were also planning to stay in the UK. This was because, as explained by Oskar, "*all the coal mines are closing down, (...) the level of unemployment in the region is increasing*", and consequently, the region faced structural problems with limited jobs outside of the mining sector. As concluded by Agata, she was from "*a city that everyone is leaving. There is nothing there*".¹¹³

The lack of highly-skilled job opportunities in Poland was also deterring returns. For instance, Izabela trained as a biomedical scientist and worked as a teacher in Poland. Once in the UK, she had a highly-skilled position in a biomedical laboratory. If returning, she wanted to move to a large city with strong economic prospects. However, according to her, "*there are no such companies, in particular no biotech companies, no R&D laboratories. There are no opportunities to find such research jobs in Poland*", even in this prosperous region. She was planning to stay due to her employment opportunities being much better in the UK.¹¹⁴

This resembles observations of several other interviewees, who were afraid that finding jobs commensurate with qualifications and aspirations would be difficult in Poland. As noted in Section 2.4, Polish post-accession migration to the UK was highly selective with respect to the educational attainment of migrants due to the processes in the higher education sector. As the British labour market attracted a disproportionately large share of highly-educated/skilled Poles, many interviewees felt that the Polish labour market would not be able to absorb their skills. The research evidence indicating the "brain overflow" in the Polish labour market confirms that the interviewees' fears were justified (see Fihel & Kaczmarczyk 2009; see Section 2.5.2). These observations about the lack of employment prospects (and highly-skilled jobs) in Poland contrasted with the interviewees' perception of the British labour

113 It was not feasible, within the scope of this research, to examine the actual trends in the unemployment levels and the migratory patterns in this region of Poland. With the overall national trend of a decreasing unemployment level, it is possible that these views were just interviewees' personal perceptions to justify their decisions not to return.

114 Again, it was not feasible to assess whether Izabela's perceptions of the Polish labour market were accurate. It is possible that it was just her personal opinion to justify her decision not to return.

market, with a number of interviewees mentioning changing jobs several times and claiming that it was relatively easy to find work, even during the economic crisis.

8.3.2 Importance of providing financially for a family and ‘living a normal life’

The economic aspect of working to attain financial means to support oneself was one of the decisive factors for migration from Poland (see Section 3.4.1 outlining how the economic factors were the main drivers for Polish migration). Survey respondents attested that the economic factors, as related to employment, were also crucial for settlement decisions and that the financial aspects became particularly important when Polish migrants started families (see Section 7.4). This was confirmed by interviewees such as Kamila, who said that parenthood encourages “*making bolder decisions*” as you are responsible for a family. Natalia and Artur summarised this rationale by saying:

(Artur) “You cannot cheat yourself that you go to work as a hobby [To jest tak, nie oszukujmy się, nikt nie chodzi do pracy tylko hobbistycznie]. (Natalia) When you have a family, you need to think in financial terms. (Artur) To support your family...” (Natalia & Artur)

Even interviewees who were actively planning to return, such as Daria, were convinced that the UK offered better financial stability for their families. This was not only about the absolute level of incomes, but rather about the possibility of living a ‘decent’ and ‘normal’ life’ (see Section 3.4.1 and Section 3.4.3, in particular Kloc-Nowak 2018; McGhee *et al.* 2012).

In general, the assessment of migrant’s current situation in the UK was typically based on a comparison with one’s own status during earlier years in Poland as well as with the circumstances of family and friends living in Poland at a given time. In that sense, as summarised by McGhee *et al.* (2012:713), “this comparison involves ‘border crossing’ as well as the ‘temporal comparison’ between their current lives in the UK and their previous lives in Poland”. These comparisons allowed interviewees to conclude that they were relatively better off in the UK than they would have been in Poland, even if they still had relatively limited opportunities in the UK.

According to interviewees, it was possible to have a better standard of living in the UK, even if working in routine, manual jobs. For instance, Kinga's husband, who worked as a manufacturing technician both in Poland and in the UK, had a much higher salary in absolute terms and in terms of purchasing power, and a much greater level of financial security in the UK. Despite higher living costs in Britain, Kinga felt that her family *"did not have the chance to have a similar standard of living in Poland"*. Remembering the family budgeting to purchase essential products in Poland, Kinga enjoyed the financial stability in Britain.

"When someone asks my husband whether he wants to return to Poland, he always replies that he does not consider it. It is because he does not want to think whether he can afford to buy shoes for children. (...) We do not have to sit by the table and discuss that children need new jackets or shoes. When they need these items, we buy them". (Kinga)

The interviewees acknowledged that some people in the UK may have financial worries or experience financial difficulty. However, the comparative perspective led interviewees to conclude (in line with findings from other research studies, e.g. Cieslik 2011; Karolak 2015; 2016; White 2011b, see Section 3.4.1) that Britain offered greater stability in family finances than Poland. For instance, Kamila felt that: *"you do not have to think here [in the UK] about how to make ends meet, you do not have to stress about everyday things"*. Marta also mentioned that working in the UK provides more financial stability when you manage your money wisely.

"I do not know if I would be able to return to Poland. (...) If necessary, I would go, but I cannot imagine it as I know how little people are earning in our region. I cannot really imagine how they are managing with these earnings. (...). It is different when you have a job and you do not have to worry about how much you bring home, whether it would be sufficient for the whole month. When you have a job, you have the money. If you can manage the money well, not dissipating, then you do not have to worry [in the UK]". (Marta)

Natalia and Artur's decision to stay in the UK was also motivated by economic factors. As a newlywed couple, they lived in a single room in their parents flat in Poland. Upon migrating, they could afford to live on their own because even routine jobs (*"simple"*, *"ordinary"* jobs as they called them) and relatively low salaries allowed them to live independently and have a better standard of living in Britain.

“Our first holidays in Poland verified our decision to stay in the UK (...). One gets used to the fact that it is easier to earn, to work, to save in here. (...). We planned to stay for a year but after this first year we concluded that it does not make sense to return to Poland (...). During this first year (...), it was also living on our own, becoming independent. It was also a factor to stay in England”. (Artur)

The couple also noted that people in the essential jobs for a society, such as teachers and nurses, were not compensated well and did not have a high social status in Poland. Contrarily, they believed that these occupations were respected and relatively well-compensated in the UK.¹¹⁵

“(Artur) It is really sad when we hear from our friends that the essential jobs such as a teacher, a nurse are so badly paid (...). People are ‘somebody’ in these professions here [Tu z tych zawodów ludzie są kimś]. (Natalia) You can have a comfortable life”.

The disparity between the required level of skills and the level of remuneration was also deterring the couple from moving back. When their friend returned, he soon realised that the job requirements were high *“but these requirements were not commensurable with remuneration”* levels (Natalia). He felt that *“the recruitment process was always as for NASA¹¹⁶ but salaries were not as in NASA”* (Natalia).

The incompatibility of job requirements and salary levels was also a factor for Kinga. Originally trained as a dressmaker, she decided *“not do it professionally”* because of the disparity between the skills requirements and the compensation levels, and subsequently retrained to follow a different career path. Once in the UK, she started sewing again. When the demand for her sewing and alteration services increased, she started doing it commercially and considered it becoming her future career. The demand for this service and the level of financial compensation came to her as a surprise because of her previous experiences from Poland and the depressed salaries in the aftermath of the economic crisis in Britain.

According to interviewees, living a ‘normal’ life was also related to the overall user-friendliness of service providers and the ease of dealing with the administrative aspects

¹¹⁵ It was beyond the scope of this study to examine the extent to which this belief was factually accurate.

¹¹⁶ In the context of this interview, NASA served as an example of an employment requiring high-level of skills, with a highly demanding and selective recruitment process.

in the UK.¹¹⁷ This often contrasted with interviewees' experiences from Poland, where liaising with public service providers was often burdensome and required in-person visits in a county or a municipality office. As noted by Natalia, "*people quickly get used to convenience / good things*" [przyzwyczajają się szybko do dobrych rzeczy]. As it was "*easier to manage everything*" and have "*a calmer life, without the pressure, without the stress*", Natalia concluded that many Poles were planning to stay in the UK. This aligned with the observations of Ada who, after experiencing how various aspects of everyday life were managed in the UK, concluded that living there was simply easier. Because she observed that many Poles have settled down and grown accustomed to the UK's standard of living, she expressed doubts about their return declarations.

"I think people get used to many things in here [in the UK], how everything works, what is available for them and their children, that they have jobs". (Ada)

Comparing life in the UK with Poland, many interviewees believed that people in Poland had more financial concerns and more stressful lives. This was in contrast with the interviewees' assessment of the situation in Britain, where it was relatively easy to find work, enjoy financial security and have a more 'normal' and 'decent' life.

8.3.3 Working standards and regulations

The interview data bring mixed findings related to working standards and regulations. In general, despite occupational downgrading and work in the labour-intensive sectors of the economy (in line with the dual labour market theory, see Section 3.4), Polish migrants (as attested by the survey results, see Section 7.4.3) were satisfied with their working conditions in the UK. This was most likely because they may have felt that their precariousness was less pronounced in the British labour market than in previous jobs in Poland.

As observed by interviewees, the differences in working standards were also pronounced in highly-skilled occupations. For instance, Gabriela worried that her husband would be "*shocked*" by many aspects in Poland as he was "*accustomed to a*

¹¹⁷ Interviewees provides some examples of difficulties when liaising with public service providers (e.g. healthcare, education, welfare). Nevertheless, most interviewees had positive views on the public services provision in the UK, considered to be more user-friendly than in Poland.

different working standard”, having spent all of his formative years, getting educated and working as a highly-skilled professional in the UK. Other interviewees also pointed to less hierarchical and more collegial relationships with co-workers and managers, and a more friendly atmosphere in British workplaces.

However, despite these generally positive experience of working in the UK, the interview data bring mixed evidence related to respecting labour standards and regulations, in particular related to maternity and leave arrangements.¹¹⁸ For instance, Natalia’s experience of being a pregnant employee twice were positive, as she received support from employer during pregnancy and when returning to work after maternity leave. This was in contrast with the experiences of her pregnant friends in Poland who *“had to fight for everything”* and *“often had nothing to return to after maternity leave”*.¹¹⁹

On the other hand, the examples provided by three other interviewees show non-compliance with the labour regulations related to pregnancy and maternity leave in the UK. For instance, both Aleksandra and Ada were made redundant when pregnant, despite laws protecting expecting mothers. Aleksandra’s temporary contract was not extended when her employer found out that she was pregnant. In Ada’s case it was also clear that her redundancy was directly relevant to pregnancy and not to her job performance. Working for her employer for over six years, she was praised several times for being a valuable staff member and *“never had any negative... [feedback], any signs that [she] was not working well”*. However, two months before starting maternity leave, she was told that *“there would be some reorganisation of the work units”*, and she was made redundant. For that reasons, she believed *“it was all personal. It was because [she] was pregnant”*. She concluded that this experience *“undermined (...) all her faith in the British system, in the workers’ rights and her family financial stability”*.

118 In general, both Poland and the UK are characterised as examples of the neoliberal labour market regimes, with flexible working relations and high shares of atypical employment contracts often leading to the experiences of precariousness and work insecurity (ETUI 2015; PPMI & CSES 2017).

119 Wider literature confirms that this is a prevailing practice in Poland, with female workers often not being able to return to their workplace once their maternity leave has finished. See Kotowska *et al.* (2008).

In Karolina's case, the negative experience related to her employer not allowing her flexibility of working part-time after maternity leave. As she "*could not imagine working 9am to 6pm, with such a small child*", she resigned and did not return to work.

Overall, interviewees positively assessed the British working standards and note that British employers respect working regulations. However, the interview data also provided examples of non-compliance with the working regulations in the British labour market.

8.3.4 Detachment from the Polish context and difficulty in transferring human capital across borders

The notion that moving back to Poland would require building a professional career from the beginning was evident during the interviews. Similarly to the overall population of Poles in the UK (see Section 2.4) and the socio-demographic profile of the survey respondents (see Section 6.1), many interviewees had limited work experience from Poland, mostly due to their young age at migration. In addition, living in the UK for a relatively long time, they have slowly embedded themselves in the British labour market and consequently felt detached from the Polish labour market (see Ryan 2018 and Section 3.4.1). As a result, interviewees doubted that they would be able to advance their professional careers in Poland and worried that they would need to start over again. As explained by Natalia and Artur:

"(Natalia) It is over 10 years since we have not been living in Poland (...). It is more of a sentiment rather than to pack our bags and go. I cannot imagine it. (...)To start everything from scratch? (Artur) Everything from scratch! (Natalia) It is that return to Poland would mean that you would have to start everything from the beginning".

This feeling of not having a good starting point in Poland referred to the interviewees' labour market situation as well as to a broader range of aspects, e.g. housing situation and having local support networks. For example, Dorota rejected the idea of moving to her husband's local area in Poland as they lacked sufficiently strong attachment to that place (e.g. a house or a job). As she inherited a house near Warsaw, she felt that this could give her family a competitive edge and strong starting point. Similarly, Alicja felt that she had "*nothing to return to*" since selling her flat in Poland some years ago, and believed that she was "*in a situation of no return*".

Being detached from the Polish context for a number of years was considered by interviewees as a deterrent to return due to the difficulty in transferring human and socio-cultural capital between countries. This feeling of detachment was also related to not having material possessions (e.g. a property) in Poland.

8.3.5 Opportunities for professional development

As evidenced by the research literature, working in the UK provided Polish migrants with a mostly positive work experience, a sense of financial security, and opportunities for upward mobility (even if they initially experienced downward occupational mobility) (see Section 3.4.1, in particular Cieslik 2011; Karolak 2015; 2016; Szewczyk 2014; Trevena 2013; White 2011b; Ryan 2018). The fact that 14% of the survey respondents received their educational qualifications in the UK (see Section 6.1.5) may also indicate upward mobility objectives among Poles. The interview data provide additional insights into Polish migrants' ambitions and undertakings related to professional development.

Firstly, most interviewees considered that advancing professional qualifications and skills through additional training was more feasible in the UK than in Poland. This was due to a broader range of training opportunities available in the UK, and more possibilities to advance or change career at somewhat later stages. Undertaking training in the UK was also seen as more financially rewarding because it gave workers a competitive advantage. In fact, many interviewees confirmed that they were gaining additional qualification and/or upskilling. For instance, Karolina and her husband were both taking various training courses because they believed that investment in training would pay off by advancing their careers, thus also improving *“the financial aspect”*.

“It is completely incomparable [financially between the UK and Poland]. (...) We develop professionally and we are very happy about it. We notice that if someone has a proper job, is hard-working, (...) then such a person can achieve a lot ...here”. (Karolina)

This notion of success through hard work was also shared by Dorota. Upon arrival in the UK she was a factory worker like *“most Polish people”*. However, with time, she acquired additional skills through a completion of various training courses and climbed up the career ladder.

“I found a job advert to work in [company name]. I started working there as a trainee, then at an assistant position. I was signing up to all training courses, just to prove that I can work, that I will manage, and I think I succeeded”. (Dorota)

Natalia had also already started *“investing in herself”* to advance her qualifications. Because there was *“no chance for professional development”* in the North of England where her family used to live, they moved south to a town near Cambridge. She worked part-time as it allowed her to *“pay the bills”*, still have time for her school-aged children, and also to *“focus on her development”*. It was the right moment *“to do something for herself so that she could not tell herself in the future that she did not do that many things in her life”*. A similar livelihood strategy was endorsed by Gabriela, who at the time of the interview was a stay-at-home mum but planned to *“complete her professional training”* and have a professional job once her children were older. All these narratives confirm that interviewees believed their personal and professional development and career advancement was possible and less dependent than it would be in Poland on their previous education level or professional experience.

However, some interviewees *“got stuck”* in the low-skilled jobs (e.g. cleaning, packing/packaging) because of family responsibilities (e.g. they could only work part-time to combine employment with childcare duties), poor command of English, or not focusing earlier on career planning. This was also because, as explained by Anna, *“as a cleaner you cannot really develop professionally”*. Daria expressed this disappointment by saying:

“I never wanted to be a cleaner all my life. But it seems that I am a cleaner for the last 10 years. I would like to move up, do something else in my life, more than just cleaning because it is not a nice job”. (Daria)

Agata, who also worked as a cleaner, articulated similar sentiments. She was taking a training course to have *“more courage to apply for jobs”*, and was willing to take up any relevant administrative job that would help advance her career.

“I am learning the language and trying to do something to get out of cleaning jobs as I got stuck. Seven years of cleaning and I have had enough”. (Agata)

The examples presented above confirm findings from the reviewed literature (see Parutis 2014; Szewczyk 2014; Trevena 2013, and see Section 3.4.1) by illustrating

that some Polish migrants had aspirations to advance their careers through gaining additional skills, and that employment below their qualifications or skills level was typically seen as a temporary situation, even if it lasted long-term.

Becoming self-employed was also perceived by some interviewees (e.g. Adam and Kamila) as an opportunity to have a greater sense of autonomy and a more meaningful job. Self-employment was also seen as a step towards a better work-life balance and professional independence, and an opportunity for higher earnings. For instance, self-employment allowed Kamila to decide on her workload and working hours to manage her childcare responsibilities.

Overall, the interviewees were positive about opportunities to advance their careers and skills in the UK regardless of their particular life stage or previous professional experience. Even if they held jobs below their qualifications and/or aspirations, many of them were motivated to develop professionally by undertaking training courses.

8.3.6 Financial security due to state support

As explained in Section 2.2, EU migrants (including Poles) are entitled to state support in the UK, providing them with a safety net and financial security in case of unexpected life events. This contributes to Polish migrants' perceptions that it is easier to 'manage' their lives in the UK, even if the absolute value of the state benefits in Britain is relatively low and the cost of living is higher than in Poland (this perception was also shared by the research participants in the Kloc-Nowak 2018 study). For nearly three in five survey respondents, the state support for families and working parents was an important factor for their settlement/return decision (see Section 7.3.1), and the interview data help to understand the motivations of Polish migrants.

Firstly, the interviewees valued the sense of financial security that the state support gave them, in particular during distressing life events. For instance, single mother interviewees¹²⁰ shared stories of how state support helped them to overcome adversity and get back on track with their lives. In Aleksandra's case, the welfare safety net helped her survive a distressing period in which she lost job when she became

¹²⁰ Several interviewees were single mothers so they had knowledge and a direct experience of the support and services available to single parents in the UK.

pregnant, and experienced a relationship break-down as the father of the child “disappeared”. Both Anna and Agata also praised the social security system in the UK as the financial support they received for childcare costs allowed them to return to work. Knowing experiences of single-parent friends in Poland, Agata believed it was financially much easier to bring up a child as a single parent in Britain.

“I am not saying that I am proud of myself that I receive state benefits as a single mother (...) I have to manage everything on my own. I go to work, I go to clean in private houses [na domki]. I want to study, I want to change something, to do something, and you know... I receive state benefits as a single mother and everything goes on”. (Agata)

Adam, who set up his own business, also felt more financially secure in the UK. Because he had children, he believed that his family would get financial support if his business was not financially viable and he could not financially support his family. Exploring the extent to which this belief was based on the actual social benefit regulations in the UK was beyond the scope of this research study. Nevertheless, Adam’s attitude may signal that some perceptions and decisions of Polish migrants might be based (at least partially) on flawed information.

Overall, interviewees believed that the British welfare system allowed them to have ‘normal’ and ‘dignified’ lives in the UK. The financial safety net of providing a minimum level of income and support with childcare costs allowed some interviewees to meet their basic needs during stressful life events.

8.3.7 Work-life balance aspects

Research studies suggest that a common reason for recent Polish migration to the UK was to better reconcile professional and private responsibilities, and to have more time for family (see White 2011a and Section 3.4.1). Comparing the labour market situations in the UK and Poland, four in five survey respondents indicated that work-life balance aspects were better in Britain (see Section 7.4.1). However, this finding seems paradoxical given the long working hours and the high level of flexibility required from workers in the British labour market (see Section 3.4.1, in particular Cieslik 2011; Karolak 2015; 2016; Ryan 2018; White 2011b).

The interviewees' examples of the British labour market practices help to shed light on how living in the UK improved their personal and family circumstances. For instance, being a lorry driver, Ula's husband worked very unpredictable hours in Poland. He often had to work involuntary overtime and "*was not at home for the whole week*", despite not being paid for this extra working time. His UK job allowed him "*to work 8 hours and be home afterwards*", which significantly improved his well-being and their family life.

"He is now really pleased that he can work 8 hours, come back home, and he can look after children. We can go out, go to a playground. (...) So this is the difference. I suppose, if we were in Poland, we would only have one child, perhaps also the second one, but... He would have to work all the time, he would not spend much time at home, I would have to go back to work soon after maternity leave. I would not be able to spend so much time with our children". (Ula)

Working part-time was another work-life balance measure praised by interviewees.¹²¹ It allowed many female interviewees to be economically active while having time for their young children.¹²² Interviewees also perceived part-time work as a wellbeing measure. For instance, Karolina wanted to "*return to work for [her] own wellbeing, so she did not need to be at home full-time*", while for Ula "*it was not even to earn money*" but rather "*to go outside, get out of the house and be between other people*". For Natalia, being at work was a "*departure from reality*"¹²³ allowing her to have a "*balance between family life and work*". For many interviewees, a preference for a part-time working pattern was their own choice, rather than the only working option available to them because of their childcare obligations.

Some interviewees decided not to work when children were small (e.g. Kinga, Alicja and Gabriela) as their husbands' salaries were sufficient to financially support their families. In a sense, this was their family 'migration success' (see Bargłowski & Pustulka 2018) because, as noted by Kinga: "*It was our decision for me to look after children. It would not be possible in Poland*". Similarly, Alicja's family "*could not afford*" her not working in Poland. However, upon reflection she added that this was

121 Despite the positive impact of part-time working on work-life balance, there are also career penalties for part-time workers. For a review, see Fagan *et al.* (2012); Lyonette, C. (2015). Part-time work is also discussed in Kloc-Nowak as one of the support measures for women's economic activity.

122 As indicated in Section 4.3, only four interviewees (Hanna, Kinga, Karolina, and Patrycja and Oskar) had children born in Poland. All other interviewees became parents in the UK.

123 This was understood by Natalia as a departure from her daily childcare and household chores.

possible in the UK only because her husband worked very long hours at the cost of “*practically not seeing each other*”, which “*irritated*” her.

Some of the interview data challenge findings from literature (see Section 3.4, in particular findings in Barglowski & Pustulka’s 2018) that female employment in Polish migrant families was typically seen as subordinate to male employment, with female migrants only working if it made sense financially for a family, and if the partner agreed to take care of the children while woman was at work. To the contrary, many interviewees suggested that fathers’ involvement in childcare became normalised, with many fathers taking care of children on par with mothers (see Duda-Mikulin 2013a, 2013b, 2015). For instance, Adam viewed childcare responsibilities as “*one of the factors to start his own business*” so he could have flexibility with his working hours and “*did not need to use other forms of childcare*”. Olga’s husband was also looking after their young children during daytime and working part-time on an evening shift, while she was at work full-time. Natalia suggested that caring for children became normalised among Polish migrant fathers also because families could not rely on support from other relatives to the same extent that they would in Poland.¹²⁴

“It is different in Poland. But here, all our friends, all fathers. It was this way: mum returns to work and dad had to stay and look after a child. It was not a big deal. It was just a natural way. It is different in Poland, you have grandmothers, aunties to help with childcare so fathers do not have to be that involved”. (Natalia)

Female migrants’ labour market participation in the UK was also facilitated through the availability, access and affordability of formal ECEC. As noted in Section 2.6.4, the market for childcare is more developed in the UK.¹²⁵ In addition, free access to ECEC and compulsory schooling starts much earlier in the UK than in Poland. The underlying cost of childcare in the UK is higher than in Poland. However, by managing the cost through state subsidies, childcare affordability is better in the UK than in Poland (see Browne & Neumann 2017). It means that all families, including socio-economically disadvantaged families, have access to and can afford childcare for

¹²⁴ It would be relevant to investigate the attitudes of parents caring for children and the extent to which social class has played a role in the involvement of migrant fathers in childcare. It is plausible that working class migrant men had to engage in childcare more than their more professional counterparts. This is because working class fathers could not afford to pay for childcare services so had to contribute to childcare themselves.

¹²⁵ To some degree, this availability of formal childcare provision might have compensated the loss of familial support which may be more available in Poland.

young children. The results of the survey confirmed these findings, as respondents perceived childcare affordability and quality¹²⁶ to be better in the UK than in Poland (see Section 7.4.1). However, these findings challenge Barglowski & Pustulka's (2018) conclusions that only the more privileged and better-educated migrant women had the possibility to select and afford a form of childcare that suited their family needs.

Nevertheless, despite the greater involvement of migrant fathers and the availability of formal childcare, Polish migrants still relied on family members to provide support with childcare. Grandmothers were often asked for help when other childcare options failed, or when support was needed at short notice (see Section 3.4.2, in particular Barglowski & Pustulka 2018; Osipovič 2010). For instance, Anna's mum looked after her grandson for a couple of months before the situation with a childminder was resolved. Similarly, Marta's mum came over to help with childcare when Marta started working full-time. Patrycja also called upon a relative to help with school drop-offs and pick-ups. Several other interviewees mentioned that grandparents were helping with childcare during school holidays and half-terms. However, in general, interviewees agreed that family members would most likely provide more overall childcare support if their families (particularly grandmothers) lived in Poland, facilitated by closer physical distance, cultural norms and social expectations.

Overall, the interview data outline several reconciliation measures available in the UK and bring examples of how these measures facilitated labour market engagement and work-life balance in the families of interviewees. The evidence collected through interviews also show that migration provides an opportunity to challenge perceptions of traditional gender roles and relations in families. With the circulation and remittance of the 'new' social norms,¹²⁷ migrants could become agents of change and have a modernising role in Poland (see Section 3.5.3, in particular the social remittances concept of Grabowska *et al.* 2017). However, the modernising role of migrants also

¹²⁶ Typically, policy discussions about ECEC also include aspects related to quality of provision as accessing high-quality of ECEC provision from early years has positive and long-lasting impact on child's development (Janta *et al.* 2016). However, the ECEC quality was not mentioned by interviewees directly. Yet, all interviewees discussed how children living in the UK are provided with 'better opportunities' for development, education and future career prospects (see Section 8.3.2).

¹²⁷ 'New' social norms indicate norms present in the host county(ies).

depends on how much they internalise these ‘new’ social roles and on the extent of return migration.

8.4 Child-related factors

The prospect of giving children a ‘better life’ is noted as an important factor for Polish migrants living in the UK, with the signs of longer-term settlement particularly observed among families with school-age children. This is because children are one of the strongest factors anchoring / embedding migrants and leading to a permanent settlement of migrant families in Britain (see Section 3.2.3, 3.4.2 and 3.5.4, in particular Castles & Miller 2009; Erdal 2014a; McGhee *et al.* 2012; Sales *et al.* 2008; Ryan *et al.* 2008, 2009; Ryan 2018; Trevena *et al.* 2012; White 2011a,c). The interview data provide further insights for this ‘better life’ paradigm, which are outlined in detail in the subsequent sections.

8.4.1 Having children anchors families in the UK

Child-related factors were among the most important aspects considered by the survey respondents when making a decision to settle/return (see Section 7.3.1). In addition, most of the child- and family-related factors were also considered to be better in the UK (see Section 7.4.1). Evidence from interviews shows that starting a family inevitably strengthened Polish migrants’ links with Britain and helped to justify their decisions not to return. This was because, as parents, interviewees had to make decisions based on practical aspects, e.g. being able to financially support their family and provide children with adequate housing. As summed up by Olga: “*now when we have children, I know that we will stay here [in the UK]*”.

The decision to settle in Britain was often made following the birth of a second or third child. For instance, Izabela explained that before her second child was born, “*the return was at stake. But with a second child?*”. Similarly, Ula admitted that having another child was a deciding factor for not returning.

“Over the first 4 years of living here, we were planning to return to Poland but when we made a decision to have a third child, we concluded that we would stay here [in the UK]”. (Ula)

Children's age was also a key factor, with interviewees abandoning considerations of return as children got older. Using the services (e.g. healthcare, schooling) and cultivating friendships with local people (e.g. parents at nurseries or schools, and in the local community) helped families to developing social anchors and feel embedded in the local social fabric. According to interviewees, it would take considerable effort to (re-)integrate and (re-)build these links in Poland (see Section 3.2.3 and 3.4.4, notably Cassarino 2004; Ryan 2015a; White 2013a; White 2013b).

Interviewees also reflected on the interrelations between and sequence of life events and how they reinforced each other and consequently contributed to their settlement decision. For instance, Marta explained her decision not to return as related to a combination of factors, such as becoming a parent, buying a house and finding a secure job. Asked about the importance of children for their decisions, she said:

“When I got pregnant, we made a decision to buy a house. I am not sure whether we would buy or not without children (...). We were considering buying a house but (children) hurried us up in making this decision. They gave us extra courage that we had to do something with our lives, live on our own and not still share a house with friends. This had an impact on our decision. And our jobs... You know, when you have children, you have to think to have a job, that you can pay your mortgage off and support your family (...). Children have impact on decisions”. (Marta)

With most interviewees believing that the UK offered better opportunities for their children, the decision to return *“would require a really important reason”* (Maria). The presence of children helped strengthen links with the UK, and facilitated the process of settling in. This, in turn, further discouraged returning.

8.4.2 Giving children better opportunities

‘Better opportunities’ came up in all interviews and were usually defined as having better education and future career prospects, and parents being able to fulfil children's dreams. When financial opportunities were mentioned, this was mostly in the context of having a ‘normal’ and ‘decent’ life (see Section 3.4.1 and 3.4.3, in particular McGhee *et al.* 2012; White *et al.* 2018), rather than having high salaries (see Section 8.3.2). However, only a small number of interviewees reflected on how their own socio-economic situation may actually be limiting children's opportunities, or on the

social, emotional and financial cost(s) that parents incur to provide children with these opportunities.

Most interviewees believed that “*children can have everything*” (Natalia) in the UK as everything was “*within their reach*” (Natalia). Interviewees also “*had an impression that people [in the UK] had easier lives*” (Agata) because “*the starting point was a bit better*” (Olga) as “*everything was more accessible, (...) easier for them to do what they wanted, to achieve their dreams, to meet their needs*” (Agata). This “*easier start in life*” (Olga) also referred to future work opportunities as it was possible in Britain “*to start (...) career earlier*” or “*change (...) a career pattern*” (Olga) throughout the life course.

However, some interviewees acknowledged that doing it “*all for child’s future*” (Aleksandra) was often at the cost of “*not thinking about myself [her own]*” (Agata). Maria also noted that “*the emotional cost was huge*” as she had this feeling of “*loss*” from foregone opportunities for her own career progression. Nevertheless, this intergenerational reflection did not often come up unprompted during the interviews. This may confirm that the cultural norm of prioritisation children’s needs and the associated parental sacrifice is deeply embedded in Polish culture and transfers across borders with Polish migrants (see Section 3.4.2, in particular Castles & Miller 2009; Clements 2014; Erdal 2014a; White 2011a; White 2011b).

The extent to which Polish migrant parents are able to give their children ‘better opportunities’ in the UK is also questionable. Due to the socio-economic status of migrant parents, this could be more of an aspiration of migrant parents than a reflection of the actual experiences and real-life chances offered to children. Furthermore, most interviewees compared opportunities in Britain with opportunities in Poland. As such, the perspective and reflection on migrant children’s opportunities vis-à-vis opportunities of British children was often lacking. Finally, as the decision to settle in the UK was often motivated by the well-being of children, the costs encountered by parents were also not often mentioned during interviews.

8.4.3 Children becoming bilingual

In general, interviewees did not worry about children's fluency in English because they grasped it quickly once they started attending nursery or school. A good knowledge of English was considered an essential skill because of its status as a *lingua franca* in the modern world.

"The main reason for us are solely children and learning English. I suppose if we return to Poland, our first daughter would forget English really quickly, and we would not give this chance of learning English to our second daughter at all". (Izabela)

Most parents also wanted their children to know Polish, and in this sense, being bilingual refers to knowing Polish in addition to knowing English. Polish was a dominant language of communication in two-Polish parent families, with some families *"using solely Polish at home"* (Izabela). Parents wanted children to learn Polish for practical reasons, such as to have *"contact with family"* (Natalia) and *"to communicate normally"*¹²⁸ (both Alicja and Marta) with their grandparents. Interviewees believed that learning Polish did not require additional effort from their children as *"children are like sponges and they can pick up any language without any problems"* (Alicja). Finally, because *"language is connected to traditions, culture"* (Karolina), therefore not teaching Polish to children could be viewed as *"depriving"* them of this *"strong connection"* (Karolina) to Poland. This aspect of language giving a sense of cultural connectivity and belonging has not been comprehensively discussed thus far in the Polish migration literature (see Section 3.4).

Even if some parents were convinced that *"children would be bilingual"* (Karolina), many interviewees acknowledged that learning Polish was challenging for children. Even if the children could follow simple conversations, they lacked comprehension and had limited capacity to discuss a wider range of topics.

Children also often preferred reading and speaking with their sibling(s) and parents in English. As explained by Ada: *"I speak to my children in Polish, my oldest replies in Polish, my second child replies in English"*. Patrycja had children who *"speak English at home between each other"*. Parents often *"stopped"* (Patrycja) children or

¹²⁸ It means communicate without the need for interpretation.

“*demanded*” (Karolina) from children to “*to speak Polish at home*” (Patrycja), but children often had a strong preference to speak English. On the other hand, interviewees did not want their children to “*feel different*” (Karolina) and encouraged children to have British friends so “*they are not only in the circle of other Poles*” (Kamila).

The insufficient level of academic Polish among children was a key factor deterring return for many families. This was particularly prevalent among parents who witnessed migrant children’s adaptation to the British education system, e.g. Ula observing her younger brother struggling in school when he first came to the UK.

“I was petrified when my mum was moving here with older children. (...) It was frightening to me how they would cope without knowing the language, just knowing basic English. For that reason, I do not want to do it to my children. In particular that they are saying to me that they have difficulties with Polish. I cannot imagine sending them to a school in Poland, into deep water. I think this is the issue that would make them stress out a lot”. (Ula)

An insufficient knowledge about bilingualism among teachers was also a concern for many interviewees. For instance, Hanna explained that British teachers “*were astonished*” and “*kept their eyes wide-open*” when they saw her children reading in Polish because they mostly associated bilingualism with speaking skills. Teachers in Poland were also perceived by interviewees to have limited knowledge and practical experience of supporting bilingual children. The research by Grzymała-Moszczyńska *et al.* (2015) (see Section 3.4.2) show that this belief was justified.

8.4.4 Education of children

Studies on Polish migration suggest that return is unlikely when children are settled in British schools. This is because education turns migrant parents into tied stayers, in particular when children reach crucial ages (see Section 2.7, in particular Ryan and Sales 2011; Sales *et al.* 2008; Trevena *et al.* 2016).¹²⁹ The survey respondents reported that children’s education was one of the most important factors anchoring families in the UK (see Section 7.3.1). The evidence from interviews provide further insights on the importance of children’s schooling for returns.

¹²⁹ E.g. child becoming 7 years old thus reaching compulsory schooling age in Poland, or child moving from primary to secondary school.

In line with research literature (see Section 2.7, 3.4.2 and 3.5.4, in particular Moskal 2014; Sales *et al.* 2008; Ryan *et al.* 2008; Ryan *et al.* 2009; Trevena *et al.* 2012; White 2011a), interviewees noted several differences between Polish and British education systems and school programmes. They valued the practice-based approach to learning in British schools as opposed to the theory-based education in Poland. Parents also praised that in Britain, children (and their parents) were active partners in their learning journey, their viewpoints were considered, and children learned to form opinions and not just memorise facts as was the case, in their opinion, in schools in Poland. For instance, Anna considered the British education system to be better because it was equipping children with knowledge and skills that could be applied in the real-life situations.

“Schools in Poland teach a lot of theoretical issues, and I like that schools in here [in the UK] teach more practical aspects. They teach children aspects that would be useful for them in their life”. (Anna)

Ada also valued the student-oriented approach and student-friendliness of British schools, and would regret it if her children had to continue education in Poland.

“To be honest, I would feel pity for my children when thinking about their schooling. (...) After the experience of the English schooling, I would feel pity to let them be at a school in the Polish education system”. (Ada)

Several interviewees also mentioned the availability of support for disabled children and children with special education needs. There was a general perception among interviewees that children (and families) receive better, higher-quality and targeted support in the UK.¹³⁰ For instance, Maria, Marta and Ula mentioned how the British health and education system provided integrated care to support their children, and helped them to cope with emotional and learning difficulties to reach independence.

The aspects of additional support for children resonated with Kinga’s reflections about her husband’s schooling back in Poland and her son’s experiences in Britain. Knowing the difficulties that her husband encountered and the support that was available to him (or rather the lack of support), Kinga worried that her son would face similar

¹³⁰ Aspects mentioned by interviewees included: the provision of a one-to-one support to children, drafting special educational plans, integration classes with disabled children, and financial support available to parents raising children with special needs.

challenges and would not cope in the Polish education system. This was one of the most important reasons why her family was not considering return.

“The reason is that I cannot imagine my son in a school in Poland. (...) No one can understand him and I think in Poland I would be asked to do something with it (as a parent) (...). When my husband was finishing primary school¹³¹, he went to a career advisor (...) to get some support about his secondary school options. And after doing some tests, he was advised not to go to any school as he was not bright enough. I suspect my son would be treated in a similar manner in a school in Poland. (...) In his school in the UK, the teacher is trying to help him. She [the teacher] gets in touch and provides suggestions how we can help him (...). She puts some extra effort, so the school is not boring for him. The teacher is trying various ways to make him complete his school tasks rather than shouting at him”. (Kinga)

On the other hand, some interviewees were quite critical about the educational standards in British schools. For instance, Daria believed that her children would learn more in Poland and this motivated her to return.¹³²

“Everyone is saying, but I do not understand it, everyone is saying that they are staying [in the UK] for their children. Because it is easier here, because schools are easier here. But why am I to deprive my children from having better education standards (in Poland)? (...) Why aren't my children to learn more than children in schools here? When I speak to other mums, I think they are taking a shortcut [idą na łatwiznę] by saying that it is better for children to have a lower education level. But how is it better for children? To deprive my children education? I do not understand it”. (Daria)

Kamila was also tempted by “a good standard of education” in Poland and the quality and affordability of tertiary education because “studying at the university level is less expensive (...) as there are no fees for a full-time study at public universities” in Poland. Some interviewees with older children made similar remarks about the high cost of university-level education in Britain, and worried that their children would not be able to afford it. This concern was particularly articulated by interviewees with a higher socio-economic status and/or academic aspirations.

¹³¹ At the age of 14 as it was the case at that time in Poland.

¹³² Daria's family returned to Poland about one year after the interview was conducted. It is quite possible that Daria's critical assessment of the British education system partly derived from wanting to justify her decisions to move back to Poland. On the other hand, the results of the OECD's Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) clearly indicate that children attending schools in Poland achieve higher scores in reading, mathematics and science than children attending schools in the UK (OECD 2019).

In general, the overall positive experience of the British education system together with parents' concerns over how children would adapt in the Polish schools made most interviewees reluctant to transfer their children into the new school environment in Poland. As such, children's schooling was deterring returns of families with children.

8.5 Home and feeling of belonging

Home typically brings a sense of stability, identity and rootedness. The concept of home often challenges migrants' identity as home also symbolises where the person belongs (see Erdal 2014b and Section 3.4.4). The findings from the survey suggest that a good housing situation, and the feeling of being 'at home' and belonging affects Polish migrants' decisions to start a family and to settle/return (see Section 6.3 and 7.3.1). As the available literature on Polish migrant's multiple dimensions of home is still relatively sparse, this section seeks to enhance the understanding Polish migrants' sense of belonging, focusing on how they construct the notion of home and how the feelings of rootedness and belonging shape their identity. These factors, in turn, are examined for the influences they have upon Polish migrants' settlement/return considerations.

8.5.1 Many migrants feel 'at home' in the UK

Most interviewees felt that their home was in the UK because members of their nuclear family, and often also their extended family (parents and/or siblings) lived in the UK (this confirms findings from the reviewed literature, see Section 3.4.4, in particular Parutis 2006; Parutis 2013; White 2011a).¹³³ According to Agata and Kamila, living close to family "*makes you feel 'at home'*".

"If my mum was not here, if my sister was not here... I suppose it would not be so obvious... (...) that I want to stay here, that I feel 'at home' here". (Agata)

Reaching this feeling of being 'at home' in the UK often took interviewees some time. For some, there was a particular moment in time that changed their perception of where they belonged. For others, it was a gradual process of disconnecting with local places in Poland that made them realise that they did not belong there anymore. For

¹³³ The following interviewees had close family members living in the UK for extended period of time (often for more than one year): Kamila, Agata, Patrycja and Oskar, Anna, Marta, Ula and Gabriela's husband.

instance, Maria noted that initially, when visiting her home city in Poland, “*everything was so obvious*” and she “*could walk this city with our [their] eyes closed*” and she “*had this feeling that we [they] were at home*”. However, each subsequent visit brought surprises, the “*Oh! Wow!*” moments of not recognising once familiar places. The result was that Maria did “*not feel any more at home there*”. Natalia and Artur shared a similar experience of a gradual process of disconnecting with Poland and understanding that home was now in the UK.

“This [feeling] was growing inside us each time we were visiting Poland. When the day was coming to pack up our bags, we had this thought in our head: ‘it is time to go home’”. (Natalia & Artur)

For Olga, the turning point was when she and her husband decided not to return to Poland, while for Agata it was the birth of her son. Before becoming a parent, Agata was “*so undecided*” about her future. When her son was born, she “*stopped thinking that she could return to Poland one day*” and “*stopped having doubts about where her home was*”. It was as if “*a thick line*” divided her life into two parts – childless period and motherhood – and also defined her sense of belonging.

“When I visit Poland, I feel happy that I am in Poland. (...). But when I return here, I feel some relief that I am returning home. I feel such a way: ‘Oh, I am returning home’. I do not know where this feeling came from. I do not know but this came since I had my son. Before I had my son, it was completely different. Completely different approach. (...) When I did not have my son, I felt my home was still there [in Poland]. Since I had my son, I feel my home is here [in the UK]”. (Agata)

For Agata, this “*positive feeling*” also resulted from “*the feeling of connection with the town*” where she lived. As she domesticated this neighbourhood, this was reinforcing that she felt “*happy*” in this place.

However, for some interviewees the feeling of missing family and Poland intensified after they became parents and as they grew older. For instance, Aleksandra noticed that “*this longing and closeness to [her] family home and intimacy to [her] parents (...) intensified*” since she had her child and now she felt she had two homes (see also Section 8.4.4 for a discussion on the feeling of having two homes). Over time, Ada became “*more sentimental*” and started missing Polish language and culture. Nevertheless, missing family and Poland still did not make interviewees plan to return.

8.5.2 Homeownership strengthens connection with the UK

The processes of considering return, starting a family, and buying a house are intertwined, but the course of events can follow various directions. For some migrants, the decision to buy a house in the UK is a natural step once they decide not to return. For instance, Daria explained: “[The return] *was postponed, and then more postponed, and then we bought this house and decided that we are staying*”.¹³⁴ On the other hand, hoping to return, other migrants invested in property in Poland. For example, Kamila believed that “*you always feel more ‘at home’ in Poland*” and her family started building a house in Poland. However, when her children were born, her family began “*sinking more and more in England*” and decided to sell the house in Poland and buy a house in England. Nevertheless, Kamila still wondered whether buying a house in the UK would make her family “*more rooted (...) and determined to stay*”.¹³⁵

Not considering return, and motivated by their children’s wellbeing, Natalia and Artur were planning to buy “*something locally*”. They did not want to “*change much in their [children’s] lives*” because they had “*their friends, their environment*”, and they all “*felt good here*”.

Some interviewees challenged the popular Polish perception that one should not sell a family home. As explained by Kamila “*You have this mentality in Poland that when you buy a house, you buy it for your whole life, and you do not move anywhere else anymore*”. Marta added that she could re-locate, if needed, because migrants are less attached to material objects.

“I think it would be easier for me because once you left Poland... Once you packed up your bags, was able to leave your own country, your own family home... I would feel sorry, you know, you get used to things. (...) I would definitely feel sorry but if it was necessary... If life makes me move...” (Marta)

The interviewees also confirmed that buying a house is emotionally and physically demanding. For instance, Marta was initially sceptical and “*petrified*” about buying a house, and Gabriela and her husband were mentally and physically “*tired of viewing houses, arranging it all*”. Whilst this is also a common-enough view among British

¹³⁴ Since then, Daria had two children born in the UK, but at the time of conducting an interview, she was planning to return to Poland.

¹³⁵ Kamila’s views are in contrast with evidence from the reviewed literature saying that the physical attachment of owning a house often provided migrant with a sense of belonging to Britain (see Parutis 2006; 2013 in Section 3.4.4).

people, the couple had a moment of reflection upon experiencing problems with having a mortgage approved, and realised that buying a house was more than becoming an owner of a physical place. For them, it was an emotional and symbolic attachment defining their belonging. Hesitating over whether they really wanted to belong there, they decided not to progress with buying a property.

“We had this moment of reflection whether we really want to stay in this town. Whether this is the place where we want to invest our money, our lives? Do we want our children to be here?” (Gabriela)

In line with evidence from literature (see Section 3.4.4, in particular Parutis 2006; Parutis 2013; White 2011a), becoming a homeowner physically attached interviewees to Britain, which often translated into a sense of stability and a symbolic, emotional connection. The process of buying a house often also initiated a wider reflection on whether and how homeownership contributed (or not) to the process of belonging and creating ties with a particular locality in the UK.

8.5.3 The feeling of belonging also depends on social factors

In contrast to findings from reviewed literature suggesting that homeownership facilitated integration into the local community (see Section 3.4.4, in particular Parutis 2006; Parutis 2013), some homeowner interviewees still did not feel ‘at home’ in the UK due to social factors. For example, Alicja could still not express herself clearly in English. This undermined her social interactions and her self-esteem, and made her feel *“being a foreigner”*.

“Perhaps it is just my imagination¹³⁶ but when talking with British people, native British people, they make me feel, perhaps not all of them, but they make me feel that I am not one of them. (...) Perhaps I am exaggerating... but it was a few times that I felt this way, in particular when I was struggling to express myself. It is this sudden change: ‘So you cannot say it?’ And it does hurt me¹³⁷”. (Alicja)

Lacking *“real close friends, such a support social circle”* locally prevented Maria from feeling *“100% ‘at home’”* in the UK. However, because her disabled children needed continuous medical support and this support was of a better quality in the UK, the family decided to settle. This had a significant emotional impact upon Maria.

136 The exact word used was “paranoia”.

137 The exact expression was *“To tak jakoś mnie kłuje”* literally meaning *“it stings me somehow”*.

“It is comfortable¹³⁸ but the emotional cost is huge as I have some feeling of loss. It is mostly about feeling of belonging, such an obvious thing, that I belong to some place, where I know everything, where I have old friends, where I build/contribute to something. (...) On one hand, the benefits that we have as a family are greater than the loss, but on the other hand, I feel that there is no return. (...). It is not possible because of children's school and their future. We are stuck here”. (Maria)

Agata started having doubts about feeling ‘at home’ in Britain due to comments from colleagues. Asked by a colleague whether she was *“going home for holidays”*, Agata replied that her home was in the UK, and this answer was challenged. This made Agata *“question”* her own feelings and sense of belonging to this country. Similarly, Kamila questioned whether she would ever *“entirely feel ‘at home’ in the UK”* due to the ethnically motivated attacks and the anti-migrant rhetoric in the popular press. The narrative that Polish people are *“a social burden”* in Britain was *“always in [her] consciousness”*. Dorota also acknowledged this anti-migrant rhetoric, but had never personally felt that she was *“worse”* than English people.

Other interviewees also noted that people started paying more attention to their Polishness once they become parents and/or moved to smaller towns.¹³⁹ For example, speaking English with a strong Polish accent made Ada instantly recognisable as *“a migrant”* when she moved out of London. Gabriela also experienced, at least initially, this feeling of being *“treated (...) differently [in] a small town”* because there was *“such a divide in here: us and them”*. She was somehow invisible to other people when she was *“on her own, without children”*. However, speaking Polish with her children in public appeared to make other *“people notice [her] more”* and *“some people give [them] a strange look”*. For that reason, she was *“very proud of herself that she was able to integrate in this town”*.

Karolina also noticed that *“how English people consider you and treat you”* changes once they realise that they are speaking with a foreigner. In her view, migrants’ poor command of English prevents them from engaging with the local community and professional opportunities. In order to prevent her children from *“being different”*, she enrolled her son in many after-school activities to *“experience the English culture”*.

138 Comfortable in the economic sense as Maria’s husband had a satisfying and well-paid job so they did not have to *“worry about finance”* (Maria).

139 As presented in Chapter 2, Poles are widespread across the UK, while previous waves of migrants were more concentrated around London.

Hanna also “enrolled [her children] to various clubs [and] after-school activities” to help them “make friends” locally. She believed that her family “would have fewer friends if they did not have children” because children facilitated contact with the local community, thus helping her family to integrate (see Section 3.5.4, in particular Ryan & Sales 2011; White 2011a; White 2016). However, she believed their behaviour was atypical as Polish migrants often did not engage in local initiatives.

When migrants’ feeling of being ‘at home’ in the UK was questioned, it undermined their self-esteem and often their identity. Noting that integration was often facilitated by becoming part of the local community, and to combat social exclusion and discrimination, several migrants adopted a conscious strategy of engaging in local initiatives. Building local identity among migrant children also aimed to prevent them from feeling different than their peers.

8.5.4 The feeling of having two homes

Some interviewees revealed identification with two places: home where they grew up in Poland and their own home in Britain (see Section 3.4.4, in particular Erdal 2014a, Erdal 2014b; Parutis 2006; Parutis 2013). For instance, both Gabriela and Aleksandra always say that they “have two homes (...) here and there”. However, despite feeling “good returning to your own familiar places” when visiting parents in Poland, Marta felt her home was now in Britain. This emotional attachment to her parents’ home resembled more of a nostalgia for the past long gone, and perhaps also a regret that she could not live close to her parents.

[reflecting on holidays in Poland] “After those 4 weeks spent in Poland, I was missing to come over here, to come over to my own home. Because that house [in Poland], it is my parents’ home, not mine. Mine because it is my parent’s house. But this one is mine because I earned it. So I am not sure. Here and there, half and half. It would be great not leaving your own country, living there with our family and have the same life chances, opportunities like in here. But it is not possible from my point of view, not where I had lived”. (Marta)

Gabriela’s home was now in the UK, even if it was only a “temporary” situation. However, she also had this feeling of two homes, which was shared by her daughters because “grandma’s house” was “their second home”. Thinking to “return to Poland

one day but not yet”, she wanted her children to “*experience two cultures*”. Being a quite adaptable person, she concluded that she could feel ‘at home’ anywhere.

“I am such a person that when I am here, this is my home but I can be in a different place in six months’ time, even in two days’ time, and then it would also be my home, my temporary home”. (Gabriela)

Remaining active in two geographical locations helped interviewees sustain a sense of attachment to places and people across borders (see discussion on the theory of transnationalism in Section 3.2.4). These dual ties, in turn, gave migrants a sense of belonging to two places.

8.5.5 Migrants have multiple understandings of roots and rootedness

Roots often denote identification with a particular place or time, and in that sense roots can refer to a broad range of experiences, shared culture and history, and collective values (see Section 3.4.4, in particular Erdal 2014b).

Even when not planning return, most interviewees taught children Polish history, geography and culture because they wanted to transmit (at least to some extent) Polish identity to their children (see Section 8.5.7 for a discussion on Polish migrant children identity). For instance, Ula wanted her children to know their heritage in order to “*have some understanding where we come from, where we lived, where our life was*”. Agata shared a similar motivation, wanting her son “*to know a lot about Poland, about our history, about our roots, where we came from*”.

Family members in Poland were often perceived as the protectors of shared roots and markers of Polish identity, and interviewees’ sense of belonging.

“I think it is important that children have good contact with family in Poland, with their grandparents, with their cousins so they would always know where their roots [and] the roots of their parents are. So that they know that they can always return to Poland because their base is there”. (Kamila)

Ada noticed that a shared socio-cultural background and similar life experiences enabled her to befriend other Polish migrant mums at playgroups relatively easily. She always had “*many topics to speak with*” (even newly met) Polish mums because there was “*this initial tie*” to build upon. In contrast, she had to exert much more effort to forge connections with British mums.

A two-generational understanding of the rootedness concept was raised by Kinga. Reflecting on the unexpected death of her young sister-in-law, she questioned whether her own resting place should be somewhere near her roots or those of her children. Understanding that her children's roots and home were in Britain, and hoping that they would visit her grave in the cemetery (in line with Polish tradition), she concluded that it would be more natural and convenient for them if she were buried in the UK. This triggered wider reflections upon whether, as a parent, you should keep deeper connections with your past or your children's present lives.

"I was just reading that people need to know their roots. (...) When I die, where would they [children] bury me? Here or there? I think I do not mind as long as it is convenient for them. When my brother's wife died, we all realised that it is important to visit the grave". (Kinga)

According to Gabriela, leaving one's homeland uproots migrants and means they can never feel 'at home' again. Coming to Britain as a teenager, her Polish-born husband managed to integrate well into British society.¹⁴⁰ When Gabriela first met him, he did not speak Polish well and was not very attached to Poland, which made him feel *"like an alien"* as he was *"not sure where he was, where his home was"*. Despite being *"very pro-Polish"*, Gabriela noted that after some years in Britain she has also begun experiencing this feeling of no longer being rooted anywhere.

"I am not sure whether you also have this feeling that if you once left your country, you are an immigrant forever. You are never 'at home'. At least it is this way in my case". (Gabriela)

Overall, interviewees brought a diverse understanding of the concept of roots as related to cultural, historical and emotional ties, and shared reflections about children's roots and the process of de-rooting.

8.5.6 Polish migrant children feel 'at home' in the UK

Similarly to adults, children's identity and sense of belonging was constructed through various physical, emotional and social aspects. In the words of interviewees, migrant children perceived the UK as their home, particularly children born in this country.

¹⁴⁰ Gabriela's husband completed secondary school and the university degree in the UK, and was working as a medical professional.

For instance, Olga noted that her daughter “*identified herself as living in the UK*” and was aware that this made her different from Polish children who lived in Poland.

Children typically enjoy visiting Poland but “*it is just a few days and they want to come back home [to the UK]*” (Ula). Aleksandra shared a similar observation about her son missing Britain: a physical space (his room and toys) and people (neighbours, teachers).

“I can tell you, when staying in Poland, the first week, the first two weeks, it is so lovely. (...) But then, I notice that he is missing his home here [in the UK] (...). My son is saying: ‘Mummy, I would like to go back to my toys, to my stories.’¹⁴¹ (...) I have already observed it twice. (...) After about 2 weeks he starts asking; ‘Mummy, when would we return home, to England’”. (Aleksandra)

In line with the results of the survey (see Section 7.3.3), interviewees realise that a return decision should be consulted with all family members because it would affect both parents and children. Children (particularly older children and teenagers) had their own social circles, meaning that return could put an emotional strain on their lives. Due to the children’s specific educational trajectory, gaining qualifications and skills, return would also have a direct impact upon their education and future careers.

“I’ve heard from friends that teenagers do not want to return to Poland. (...) I do not know what to do with a child who does not want to return to Poland. Can you force a child to move? Is it worth making the child unhappy only because you think that it could perhaps be better in Poland? I am not sure about this decision. Children also have a right to their own decision and we will consult with them what to do”. (Kamila)

However, concerned that children living in England did not have a sufficiently strong relationship with grandparents in Poland, Dorota questioned whether and for how long one can “*have a relationship over skype or during holidays?*” (see White 2011a and Section 3.5.4).

Because children felt ‘at home’ in the UK, their sense of belonging had implications for Polish migrant parents’ considerations.

¹⁴¹ Meaning: cartoons on the British TV channels.

8.5.7 Contested / conflicting identities of Polish migrant children

Discussions on children's identity revealed complexities and disparities in how parents defined their migrant children and how children defined themselves. For instance, Izabela was surprised that her daughter identified herself as Polish¹⁴² during an activity in a nursery, while she had believed that her "*daughter does not have much in common with Poland [except] holidays and grandparents that live in Poland*". Similarly, Natalia was surprised when her daughter started considering herself Polish upon moving to a location with a higher proportion of Polish migrants. Not wanting her children to feel different, she explained to her daughter that she could have dual identity.

"She considers herself to be Polish but I am always telling her that she is Polish because your parents are Polish. But you were born here. Your home is here and you will not be any different from other people who live around you". (Natalia)

On the other hand, many interviewees revealed that their children perceived themselves to be English/British¹⁴³ because their home was in the UK, they were born in Britain, and also because "*children have no comparison*" (Maria) of living elsewhere. For instance, Hanna's younger son had "*this strong conviction that he was English and [his parents] were Polish because they were born in Poland*" while "*he was born in England*". Similarly, Agata recalled a situation of her then 4-years old son explaining to a barber that his mum was from Poland but he "*was from here [UK]*". Despite being aware that she would face such a situation, she was stunned that it happened at such an early age.

As noted by interviewees, children also defined their identity by the length of time spent in the UK and the language they spoke. For instance, a 13-years old daughter of Patrycja and Oskar "*perceived herself as English*" as she only had English friends and spoke English more than Polish. In contrast, the couple consider their children as being "*Poles living in Britain*". This perception was shared by several interviewees (e.g. Adam, Gabriela and Marta).

¹⁴² This identification was based on her family background, rather than the location of her birth.

¹⁴³ The interviewees often used the terms 'English' and 'British' interchangeably to denote a perception of being 'from here', rather than a specific connotation with England or Great Britain, or the national identities of the British nations.

Other interviewees also noted their children's complex identities. For example, Kinga's son could not define himself "*in one direction*" –as either being Polish or British.

"When you ask my son how he perceives himself, he would say that he is Polish. But then, later, he comes to a conclusion that what he says does not match [nie jest tożsamy] with what he does". (Kinga)

Ada noted that "*older children still did not define themselves*" and questioned whether her mixed-heritage¹⁴⁴ children would ever need to "*define themselves*".

Gabriela also observed that her oldest child "*had this awareness*" about her complex identity. Acknowledging that identity formation is a process, Gabriela concluded that migrant children's self-perception and self-identification can change over time.

(Talking about her daughters) "They are little Poles with British passports living in England. (...) I think my older daughter knows that she is Polish. 'Mummy, we speak Polish so I am a Pole, right?' 'Yes, but you know, you have a British passport'. But it is probably too complex for her that you have a document and it defines that you are British. I do not think she is able to comprehend it.¹⁴⁵ Perhaps it would change in the next 5 years and she would suddenly start perceiving herself... that she was born here". (Gabriela)

The multiple and complex identities of children were often facilitated by parents' openness towards other cultures and traditions. Despite still cultivating Polish traditions when celebrating Christmas and Easter, preparing traditional Polish dishes, having children attend Polish Saturday schools, and often attending mass in Polish, interviewees did not want "*to lock themselves in Polishness*" (Gabriela) and they tried "*to gently weave [British and other traditions] into their lives*" (Olga). This attitude of openness was demonstrated through their observance of British traditions, such as English Mother's Day,¹⁴⁶ as well as other traditions including Chinese New Year.

Overall, interviewees acknowledged the multifaceted factors that defined their children and highlighted their children's complex identities.

144 Her husband had a dual heritage and Ada was Polish.

145 At the time of conducting an interview, Gabriela's daughters were 4.5 and 2.5 years old.

146 Mother's Day in Poland is always observed on the 26th of May while in the UK it is observed on Sunday three weeks before Easter.

8.5.8 Children's identity defined through passports

The formal citizenship status of children was a sufficiently important factor for interviewees to mention during the interview discussions. Even if many parents preserved their children's Polish identity, they found that British citizenship was a significant marker of their identity. Interviewees also wanted their children to have British citizenship for practical reasons (e.g. the relatively easy citizenship application process for children of EU nationals born in the UK, and the ease of travelling and working outside of Europe, see Section 2.4).

Despite having children who were formally British, Gabriela and Olga still *"tried to bring up (...) children in a Polish spirit so they do not forget that their roots [were] Polish"* (Olga). Aleksandra hoped that her son's dual identification and citizenship would be an advantage for him in the future. Applying for a British citizenship for him, she believed that being British would *"open many doors for him"*, which *"were never open for me [her] and would not ever be open for me [her]"*. Marta's daughters were also brought up *"all in Polish rather than in English"* ways. However, her girls also had British passports because it gave them more reassurance regarding permanent stay in the UK.

"You know, documents... (...) We applied for British passports, British citizenship. (...) My husband insisted to apply for citizenship, we do not know what future brings". (Marta)

When asked about the identity of her son, Anna started explaining that her son only had a *"Polish passport"* because she did not reside in the UK long enough before his birth for him to qualify for British citizenship.

There were also some interviewees who perceived British citizenship of their children as a natural component of their future British identity. For instance, Alicja was convinced that her children *"would consider themselves to be English"* because *"they have British passports and they are being brought up here [in the UK]"*. While acknowledging her children's Polish heritage, she believed they would identify themselves as British because they lived in the UK and were surrounded by *"British friends, school, (...) culture"*. The fact that she did not even apply for Polish passports

for them due to procedures being too daunting¹⁴⁷ is an indication that the administrative burden of obtaining Polish documents effectively creates pressure to change children's citizenship, and hence anchors parents more strongly in the UK.

8.6 Other socio-political and emotional factors

Asked about return, interviewees also mentioned some wider socio-political and emotional factors.

8.6.1 Responsibility to help parents not a return factor

Research literature suggests that some return migration can be motivated by the responsibilities to look after ill or ageing parents (see Section 3.4.4, in particular Barcevičius *et al.* 2012; Frelak & Rogulska 2008; Lubbers & Kaliszewska 2013; White 2011a). However, in line with the survey results (see Section 7.3.1), interviewees did not consider caring duties among priorities for return.

Most research participants had a pragmatic approach towards caring responsibilities. Firstly, most interviewees could rely on other family members (e.g. their siblings) living in Poland to provide care. Secondly, due to improved transport options, they believed they could reach Poland within a couple of hours in case of emergency. Some interviewees (e.g. Ada) also considered moving back to Poland temporarily to provide support. Finally, looking after parents was not considered a critical issue because parents were still relatively young.

Some interviewees also admitted that the need to provide care to ageing parents was not often discussed among migrants. Not wanting to acknowledge and confront themselves with such situations, migrants often "*put these topics off*" (Alicja). For example, Gabriela expressed a sense of obligation towards her family, yet at the same time hoped that the situation "*will resolve itself with time*".

¹⁴⁷ In order to apply for a first Polish passport for a child, both parents have to present themselves in the Polish consulate in London, Manchester or Edinburgh. Until recently, at least one parent had to collect the passport in person from the consulate. In comparison, the application process for a British passport can be processed through filling an application form at the post office or online.

There were also interviewees (e.g. Alicja) who believed that their primary responsibility was to look after their own children because any potential move could disturb children's lives.

"My mum was always saying (...) that she would not make me return for this reason [to look after her]. She knows that I have my family. It would be a different story if I was on my own. I was never under pressure from my mum or other family. (...) Now because of my children, I do not have much of a choice (...). What would I do with my children? (...) I now look from the perspective of my children's wellbeing". [Ja patrze pod dobrem dzieci teraz]" (Alicja)

Overall, the provision of care to elderly parents was not among the main return factors because most interviewees had back-up plans in case of a critical situation with their parents.

8.6.2 Lack of openness towards 'different' people deters returns

Polish societal homogeneity and attitudes towards diversity were also deterring returns (see Gawlewicz 2015 and Section 3.4.3). This aspect was particularly relevant for interviewees raising children who were somehow 'different' because of their disability or appearance.

For Maria, *"Poland was not a tolerant country for differences"*. She worried that her sons' disability would be framed as *"a problem"* in Poland and would reduce educational opportunities available to them, consequently preventing them from reaching their full potential. Anna, bringing up a mixed-raced son, did not want to return due to the *"Polish parochialisms/provincialism [jednak ta polska zaściankowość]"*. In her view, people in Poland have limited opportunities to experience diversity of attitudes, values and lifestyles, resulting in their narrow-mindedness. Artur observed that employing a disabled person was *"a normal thing"* in the UK, but disabled people were often excluded from the labour market and wider social life in Poland.

Having experienced the attitudes of openness and tolerance in Britain and worrying about lack of openness in Poland, some interviewees concluded that staying in the UK was a safer option.

8.7 Discussion

The interview data presented in this chapter provide more nuanced insights into the settlement/return considerations of Polish migrants.

In line with the research literature and the survey results (see Section 3.5.1 and 7.2, in particular Okólski & Salt 2014; Ryan 2018; White 2016), the interview data confirm that interviewees held a strong perception that return was always possible, even if most were not considering or planning moving back. Although acknowledging this position, few interviewees confronted the possibility that it could have a detrimental effect on their settlement in the UK at the same time as undermining their potential for successful return. In fact, it seems that *Polish migrants' 'inertia' was unconsciously causing settlement by the gradual extension of stay*. This, in turn, raises questions over whether and to what extent migrants would be able to exercise their agency in the future.

For instance, underlying indecisiveness prevented some migrants from integrating with the local community, and may therefore have affected the well-being of migrant families. In addition, the examples of 'double returnees' (returning to Poland and then back to the UK) show that some migrants were not able to capitalise on their human and financial capital in Poland. This potentially served as both a warning to 'considering returnees' and a sufficiently strong motivation for double returnees themselves to finally focus their livelihood strategies on Britain. On the other hand, adopting risk-minimising strategies, such as keeping a house in Britain, to guard against potential 'double return' indicates migrants' exercising agency in planning for a return to Poland.

By providing supportive arguments and justifications, the interview data strongly supports findings from research literature and the survey results (see Section 3.4.1, 7.3 and 7.4, notably particular Drinkwater *et al.* 2006; White 2016; White *et al.* 2018) on why, for Poles, *the dominant reasons for staying in the UK are related to migrants' experiences of the labour market*. Firstly, interviewees were in agreement that the economic aspects of work were much better in the UK because work was more economically rewarding. This, in turn, allowed migrant families to have a 'normal',

‘decent’ life in Britain. Secondly, the interviewees had (in general) positive experiences of employment conditions and standards in British workplaces and praised the availability of the welfare safety net. This often contrasted with their experiences from Poland, characterised by long working hours, low pay and difficulties to make ends meet.

While the financial stability affected migration and family formation decisions, *aspects related to reconciliation of work and private life became particularly important when migrants started families*. Interviewees praised the flexibility of working hours and the provision of formal childcare services in Britain. This allowed interviewees *to make choices as to whether and how to work while raising children*, for instance working full- vs. part-time, deciding on a suitable childcare format (e.g. nursery, childminder or informal care), or temporarily withdrawing from the labour market to look after family.

Given that Polish migrant women’s fertility in the UK is greater than the fertility of women in Poland (see Section 5.1.1), this raises questions regarding the optimal socio-economic conditions in which to have children. Firstly, this underlines the importance of the financial stability of families and provision of services that facilitate labour market participation of parents. Secondly, this raises issues about the extent of exercising *parental choice* in view of the security and flexibility of employment conditions. This, in turn, draws attention to the *availability of policies and provisions in Poland* (see Section 2.5, 2.6), *and whether they give families sufficient and adequate choices to attract migrant parents to return*.

In line with findings from the research literature (see Section 3.4.2, especially Duda-Mikulin 2015; Grabowska *et al.* 2017) and the analysis of the birth registration data (see Section 5.1), interviewees also attested that *migration had an impact on gender relations and childcare norms, which in turn changed family dynamics*. Due to practical reasons (e.g. labour market attachment of mothers of young children, lower availability of informal childcare), fathers had to become more involved in childcare and other domestic responsibilities. Some fathers might have also adopted more progressive gender roles in Britain. In this respect, through the diffusion of these ‘new’

social norms, there is a *potential for migrant experiences in the UK to play a modernising role in Poland*.

A common experience among many interviewees was gaining additional skills and qualifications and ascending the occupational ladder in their British workplaces. However, being detached from the Polish context for a number of years, interviewees worried that they would face difficulties in transferring their knowledge and skills across borders, and this deterred returns. On the opposite side of the human capital spectrum were interviewees who were ‘stuck’ for a number of years in low-paid jobs in Britain. This situation¹⁴⁸ was already having a negative impact on their wellbeing and earning potential in the UK, while at the same time reducing their future employment opportunities in Poland.

The interview data indicate that some Polish migrants who responded to one set of economic signals (e.g. demand for qualified labour in the UK) can be constrained from return by being purely economic in their labour market activity in the UK. On the other hand, there are some migrants who had become trapped by the short-term labour market choices they made on migrating (e.g. working long-term beyond their qualifications), and thus were unable to return. Consequently, both types of migrants could *face similar structural labour market barriers upon return*. This clearly shows that the experience of *working abroad can act as a disadvantage* when applying for jobs in Poland, irrespective of *whether Polish migrants gained additional credentials/had jobs commensurable with skills in Britain*.

The interview data also reveal *how strongly children were anchoring some migrant families in the UK*. The research literature (see Section 3.4, in particular McGhee *et al.* 2012; McGhee *et al.* 2013; Ryan *et al.* 2008; Ryan *et al.* 2009; Ryan & Sales 2011; Trevena 2009; Trevena *et al.* 2012; White 2011a; White 2011c) and the survey results (see Section 7.3) indicate that the desire to *provide children with better opportunities and a better life* was an important reason for Polish migrants to stay in the UK. The interview data show the *cumulative effect of how prominent this factor was for Polish migrant parents* (see Section 8.4). However, interviewees did not often raise how their

148 This situation refers to at least four aspects: (1) downward occupational mobility for those who had worked in Poland, (2) working in a job for which migrants were over-qualified, (3) migrants having a low status (low pay, low skill) job, and (4) loss of skill through lack of use.

socio-economic situation may potentially be limiting children's opportunities, and the personal costs (e.g. emotional, social and financial) and parental self-sacrifice, as well as the impact of these issues on their wellbeing and future opportunities in life. These topics would be worth pursuing in future research.

Interviewees placed strong emphasis on children's education and how *return has become increasingly less likely with children becoming older*. As children were on a learning trajectory, parents did not want to disturb their education. In addition, interviewees (similarly to the survey respondents, see Section 7.4.2) valued British practice-based approach to learning focusing on student needs, and contrasted it with their own (often negative) memories of and knowledge of current education provision in Poland. Furthermore, the insufficient level of academic Polish among migrant children also acted as a return deterrent because parents worried (justifiably as the research of Grzymała-Moszczyńska *et al.* (2015) shows) that *Polish schools are not prepared to support specific needs of returnee children*.

Social factors related to feeling 'at home' and a sense of belonging were the third most important factor embedding interviewees in the UK (see Section 3.4.4, notably Parutis 2006; Parutis 2013; White 2011a). They emphasised that homeownership and presence of children facilitated using local services, developing friendships and links with the local community. This connection was *strengthened by children's perceptions of 'home' and their identities being 'rooted' in the UK*. Even if children's identities (British, Polish, both Polish and British) were contested, and parents and children often did not want to define themselves one way or the other, most children perceived Britain to be their home. Children's belonging to the UK also often resulted from being formally British citizens. Children's identity and sense of belonging made interviewees realise that preferences, gains, and costs of all family members (children and parents) have to be taken into consideration because *it was no longer an individual migrant but a family settlement/return decision*.

Contrary to findings from the research literature (see Section 3.4.4. and 3.5.3, especially Barcevičius *et al.* 2012; Frelak & Rogulska 2008; White 2011a), feelings of responsibility for caring for elderly parents in Poland were not strong enough to determine interviewees' settlement decisions.

8.8 Conclusions

Drawing on interview data, this chapter has provided insights into migration and family formation decisions of interviewees, and the dynamic relationship between migration, family formation and settlement/return decisions. It emphasised how meanings and reasoning change over time as a consequence of life events.

The evidence from interviews reinforces the findings from the survey that the most powerful influences upon settlement/return decisions are around work and economic factors, family perspectives on children's future, and related socio-emotional factors of belonging and identity.

Although most interviewees were not considering return to Poland, many of them still held the perception that return was always possible. Not confronting the possibility that it could have a detrimental effect on their settlement in the UK and undermine their potential for successful return, many interviewees were *unconsciously settling by gradually extending their stay in the UK*. Migrants may have expected that they would return at some point, but found that the decisions they made and the ways their lives had changed over time made return much more difficult in practice. As a result, some might be described as ending up not fully settled while not able to return. This raises questions as to whether Polish migrants at that stage are still able to exercise agency in the migration process.

The largely positive experiences of the British labour market and the ability to financially support families while still enjoying a work-life balance encouraged interviewees to stay in the UK. *Returns were also discouraged by the interviewees' perceptions and experiences of the Polish labour market*. Due to being detached from the Polish context for a prolonged period, those interviewees who advanced their skills in Britain had concerns about whether they would successfully transfer and have their British credentials and experience recognised in Poland. Interviewees occupying low-skilled positions in Britain for a long time were aware that this would constrain their employment opportunities in Poland. In addition, regardless of their occupational status, interviewees emphasised how much they valued financial security and policy measures allowing them to reconcile work and private responsibilities. Flexible

working patterns and childcare options were seen to be less developed in Poland, so working parents have less choice. This extended to a perception of migrant parents taking a more equal share of childcare and household responsibilities in contrast with their impressions of gendered power relations in families in Poland.

Interviewees also emphasised the multiple ways in which *children were anchoring them in Britain*, and how the likelihood of return was decreasing as children became older. Even if interviewees felt that their roots were still in Poland, migrant children's identities were often contested because *most children felt 'at home' in Britain*, and this was strengthened by children's official legal status of (often) being British citizens. At the same time, children's insufficient command of Polish deterred returns as interviewees perceived Polish schools not to be prepared to accommodate special needs of returnee children.

Finally, being embedded in Britain through homeownership, friendships and children's schooling, interviewees acknowledged that their potential *return no longer depended mainly on their individual preferences but would have to allow for the views of children as well as parents*.

Clearly, only a larger and more representative sample of in-depth interviews would allow for an assessment of the relative importance of the narratives captured in this chapter. However, in conjunction with the results of the online survey, the interviews help to give a richer interpretation of the relationship between the family formation and migration behaviour of Polish migrants, and Polish migrants settlement intentions and decisions.

9 Conclusions

This final chapter draws together the various strands of research enquiry presented in the preceding chapters. By integrating them with findings from previous scientific investigations, this chapter seeks to provide a better understanding of certain issues related to migration and family formation, as well as the relationship between these two phenomena.

Section 9.1 outlines the main research contribution in the light of the theoretical approaches available. Section 9.2 reports the main empirical findings from the three methodological approaches taken. Section 9.3 explores the policy implications of these research findings. Section 9.4 outlines the limitations of this study and offers suggestions for the direction of further research. Finally, Section 9.5 provides a personal reflection.

9.1 Main research contribution

This research project yields new insights into the topics of migration and family formation, and the complex relationship between them. While these two phenomena have been examined previously in migration and demographic research, their relationship in the context of Polish migration to the UK has not been subjected to detailed scientific examination thus far.

The project's particular contribution is to study the perspectives of families with young (pre-school) children born in the UK. As concluded in Chapter 3, this aspect has been somewhat overlooked in Polish migration scholarship despite the large population of Polish migrants with young children. Previous studies focused mainly on Polish economic migrants and the needs of Polish families with school-age children.

Analyses of the secondary administrative aggregate birth registration data (see Chapter 5) and the new primary online survey data (see Chapter 6 and 7) provide additional insights into a variety of aspects of Polish parents' lives in the UK, and enable new research findings and conclusions to be drawn and exemplified. Similarly, observations deriving from the interview data (see Chapter 8) provide further in-depth understanding of the perspectives underlying decisions made by Polish families.

Since previous research studies on Polish migrants used largely qualitative methodologies to data collection and analysis, the main methodological contribution of this project is the generation and analysis of the quantitative data. The analysis of the administrative data source (birth registration data) brings insights into the family formation trends in Polish families residing in the UK, whereas the online survey designed for the purpose of this study offers detailed data on Polish migrants' family situation, their settlement/return considerations and factors that influence their family formation and migration decisions. The analysis of the survey data offers a particularly valuable perspective on aspects that have not been quantitatively examined in the Polish migration scholarship thus far.

The findings from this research project show that Polish migrants are not a homogenous group and their motivations for migration, life histories or experiences abroad can be profoundly different. As previous scientific investigations have examined particular sub-groups of Polish migrants (e.g. experiences of workers, experiences of parents of school-aged children, or family migration), those studies applied migration theories most relevant to understanding the situation of a particular group of the Polish migrant population or a particular life event. Since this study looked at a common phenomenon of forming a family and becoming a parent, it explored the relevance of a range of migration theories for a more diverse population of Polish migrants going through a variety of life events. Even if this study concludes that no single migration theory can fully explain the nature of recent Polish migration within the EU's free movement context, it comprehensively draws on multiple theories corresponding to different types of migrants, various stages in the migrant's life cycle, different regulatory/socio-economic contexts, and for different timings of migration. Similarly, the findings from this project suggest that a single theory cannot fully explain the phenomenon of Polish migrant fertility in the UK. While different theories offer plausible explanations for particular groups of migrants,¹⁴⁹ these theories need some adaptations to be applicable in the context of unrestricted EU mobility (see Section 3.6 and 5.2).

¹⁴⁹ For instance, for migrants at the particular life stage, migrants in different migration contexts, or migrants with different settlement/return intentions.

In line with findings from previous research studies on Polish migrants (e.g. Pollard *et al.* (2008), Drinkwater *et al.* (2006), see Section 3.4.1), this study confirms that the *economic theories of migration* offer the most salient perspective to explain outmigration from Poland. This relates to the economic factors, such as levels of unemployment and job security, and the persistent wage differentials between Poland and the UK. However, in contrast to previous studies providing mixed evidence on the importance of economic factors for Polish return migration vis-à-vis wider contextual and non-economic factors (see Section 3.4.1, in particular Barcevičius *et al.* 2012, Erdal 2014b; White 2013a; White 2013b), the results of this study clearly indicate a pivotal role of the economic conditions for family formation and the settlement/return decisions. This is because financial stability experienced in the UK encouraged many Polish migrants to start a family, and having children further reinforced the importance of economic factors for decisions to settle in the UK.

This study has also analysed Polish migration through the theoretical lenses of the *structural approach* considering the role of legal, technological and socio-economic factors. The EU enlargement provided new legal opportunities for Poles to work abroad, and these migration opportunities were strengthened by the decreasing structural barriers, such as lower transportation costs, improved communication technologies and better information exchanges about working and living opportunities abroad (see Section 3.4.1, notably European Commission 2012; Holland *et al.* 2011; and Section 3.4 and 3.5, especially Black *et al.* 2010; OECD 2014, both sources cited by Barcevičius 2015). In addition, this research study highlighted how strongly the structure and organisation of the education system was embedding migrant children in the UK (see interview findings in Section 8.4.3 and 8.4.4). This study also outlined the responses of Poles to the actual and perceived structural labour market conditions and employment relations in Poland and the UK (see findings in Section 9.2.3).

Social system and social network theories also provided fruitful analytical lenses through which to view processes relevant to Polish migration. Applying these theories helped to explain how the presence of the community of Polish migrants in the UK facilitated migration and how migrants access practical and emotional support in the UK and in Poland (see Section 3.4.1 and 3.4.4, in particular Burrell 2008 and Garapich

2008), and how this, in turn, shapes the migration decisions. In addition, these theoretical approaches proved relevant to explain how strongly children anchored Polish families in the local systems, structures and networks (see Section 3.4.2, 3.4.3 and 3.4.4, notably Grzymała-Kazłowska 2017; Ryan *et al.* 2007, Ryan 2018, White 2011a). This challenged some of the findings from earlier research projects (e.g. Glorious *et al.* 2013) suggesting *transnationalism* as a relevant analytical framework to examine migration patterns among post-accession CEE migrants.

Adopting the intergenerational approach offered a particularly relevant analytical lens. Firstly, with the birth / presence of migrant children, migration itself became a *structural factor* and contributed to the dynamics and complexity of the decision-making processes, e.g. due to differences in the citizenship (legal status) and identity of migrant parents and children (see Section 9.2.5 and 9.2.6, and explanation of the regulation underpinning migrant children's legal status in Section 2.4). Secondly, the (return) family migration also raises questions about agency in the migration process. For instance, when migrant parents become active agents of change and decide to return to Poland, this inevitably limits the agency of their children who possibly will be facing additional barriers and challenges (e.g. linguistic, educational, emotional) upon return.

Overall, in line with the research evidence presented in Section 3.4.4 (in particular Ryan 2015a), the results of this study provide strong evidence supporting a more permanent character of Polish migration to the UK, with children playing a particularly important role for the settlement decisions of Polish migrants. In this respect, this study highlights the role of local networks abroad for shaping patterns of migration, settlement decisions and integration (in line with the *social network theories*, and studies by Ryan *et al.* (2008) and White and Ryan (2008). The evidence coming from this research also clearly indicates that wider contextual and non-economic aspects seem to be less important factors compared with economic factors (as supported by *the economic theories of migration*, see 3.2.1 and 3.4.1). In the end, migrant parents wanted their families to have a normal, decent life, and this, in their view, was more achievable in the UK (see findings in Section 8.3.2, 8.4.2, and 9.2.2).

The next section summarises the main research findings, outlining how the theoretical approaches to family formation and return migration could be applied to the evidence stemming from this study.

9.2 Main empirical findings

9.2.1 Unintentional settling by gradual extension of stay?

The data collected for this project confirm findings about the unpredictability and uncertainty of migration plans discussed in the existing literature (see Section 3.5, especially Eade *et al.* 2007; Grabowska-Lusińska *et al.* 2009; McGhee *et al.* 2017). Firstly, most of the research participants¹⁵⁰ declared that they were not considering returning to Poland. Secondly, most of those considering return lacked a precise return timeframe because they held a general perception that return was always possible regardless of life stage (see findings reported in Section 7.2 and Section 8.1). It seems that when facing imperfect information and inherent uncertainty, return was continuously postponed and consequently often did not materialise, as migrants were unintentionally settling by gradually extending their stay in the UK. In this way, migrants were restricting their options through inactivity. On one hand, this indecisiveness raises questions about Polish migrants' capacity to exercise agency in shaping their futures. On the other hand, their adoption of risk-minimising strategies (e.g. keeping a house in the UK) implies ability to exercise agency in planning for a return to Poland.

This attitude of continuously and consciously holding perceptions of temporality of stay may have barred migrants from some opportunities in the UK, thus being detrimental for their integration in Britain, while simultaneously undermining their potential for successful return (this contrasts with the underpinning assumption of the economic theories of migration that migrants make rational decisions, see Section 3.2.1). Starting families often acted as a factor 'forcing' migrants to make a decision because return would now affect all family members and not just an individual migrant.

¹⁵⁰ This refers to the survey respondents and interviewees.

9.2.2 Employment and financial stability affects the dynamic relationship between migration, family formation and settlement/return decisions

In line with findings from literature predominantly viewing Poles as economic migrants (see Section 3.4.1), economic factors were the key driver for respondents to come to the UK. At the time when the domestic unemployment levels were very high while job security and wages were both low (see Polish-UK labour market comparison in Section 2.5 and the research literature indicating that economic factors were the key drivers for Polish migration in Section 3.4.1), working in Britain provided research participants with better financial stability, more secure employment and a better work-life balance. This finding is noteworthy as the reviewed literature suggested that due to occupying low-wage and low-status jobs, Polish migrants, similarly to other migrants, experienced high levels of precariousness and job insecurity (see Section 3.4.1, in particular Pollard *et al.* 2008; Trevena 2013). Even if some research participants provided examples of precarious situations experienced in British workplaces, this project provides evidence that employment-related aspects were overwhelmingly assessed to be better in the UK than in Poland (see relevant survey results in Section 7.4.3).

This secure financial situation made many Poles conclude that life was more ‘normal’ in the UK (see interviewees’ views on financial security in Section 8.3.2 confirming the importance of economic factors for settlement decisions, in line with the economic theories of migration). This secure financial situation, in turn, has supported decisions to start (or enlarge) families (see survey results on factors influencing decisions to start a family in Section 6.3). The fact that Polish women in the UK on average have more children than women in Poland (see Section 5.1.1) and that nearly a fifth of survey respondents wanted to have more children than they would have had if they had stayed in Poland (see survey results in Section 6.3 and 7.3) indicates that employment-related factors indeed encouraged family formation. In addition, 45% of survey respondents stated that they changed their approach to settlement/return following the birth of a child/children and now wanted to stay in the UK (see discussion on the relationship between the birth of a child in the UK and the probable settlement/return decision, in Section 7.3.2).

This clearly shows the interrelationship between socio-economic factors and migration and family formation decisions. First, the socio-economic factors motivated Polish migration to the UK (in line with the economic theories of migration, see Section 3.2.1) and then facilitated family formation among Polish migrants (in line with the theoretical approaches indicating that migration is a predictor of family events, see Section 3.3.1). Subsequently, the experience of becoming a parent affected settlement/return decisions. This way, the socio-economic factors reinforced migration and family formation decisions, and eventually strengthened motivations of Polish parents to settle in the UK. Ultimately, the most important factor in staying was being (or believing oneself to be) economically better-off in the UK.

9.2.3 Returns discouraged by the perceived and actual labour market situation in Poland

Most research participants moved to the UK as young, reasonably well-educated adults in their (early) twenties (see Section 6.1 for the analysis of the demographic characteristics of the survey respondents). Even if they (at least initially) experienced downward occupational mobility in Britain, over time many migrants improved their employment conditions, levels of pay and job satisfaction through undertaking training and gaining additional skills and qualifications (see Section 8.3). However, many migrants worried about whether their British experience would be transferable and relevant in the Polish context, and whether Polish labour markets would be able to absorb their skills, in particular if moving back to less economically prosperous regions in Poland. The limited/lack of experience from Poland and the long detachment from the Polish labour market were also seen as obstacles for return. These considerations highlight the importance of structural factors, such as the ability of employers to adequately assess the skills of returnees, and the differences between return migrants' expectations and the reality upon moving back (see Section 3.2.2).

In addition, many research participants attested how much they valued, and had become accustomed to, a different working culture and standards in Britain, including having job stability and autonomy, permanent contracts and paid overtime work (see evidence from the survey data in Section 7.4 and from interviews in 8.2). They also considered that working in the UK provided them with a better work-life balance and

more flexible formal childcare options. This shows migration as a source of agency for Polish migrants as they absorbed the ‘new’ social norms encountered in British workplaces. Concerns that they would not be able to have the same quality of work also discouraged Poles from returning. This again shows the applicability of the structural approach to analyse the situation of Polish migrants, their adoption of social and cultural norms of the host country, and their potentially modernising role on Polish society if they decide to return.

9.2.4 Distinctive family formation behaviour of Polish migrants has impact on return

On average, Polish migrants in the UK form larger families than their counterparts in Poland, as attested by Polish migrant women’s TFR of 2.13 (see analysis of the birth registration data in Section 5.1.1). Families with two children were a dominant family model among survey respondents, but a considerable share of them already had or were planning to have even larger families (see survey results in Section 6.2). Living in the UK had influenced nearly a fifth of respondents to want more children than they believed they would have wanted in Poland (see the analysis of factors that influenced respondents’ decisions to start a family in Section 7.3). Family size, in turn, had implications for return, with each additional child decreasing the likelihood of considering return (see the logistic regression results in Section 7.5). So living in the UK encouraged migrants to have larger families and, subsequently, that larger family size decreased the likelihood of considering return.

In addition, approximately three in four children born to Polish mothers in the UK also had Polish fathers (see findings from the birth registration data, in Chapter 5). This has implications for the return potential of such families because the likelihood of considering return is over two-and-a-half times greater for Polish migrants who formed a two Polish-parent family (see the logistic regression results in Section 7.5). Note that a quarter of children born to Polish mothers in the UK had a non-Polish father, and that these families had a relatively low likelihood of considering return.

Furthermore, compared with women in Poland, Polish migrant women were on average older at the time of giving birth to their first child and more often had children born outside marriage, and both these trends can be explained by alternative migrant

fertility theories (see analysis and discussion in Sections 5.1 and 5.2). However, most single (by formal civil status) survey respondents lived in two-parent families (see the analysis of the survey respondents' family patterns in Section 6.2.2). Given that being married as opposed to single increased the likelihood of considering return to Poland, this suggests that couples who were not formally married had a lower chance of return than married couples (see findings stemming from the logistic regression analysis in Section 7.5). The patterns of Polish migrant women's age at first birth and having children outside of marriage may also suggest a convergence towards more liberal British socio-cultural norms of older childbearing and family composition. This finding adds to the argument that migration could be viewed as a source of agency and autonomy for Polish migrant women.

Finally, children born to Polish migrant women in the UK were on average 3 years younger than migrant children born in Poland (see the analysis of the demographic characteristics of survey respondents and their children in Section 6.1). This has implications for their return because families with a first child born in the UK were twice as likely to consider return than migrants families with children born in Poland (see the logistic regression results in Section 7.5). This could be explained partly by the younger age of UK-born children and the family's weaker involvement with the British education system, and because parents were less aware of the effort and cost involved in moving the whole family.

9.2.5 The presence of children anchors Polish migrants in the UK

This study reveals how significantly children strengthen the process of settling for Polish families in the UK, thus it enhances the understanding and the applicability of the social network theory to the situation of Polish migrants (see Section 3.2.3). Becoming a parent, in particular of a second or subsequent child, motivated a range of decisions, such as finding a better-paid job or buying a house, which in turn made links with the UK even stronger (see findings from the interview data in Section 8.3).

Once children reached school-age, return became more difficult because children's wellbeing, education and future opportunities were among the most important factors considered by Polish migrants (see the results of the survey in Section 7.3 and

interviews in Section 8.3). Return was also deterred by children's insufficient level of academic Polish, as the parents interviewed had concerns over whether children would receive adequate support in Polish schools (see evidence coming from the interview data in Section 8.3). This highlights the importance of structural factors, for instance the ability of the education system in the home country to adapt to the specific needs of returnees. In contrast, British schools were perceived as being more student-oriented and offering a practice-based approach to learning, which study participants believed would better prepare children for life. The presence of children also facilitated integration in the local communities, and thus settlement (in line with the social networks theory, see the survey results in Section 7.4.2 and interview findings in Section 8.3).

9.2.6 Migrant parents and children's identity and belonging - would it really be a 'return' for children?

Psychological and emotional attachment to Poland was not a sufficiently strong factor to facilitate return (see Section 3.4.4, notably Parutis 2006; White 2011a, the survey results in Section 7.3.1 and the evidence from interviews in Section 8.5.1) because many research participants felt that their home was in Britain. This connection was often strengthened by buying a house, as homeownership (a structural factor) reinforced a physical, emotional and symbolic belonging in the UK (see interview findings in Section 8.5). Having 'roots' in Poland, migrant parents tried to transmit and embed Polish culture, history and values into their children. However, the interviews suggested that migrant children frequently did not share this sense of belonging to Poland.

The interviewees reported that defining their children's identity was a complex and contested issue as it was constructed through various physical, emotional and social aspects, and one finding of the interviews was that children often identified themselves differently from how their migrant parents perceived them. Some of those interviewed defined their children as British simply due to their British citizenship. Many questioned whether their potential return to Poland as a family would also be a 'return' for their children, because for many migrant children, their roots and home were in the UK and Poland seemed a distant country (see findings from interviews in Section 8.4).

So structural factors related to children's citizenship, identity and the feeling of belonging can tie Polish migrants to the UK, playing a significant role in the return considerations and decisions. This finding challenges the 'double identities' possibility suggested by the theory of transnationalism (see Section 3.2.4). Even if staying attached to Poland while building a new sense of attachment to the UK was possible for migrant parents, this double attachment and identity was often not a lived reality of migrant children.¹⁵¹

9.3 Policy implications of the research

9.3.1 Uncertainty as a challenge for planning of future services

The unpredictability of migration plans (see Section 9.2.1.) creates a paradoxical situation: migrants have a potentially false impression that they are in control of their own decisions, while their return becomes no longer feasible, or at least more difficult, due to changing circumstances. Consequently, without realising it, migrants may have settled in by inertia.

The UK's vote to leave the EU might have been a turning point for some migrants to reflect on their own situation and to make more concrete decisions regarding their future.¹⁵² The fact that over 100,000 Poles left the UK in 2018 suggests that the Referendum vote and its aftermath may have been such a catalyst for many Polish migrants. Nevertheless, the majority of Polish post-accession migrants are still living in the UK and many have applied to the EU Settlement Scheme and for a British citizenship.¹⁵³ As indicated by Ryan (2015a), the possibly more permanent character of intra-EU migration has been potentially overlooked by the research and policy community (see Section 3.5.4.). It is likely, given the evidence presented in this thesis, that many Poles and their children will stay permanently in the UK. However, the continuous uncertainty of migrants' plans poses significant challenges for Poland and the UK in planning future public services such as the provision of education, healthcare or housing services. For instance, the number of children living in a country

¹⁵¹ However, since this project is not based on direct research with children, this conclusion is the inference based on the views of adult study participants about their children.

¹⁵² This research study was conducted before the Brexit referendum.

¹⁵³ Over the period 28/8/2018 to 30/6/2020, 718620 people with Polish nationality applied to the EU Settlement Scheme of whom 548,290 had 'settled' status, with 123,070 'pre-settled'. See EU Settlement Scheme...

has implications for national capacity to offer school places for all school-aged children. This would particularly be the case for education policy in Poland. If school-aged children of Polish migrants return with their parents, the Polish education system will have to cope with an inflow of children who need multiple educational, social and emotional adjustments. Given the large number of Polish children living abroad, it is striking that this return barrier is still not given attention in the education policy in Poland. It would be critical for a Polish government wanting to encourage return migration to address the need for appropriate educational services and support programmes to facilitate the smooth integration of returnees' children in Polish schools (see analysis of the Polish language capacities of Polish migrant children in Section 8.4.3 and the analysis of the interview data explaining why moving between educational systems is a challenge in Section 8.4.4).

Two aspects of policies seem to be critical: (1) the timing of policies so they correspond with the age of children, and (2) the content of policies and their target groups, for instance, specific campaigns or social media strategies targeting parents showing them that upon return, their children would receive support to match their specific needs.

9.3.2 Population change due to migration and family formation abroad

The unprecedented level of Polish migration to the UK and the high number of births to Polish mothers in the UK poses questions regarding the impact of migration and migrants' family formation abroad on Polish demography.

Current assessments of the Polish flagship family policy programme 'Family 500+' clearly show that the effectiveness of this programme to raise fertility levels is uncertain. Early evaluation reports indicate that this policy had led to lower labour market activity levels among some groups of women (Magda et al. 2018) while it did not increase fertility (Magda et al. 2019).

This points to an imminent long-term potential population change due to migration of Polish young adults and migrant children being born abroad. As there are uncertainties about how many of the adults might return, it is possible that there could be a permanent population deficiency in, more or less, one generation. In addition, since

large numbers of Poles across wider age groups are also migrating to other EU- and non-EU countries (see an overview of Polish migration trends, in Section 2.3), migration may in fact have a very substantial direct impact on the population of Poland.

Secondly, Polish family formation abroad has led to fewer births in Poland in recent years, giving rise to a *second-generation* effect. As indicated in Section 5.3, if children born in the UK to two Polish parents were born in Poland, there could have been around 4-5% more children born in Poland each year between 2009 and 2016. In addition, this would, at least partially, slow down Polish population decline, otherwise forecast to be about 8 per cent or 3.2 million between 2014 and 2050 (GUS n.d.). However, Polish migration to the UK has resulted in a significant percentage of the potential future Polish population becoming British residents (and also British citizens) (see interview findings in Section 8.4.8) and hence potential future population growth also being transferred from Poland to the UK, undermining the Polish government's child and family policy objectives (see Section 2.6).

Migrants' fertility also poses questions about the importance of the socio-economic conditions for family formation. On average, Polish female migrants have more children than women in Poland, often due to changing (increasing) their intended family size whilst living in the UK (see survey data findings in Section 6.3 and 6.4). This raises questions about the role and design of the child and family policy, and the wider context facilitating family formation.

This thesis has provided strong indications of factors that have contributed to the fertility of Polish women abroad. It confirms observations from earlier research (see Hoorens *et al.* 2011; Kotowska *et al.* 2008; Mishtal 2009) that Polish women decide to have children and realise their ideal family size if they believe that their families would be able to financially support themselves long-term. Therefore, an improved labour market situation may be the critical factor that Polish public and social policies should focus on in order to increase Poland's fertility levels. In addition, the results of this study also indicate a positive impact of promoting work-life balance policies, availability of formal childcare, and greater equality in gender roles. This suggests that an effective family policy should also address and encompass these aspects.

Should the Polish government want to raise fertility levels, this would require focusing on the key drivers enabling Polish migrant families to have more children than women in Poland and the extent to which further investment in policies allowing reconciliation of work and family life is then needed. In making this assessment, the Government should also assess how/to what extent conservative values regarding childcare responsibilities and the limited provision of formal childcare arrangements ultimately discourage migrants from returning.

9.3.3 The changing legal and socio-political situation in Europe

The changing legal and socio-economic context in Europe creates many policy challenges and opportunities, and can substantially change the migration dynamics in the future. Britain's decision to leave the EU has already contributed to reduced in-migration from Poland, and a noticeable increase in the level of out-migration from the UK. On the other hand, there has been a post-Referendum spike in British citizenship applications from EU nationals. British policymakers should examine the motivations of EU nationals, and the extent to which naturalisation to become British is a natural step towards settlement versus being predominantly motivated to ensure continuity of legal rights in the country of residence.

The British government should also carefully consider new migration regulations to ensure that it is still able to attract migrants with the diverse range of skills required in the British labour market. Future developments, e.g. the strengthening of Poland's economy, the ease of traveling to/from the UK, and the legal status of EU migrants, would all play an important role in migrants' decision-making processes. For instance, the improvements in the Polish labour market may discourage out-migration from Poland, while the tighter visa regulations and the need for additional medical insurance coverage would create barriers for visiting family members from Poland who regularly provide informal childcare.

It is also worth noting that as the access to the British labour market would be conditional upon securing a job above a specific minimum salary bracket, 'double returns' may no longer be feasible in the context of Brexit. It may mean that potential

returnee migrants will be less inclined to ‘consider’ returning, if they are not ready to take the risk of facing great difficulty in re-entering the UK for work in the future.

9.3.4 Changing economic situation in Poland and the demand for labour

Polish migrants should also reflect upon whether and how the changing situation in Poland affects their employment perspectives and opportunities as related to the demand for labour and skills. There are already some indications that the labour supply is often not able to meet the labour demand, mostly due to the insufficient supply of staff with the required skills and knowledge (Kubisiak 2018). These labour shortages put pressure on businesses to improve levels of pay and working conditions. This, in turn, makes working in Poland more financially rewarding, and may therefore encourage some return migration in line with the economic theories of migration, see Section 3.2.1).

On the other hand, Polish migrants can feel discouraged from returning because of structural factors. On one hand, they may have concerns over whether skills, experience and occupational identity gained abroad would be fully recognised in Poland (see the analysis of the interview data in Section 8.2). This is particularly important for workers across a broad range of occupations who need to have their qualifications accredited, for example medical, childcare or building occupations (e.g. nurses, pharmacists, registered nannies, structural engineers) or technical occupations (e.g. electrician, forklift driver, crane operator). On the other hand, those migrants who worked abroad in occupations below their skills/qualifications can be deterred from returning due to difficulty in finding jobs more commensurable with their aspirations and skills (see findings from interviews in Section 8.2). Therefore, there is a role for the public employment services to facilitate a smooth labour market transition of returnees, for instance through targeted career guidance provisions. Employers should be also more open towards foreign experience and skills as it could provide a competitive advantage for their businesses. Returnees’ expectations towards working relationships (e.g. less hierarchical) can also provide an opportunity to modernise working relationships in Poland.

Finally, when (re-)designing policies targeting Polish return migrants, Polish policymakers should assess the evidence and experience of other countries facilitating labour market integration of return migrants, e.g. taking account of the International Labour Organisation's recommendations on how to facilitate the recognition of skills of migrant workers (ILO 2017).

9.3.5 Importance of regional economic performance

Earlier research highlighted that Polish migrants, if they return, were mostly returning to their local area, a finding that was also confirmed by this research study (see Section 3.5.3, especially Barcevičius *et al.* 2012; Iglicka 2009; White 2011a; White 2013b and survey results in 7.2). Therefore, the economic situation of particular Polish regions has an important impact upon return decisions, with regions with stronger local economies expected to be more attractive to potential return migrants than other regions.

Research literature on return migration shows that migrants often come with entrepreneurial energy and skills (see Section 3.5.3), which can further strengthen the regional labour pool and economic performance of particular regions. As such, if returnees are moving back to prosperous regions, this can potentially add to the further growth of these areas and consequently lead to growing divisions between particular Polish regions. On the other hand, if migrants originated from more depressed regions, they will most likely also return to the same areas, even if these regions still do not provide good economic opportunities. This way, returnees moving back to the less economically advantageous regions can be vehicles of change, e.g. creating new businesses and employment opportunities and activating the local community. However, if there is not a sufficient level of support locally, returnees' skills and capital (human and financial) may be lost (as for instance indicated by the phenomenon of 'double return' migration). Therefore, from a policy prospective, it is crucial to ensure that returnees are aware of the available support services (e.g. how to set up a business, how the tax system works, financial support available) so they can fully utilise their potential, regardless of where in Poland they return to.

9.4 Limitations of the study and directions for further research

From the literature review relating to migration in Chapter 3, a number of research questions could have been selected as the subject for a PhD. Some would complement the one finally chosen for this thesis in order to gather additional evidence that is currently lacking from both scientific and policy points of view. Some of these would amount to PhD projects whereas others would constitute larger collaborative projects requiring more resources (e.g. staff, time, budget). Below we focus on just five key areas.

9.4.1 Examining the situation of returnees

The return migration phenomenon and the actual returns of Polish migrants will continue to attract the attention of researchers and policymakers in the years to come. To complement this PhD research, any future study on this topic should also capture the views of return migrants who now live permanently in Poland. Such a study should explore the similarities and differences in the demographic and socio-economic characteristics of those who settled in the UK and returnees, for example their family situation, occupational status, and the length of stay in the UK. Focusing on migration outcomes (e.g. as related to labour market participation), a study *comparing returnees and people who have never migrated from Poland* (e.g. using LFS data) would allow researchers to explore whether and how the migration experience changed people's attitudes, perceptions and actual everyday practices. An integration policy-oriented research project aiming to improve the situation of returnees should also *explore challenges that returnees face upon return as related to a broad range of factors*. This would facilitate planning and implementing prospective (return) migration policies in Poland. From a *project design perspective*, a project *gathering data across several points in time*, e.g. before return and upon return, would allow comparing and contrasting ex-ante and ex-post views and opinions on how migrants imagined return and the reality of return. It would allow exploring whether and how returnees' rationales, expectations and perceptions of return changed after settling back in Poland.

A future project should also distinguish between *migrants' considerations and concrete plans examining the category of social risks and migrants' strategies when facing uncertainties*. As the results of this study show, migrants might have 'considered' returning but in their views, this did not have to be accompanied by any concrete return intentions or plans (see survey results in Section 7.2 and findings from interviews in Section 8.1). Future research should examine the reliability of migrants' return declarations by asking questions about concrete steps that migrants undertook to prepare themselves for such a move, e.g. making enquiries about schools for children, applying for jobs in Poland. Of course, such a project would need to allow for those migrants who did not have a well-developed return strategy but returned anyway.

9.4.2 More focus on the employment experiences of men, young people and childless couples

Review of existing research literature (see Section 3.4 and 3.5) indicates that the perspectives of migrant women might have been disproportionately captured in Polish migration scholarship. Therefore, another area of research would be to systematically capture perspectives, experiences and insights of a larger number of *men*. Targeting male respondents, e.g. by setting up a quota for male and female survey respondents/interviewees and actively recruiting until saturation is reached for both sexes, would help overcome the gender bias.

Future studies should also pay more attention to the *perspectives of Polish migrant children and youth*. Existing studies predominantly engaged adults, with parents representing children's beliefs, attitudes and values. Recognising the evolving capabilities of children and youth to express their views and preferences, any future studies should capture the opinions of the younger generation, as reported by themselves.¹⁵⁴ This would recognise the agency of young people according to their stage of development and seek to more accurately represent their subjective identities and perceptions of belonging while growing up as a migrant child.

¹⁵⁴ Conducting research with children requires additional ethical procedures related to children's safeguarding.

The perspectives of Polish migrants who are not yet parents (or not intending to become parents) would also offer relevant insights into factors they consider important for their reproductive decisions on becoming a migrant parent. This approach would also allow comparisons with national data examining the extent to which migrants' family planning is similar to/different from the experiences of people living in Poland, and what it means for prospective family policy planning and implementation.

Lastly, this research project yielded rich data on a broad range of factors that might be relevant for potential Polish return migrants. The survey questionnaire included a comprehensive list of factors covering respondents' family situation, and their experiences of work and employment, education of children, childcare, and housing. The analysis of the survey data revealed the significance of the employment-related aspects for Polish migrants' return considerations. Consequently, the aspects related to work and employment were covered in more depth during the interviews. Informed by the findings of this study, any subsequent research project on return migration should consider capturing more detailed insights related to migrants' employment and occupational status, e.g. job title, sector of employment, hours worked, remuneration levels, work-life balance, job satisfaction, career aspirations. Such detail would allow for greater understanding of the position of migrants in the host country's labour market, and comparison with the positions of native workers, other groups of migrants, as well as people of a similar socio-demographic profile in their home country. This, in turn, would help in the design of policies (e.g. Polish return policies focusing on employment) that better match migrants' expectations and needs.

9.4.3 A need for quantitative studies and longitudinal studies with both quantitative and qualitative elements

From the scientific point of view, *more quantitative studies* should be conducted. Thus far, the majority of studies about Polish migrants in the UK have applied qualitative approaches using small sample sizes offering rich narratives and a detailed understanding of particular social phenomena. However, the value of these studies could be enhanced by putting them into a wider quantitative context through covering larger Polish population samples in the UK. In addition, the reliability of the existing population data often poses challenges for assessing the real magnitude of out-

migration from Poland. This calls for more harmonisation in the process of data collection and cleaning. There is also a need for improvement in the statistical data provision on age-specific fertility to enable analysis of birth trends in migrant women in the UK.

This points to the need for researchers and policymakers to plan for future projects that apply longitudinal, larger scale, quantitative approaches, exploiting both secondary and primary data sources. The benefit of conducting such studies would be in their ability to capture new and emerging trends at the population level across a period of time, within which to embed the more nuanced qualitative investigations. This way, new studies (e.g. building on questions from this PhD research or other tested and reliable questionnaires) would provide the information required for more efficient public policy planning, with the potential to respond better to the changing needs of migrant and host populations.

9.4.4 Better use of available secondary data sources

It seems that thus far secondary data have been underutilised in Polish migration scholarship, with only a handful of projects using existing data sources. Yet, there are several surveys conducted in Poland and the UK that could provide valuable insights into the situation of Polish migrants. For instance, the *Understanding Society* survey (previously carried out as the British Household Panel Survey), the *European Labour Force Surveys* (LFS), the *European Union Statistics on Income and Living Conditions survey* (EU-SILC) and the *European Social Survey* all offer large population samples that allow for disaggregating data according to migration status. In addition, since the last three of these surveys are conducted both in the UK and in Poland, they also allow the researcher to conduct comparative multi-country research projects (e.g. comparing Polish migrant populations in the UK, Ireland, Germany and Norway, or comparing Polish and other migrant experiences across countries). This comparative perspective would create exchange of knowledge and expertise on similarities and differences of migrant experience across countries, and the relevance of particular policies developed in specific contexts.¹⁵⁵ In addition, the Polish LFS data, containing information on

¹⁵⁵ An example of such a study could be a project on the socio-economic inclusion of EU migrant workers conducted for the European Commission, <https://www.rand.org/randeurope/research/projects/socioeconomic-inclusion-migrant-eu-workers.html>, last accessed 5 March 2020.

previous work history abroad, could be used to analyse the labour market attachment of return migrants. Finally, the non-longitudinal surveys are also repeated over time, permitting time trends to be explored. However, identifying return migrants might be more difficult due to sample size limitations.

In addition, *administrative registers* also seem a useful, yet still unexplored, source of data. Apart from the Birth Registration data used in this research, other administrative sources, such as the NHS Patient Register, the National Pupil Database or the Higher Education Statistics Agency could also offer insights pertaining to various aspects relevant in migration research. For instance, cross-examining the National Pupil Database (e.g. data collected on the parents of children in English schools) and the Birth Register data would allow researchers to examine whether and/or what proportion of children born to Polish parents still reside in the UK, and whether these children face any particular challenges vis-à-vis other children attending schools in England. The analysis of Higher Education records would allow one to better understand the type of study that Polish migrants were/are undertaking in the UK, what skills they were/are acquiring, and the transferability of these skills for the Polish labour market.

When planning studies using secondary data sources, it would be crucial to assess the practicalities (e.g. application procedures, timeframes to obtain data) and the cost of accessing data. The procedures to access harmonised EU micro-data are relatively straightforward and access is typically granted within the specified timeframes. However, accessing some of the Polish/British/English national sources can prove problematic due to the sensitivity of data.

9.4.5 The changing migration landscape in Europe opens up new avenues for ‘futures research’

This final section underlines research strategies adopting ‘futures’ and ‘foresight’ approaches that could be applied to examine research-based scenarios building on the findings from this current research study.

The study design and data collection phase for this PhD research took place between 2012 and 2015, when we began to notice a settling-down of certain aspects of the

Polish migration phenomenon at the same time as further evolutions through their longer-term associations with family formation. However, due to the study's timeframe, this project did not directly explore the implications of Britain's decision to leave the EU and its possible outcomes for the stay/return decisions of Polish migrants.¹⁵⁶ Any future/foresight studies should explore the impact of the changing legal, socio-political and economic landscape across Europe in shaping future decisions of Polish migrants and the associated policy responses. Futures methodologies provide an opportunity to critically assess the existing uncertainties surrounding specific trends and the specific drivers of these trends, and bring them to the policymakers' attention (Hoorens *et al.* 2013). They include, *inter alia*, foresight studies focusing on emerging trends (e.g. big data analysis, horizon scanning), scenario analysis particularly useful to formulate policy options and decision trees, and policy gaming tools to tests policy options, assumptions and plans against a set of scenarios.¹⁵⁷

In the context of migration and family formation studies, a discrete choice experiment involving Polish migrants could be a particularly valuable approach. Choice modelling methodologies are a relevant approach in situations of uncertainty when attempting to model the decision process of an individual/groups and reveal preferences in a particular legal and socio-economic context. Typically, they involve asking research participants to make discrete/binary choices across a broad range of factors in order to infer importance and weight of factors on a relevant scale.¹⁵⁸ In the context of migration studies, this approach allows narrowing (at least to some extent) the inherent uncertainties affecting migration decisions and their outcomes.

This current study has asked migrants to specify which factors they consider important and why for their migration and family formation decisions, and whether they assess these factors to be better in Poland or in the UK. This approach facilitated better

156 A potential strategy to overcome this barrier could be to re-connect with some research participants, for instance as to whether their return plans and considerations have changed as a result of Brexit. Such a strategy was applied by other researchers studying Polish migration (see Kilkey & Ryan (2020)).

157 See for instance, RAND Europe's Centre for Futures and Foresight Studies <https://www.rand.org/randeuropa/methods/futures-and-foresight-studies/about.html>, last accessed 10 March 2020.

158 For a range of studies that could be conducted using a discrete choice modelling, see for instance <https://www.rand.org/randeuropa/methods/modelling/discrete-choice.html>, last accessed 10 March 2020.

understanding of the importance of particular factors, yet it was considerably difficult to weigh and rank the factors against each other. Future studies could develop a range of relevant factors building on the choices given to respondents in this current study and add further factors related to the changing context. This way, respondents would face making choices between a comparable range of factors (e.g. employment/housing/education of children/legal status/political situation in Poland, the UK and other countries) and across (potentially not related) factors (e.g. housing situation in the UK vs. childcare options in Poland, current political context in Poland vs. migrants' legal status in the UK, work opportunities in other European countries vs. children's schooling). Analysed together with the migrants' socio-demographic data, these choices would inform researchers on how particular aspects affect migrants representing different migration trajectories and family situations. This would facilitate developing research scenarios defining critical uncertainties in order to discuss the impacts and potential policy responses. This approach allows exploring the benefits and drawbacks of different policy options and strategies, and planning and evaluating a potential course of action (Hoorens *et al.* 2013). Based on the results of a discrete choice experiment, relevant stakeholders, such as Polish and British policymakers, would be able to more accurately identify driving forces for societal change and identify critical uncertainties. This, in turn, would facilitate development of a range of plausible scenarios drawing on the direction of each of these uncertainties. The final step would be to delineate the implications of each plausible scenario to start discussing the implications and impact of each scenario, and to plan for a relevant policy response. Informed decisions about future policies, in turn, would also better attend to the needs and preferences of particular groups of Polish migrants.

9.5 Personal reflection

My interest in the phenomena of migration and family formation, and the intersection between the two, was sparked when researching fertility trends and their impact on the changing demographic landscape in Europe. This was the first time when I came across the England and Wales birth registration data and could explore the unprecedented increase in the number of births to Polish mothers. It all suddenly made a lot of sense to me! All those Polish mothers with pushchairs and young children who

I have encountered in playgrounds and at playgroups in Cambridge. Truly, Polish women were having children in the UK in great numbers. This prompted discussions with my colleagues (social researchers) and my migrant friends on the relationship between family formation abroad and settlement/return to home countries. It transpired that there was no scientific consensus on this issue (see Section 3.3). My friends shared reflections on how parenting experience changed their perceptions and plans towards settlement/return.

Reviewing available literature on Poles in the UK, I realised that this was still an unexplored area in the Polish migration scholarship. Being one of those Polish-born mothers with children born in the UK, I thought that this was an ideal opportunity to embark on a research project focused on my own community. While this PhD was a long journey, it was a fascinating experience that taught me a lot about my compatriots as well as about myself. After all, the research questions resonated with my family situation and my own reflections.

With this PhD study coming to an end, the issues of family formation and migration still fascinate me. I hope this project opens up a lot of possible avenues for future research.

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10 Annex 1 Technical detail about the online survey

10.1 Survey distribution channels

The online survey respondents were approached through multiple recruitment channels to reach a broad range of respondents. Box 10.1 below presents a list of websites where the main survey was advertised.

Box 10.1 Websites where the online survey was advertised

Internet fora
<p>www.gazeta.pl (Matki Polki w UK (<i>Mother-Poles in the UK</i>), Polki w Anglii (<i>Polish women in England</i>), Lady Grey in UK, Zycie na Wyspach (<i>Life in the Islands</i>), Praca w Wielkiej Brytanii i Irlandii (<i>Work in Great Britain and Ireland</i>)</p> <p>http://londynek.net/</p> <p>http://www.emito.net/</p> <p>http://www.mojawyspa.co.uk/ (Dom i Rodzina (<i>Home and family</i>), Damskie sprawy (<i>Ladies issues</i>))</p> <p>http://goniec.com</p> <p>Dzieciak.co.uk</p> <p>http://polskie-milton-keynes.phorum.pl/</p> <p>http://www.bedfordpl.com/</p> <p>http://www.polkadot.pl/forum/kacik_mam</p> <p>http://www.gbritain.net/forum/index.php</p> <p>http://polishbelfast.co.uk/forum/</p>
Facebook (groups and friends)
<p>Aukcje, sprzedaz kupno i zamiana Irlandia Polnocna (group) (<i>Auction, selling, buying and exchanging Northern Ireland</i>)</p> <p>BazaFirm, OgłoszeniaDrobne - UK - reklamuj się! (grupa) (<i>List of companies, adds - UK - advertise your business!</i>)</p> <p>Bedford Polski Portal (grupa) (<i>Bedford Polish portal</i>)</p> <p>Birmingham Wielka Brytania (friend) (<i>Birmingham Great Britain</i>)</p> <p>Bristol Polacy (friend) (<i>Bristol Polish community</i>)</p> <p>Crewe sprzedaz kupno wynajem (group) (<i>Crewe selling, buying, renting</i>)</p> <p>Darmowe ogłoszenia w UK (group) (<i>Free adds in the UK</i>)</p> <p>East Midlands Polonia (friend) (<i>East Midlands Polish community</i>)</p> <p>Halifax PL ogłoszenia (friend) (<i>Halifax PL adds</i>)</p> <p>Jess Cambridge (<i>Polish shop Jess in Cambridge</i>)</p> <p>Kobiety w Northampton (friend) (<i>Women in Northampton</i>)</p>

Krajan.co.uk (Essex)
 London Polski Portal (friend) (*London Polish portal*)
 Luton Polski Portal (friend) (*Luton Polish portal*)
 Magazyn Londyn Nottingham (friend) (*Magazine London Nottingham*)
 Mama w Glasgow (group) (*Mum in Glasgow*)
 Mama w UK (Londyn i okolice) (*Mum in the UK (London and surrounding area)*)
 Mamy w Essex (friend) (*Mums in Essex*)
 Manchester - kupie, sprzedam zamienie (group) (*Manchester - buying, selling, exchanging*)
 Mieszkamy W Londynie (*We live in London*)
 Mieszkancy Lincoln (friend) (*Polish inhabitants in Lincoln*)
 Migration and integration in rural areas (community)
 Milton Keynes Polski portal (friend) (*Milton Keynes Polish portal*)
 MKaccountancy Milton Keynes (friend)
 Moje Southampton (group) (*My Southampton*)
 Moja Szkocja Szkocja (group) (*My Scotland Scotland*)
 Mums from London (grupa)
 Nasza Wyspa Our Island (friend)
 Nasza Wyspa Our-Island
 Nasze Birmingham (friend) (*Our Birmingham*)
 Nasze Luton (friend) (*Our Luton*)
 Nasze-UK (group) (*Our UK*)
 Ogloszenia Anglia (grupa) (*Adds England*)
 Ogloszenia Luton (group) (*Adds Luton*)
 Ogłoszenia Milton Keynes (grupa) (*Adds Milton Keynes*)
 Ogloszenia w West Yorkshire (group) (*Adds In West Yorkshire*)
 Opoka Bristol - Centrum wspierania rodziny (group) (*Rock Bristol - Family support centre*)
 Peterborough Pl
 Polacy Irlandia Północna (friend) (*Polish people Northern Ireland*)
 Polacy Linconshire (grupa) 2X (*Polish people Linconshire*)
 Polacy- Londyn, Thurrock, Essex, Kent, Surrey, W&E Sussex (group) (*Polish people - London, Thurrock, Essex, Kent, Surrey, W&E Sussex*)
 Polacy Mansfield (friend) 2X (*Polish people Mansfield*)
 Polacy Sheffield Rotherham Doncaster (friend) (*Polish people Sheffield Rotherham Doncaster*)
 Polska Szkocja (friend) (*Polish people Scotland*)
 Polacy w Aberdeen (group) (*Polish people Aberdeen*)
 Polacy w Anglii (friend) (*Polish people in England*)
 Polacy w Anglii (grupa) (*Polish people in England*)
 Polacy w Basildonie Okolice (friend) (*Polish people in Basildon and neighbourhood area*)

Polacy w Birmingham (group) (3 different groups) (*Polish people in Birmingham*)

Polacy w Brighton & Hove (group) (*Polish people in Brighton & Hove*)

Polacy w Bristol (group) (*Polish people in Bristol*)

Polacy w Crawley (friend) (*Polish people in Crawley*)

Polacy w Derby (group) (*Polish people in Derby*)

Polacy w Gateshead (group) (*Polish people in Gateshead*)

Polacy w Glasgow (community) (*Polish people in Glasgow*)

Polacy w Hampshire (friend) (*Polish people in Hampshire*)

Polacy w Harlow (friend) (*Polish people in Harlow*)

Polacy w Hull (community) (*Polish people in Hull*)

Polacy w Leeds (grupa) (*Polish people in Leeds*)

Polacy w Luton (group) (*Polish people in Luton*)

Polacy w Manchesterze (grupa) (*Polish people in Manchester*)

Polacy w Newark (friend) (*Polish people in Newark*)

Polacy w Newcastle upon Tyne (group) (*Polish people in Newcastle upon Tyne*)

Polacy w Reading (group) (*Polish people in Reading*)

Polacy w Reading UK (grupa) (*Polish people in Reading*)

Polacy w Slough (friend) (*Polish people in Slough*)

Polacy w UK (friend) (*Polish people in the UK*)

Polacy w UK - praca, biznes i kultura (grupa) (*Polish people in the UK - work, business and culture*)

Polacy w Weston Super Mare (grupa) (*Polish people in Weston Super Mare*)

Polacy w Wielkiej Brytanii (friend) (*Polish people in Great Britain*)

Polacy w Worcester (friend) 2X (*Polish people in Worcester*)

Polandhome Cardiff (friend)

Polish Advice Bureau Pomoc Polakom (group) (*Polish Advice Bureau Support for Polish people*)

Polish Association East Anglia (group)

Polish community Liverpool (friend)

Polish Edinburgh (friend)

Polish Milton Keynes (friend)

Polish mums and little ones Nottingham (group) 2X

Polish Professionals (grupa)

Polonia Blackburn (friend) (*Polish community Blackburn*)

Polonia Bournemouth (friend) (*Polish community Bournemouth*)

Polonia Cambridge UK - Cambridge Polish Community (*Polish community Blackburn*)

Polonia Nottingham (friend) (*Polish community Nottingham*)

Polonia Portsmouth (group) (*Polish community Portsmouth*)

Polonia w Edinburgh Scotland (group) (*Polish community in Edinburgh Scotland*)

Polonijne Centrum Darmowych Ogłoszeń (group) (*Polish Community Free Adds Centre*)
Polska spolecznosc West Yorkshire (friend) (*Polish community West Yorkshire*)
Polska szkola w Worksop (friend) (*Polish school in Worksop*)
Polskie firmy Birmingham (group) (*Polish businesses in Birmingham*)
Polskie Mamuski Leicester (*Polish mummies in Leicester*)
Polskie Mamuski w UK (*Polish mummies in the UK*)
Polskie mamy Manchester (*Polish mums in Manchester*)
Polskie mamy w Leeds (*Polish mums in Leeds*)
Polskie mamy w Plymouth (Community) (*Polish mums in Plymouth*)
Polskie mamy w Sheffield (group) (*Polish mums in Sheffield*)
Rodzice w Anglii (friend) (*Parents in England*)
Tablica Ogłoszeń (grupa) (*Advertisement Board*)
Trybuna emigranta (grupa) (*Migrant's tribune*)
UK mama pomaga mamie (*UK mum helps other mum*)
West Midlands ogłoszenia (group) (*West Midlands ads*)
West Midlands Polonia (friend) (*West Midlands Polish community*)
Wielka Brytania (friend) (*Great Britain*)

Note: translations are in italic.

10.2 Advertisements about the online survey

Box 10.2 Survey advertisement in Polish

Prośba do rodziców o wypełnienie ankiety

Chciałabym zaprosić wszystkich polskich rodziców do wypełnienia ankiety dotyczącej urodzenia i wychowywania dzieci w Wielkiej Brytanii. Nazywam się Barbara Janta i ankieta ta jest częścią mojego badania doktorskiego na Uniwersytecie w Warwick. W moim badaniu koncentruję się na zagadnieniu, w jaki sposób rodzicielstwo wpływa na decyzje Polaków o pozostaniu w Wielkiej Brytanii lub powrocie do Polski. Szczególnie cenne będą dla mnie opinie rodziców, którzy wychowują dzieci urodzone w Wielkiej Brytanii, oraz osób, które planują powiększenie się rodziny w najbliższym czasie. Badanie jest anonimowe i zajmuje ok. 15-20 minut. Wyniki badania zostaną wykorzystane do pracy naukowej, która mam nadzieję będzie miała również wpływ na kształtowanie się polityki społecznej dotyczącej dzieciętności migrantów w Wielkiej Brytanii i w Polsce.

Badanie dostępne jest na poniższej stronie internetowej:

<http://migracjairodzicielstwo.badanie.net/>

W razie jakichkolwiek pytań proszę o kontakt na emaila [REDACTED] Z
góry dziękuje za okazaną pomoc!

Box 10.3 Survey advertisement in English

Request to parents to complete a survey questionnaire

I would like to invite all Polish parents to complete an online survey questionnaire regarding having a child and bringing up children in the UK. My name is Barbara Janta and this survey questionnaire is part of my PhD study at the University of Warwick. My research is focused on the relationship between Polish migrants' childbearing experiences and the decisions to stay in the UK or to return to Poland. In particular, I am interested in the views of parents who are bringing up children born in the UK, and the views of people who are planning to have more children in the future.

Completing the survey will take about 15 to 20 minutes. The results would be kept confidential. The findings stemming up from the online survey would be used for scholarly research that, as it is hoped, would also have impact on the design of the Polish and British child and family policy.

The survey is available at the following weblink:

<http://migracjairodzicielstwo.badanie.net/>

Please do not hesitate to contact me at [REDACTED] if you have any questions. Thank you in advance for your help!

10.3 The online survey questionnaire statistics

10.3.1 Pilot survey

The online survey questionnaire was piloted on the Polish internet forum ‘Polish mothers in the UK’ (Matki Polki w UK) at the online version of the Polish daily newspaper gazeta.pl. The survey questionnaire was open between 4 and 7th of December 2013. The pilot questionnaire was viewed 192 times, and 108 respondents completed at least one survey question.

Upon completion, the survey questionnaire was revised and posted across several websites and Facebook groups, as described in the earlier part of this Annex.

10.3.2 The main online survey questionnaire

The online survey questionnaire was opened on the 7th of January 2014 and closed on the 12th March 2014. Most of the responses were received in the early days after survey opening. In total, the survey was opened 1,801 times, with 962 respondents who completed at least one survey question.

In total, there were 1,071 individual responses from both the pilot and main survey. After accounting for the survey drop-out rate, there were around 600 responses per survey question.

11 Annex 2 The online survey questionnaire - English and Polish language version

11.1 English language version of the online survey questionnaire

Migration and childbearing

My name is Barbara Janta and I am a doctoral researcher at the Institute for Employment Research at the University of Warwick. This survey is part of my doctoral research looking into Polish migrants in the UK. I am interested in Polish migrants who become parents in the UK and how childbearing experience influence their decision to settle in the UK or to return to Poland. More detail about me and my research is available [here](#).

I would love to learn about your experience and hear your views, especially if your child / children were born in the UK or if you plan to have children while you are living in the UK.

This survey is anonymous and all answers are confidential. When answering please be as honest as possible. There are no good or bad answers. This survey should take about 15 to 20 minutes. Survey findings will be used for academic research, which it is hoped will inform policy development.

In case of questions or comments, please contact me on [REDACTED]

Section 1

In this section we ask you about your children (or plans to start a family).

1. How many children do you have?

I don't have children yet

1

2

3

4 and more

2. When were your children born?

If you have more than four children, please write in their dates of birth in the next question.

	Not applicable	2013	2012	2011	2010	2009	2008	2007	2006	2005	2004	2003	2002	2001 or earlier
Child 1														
Child 2														
Child 3														
Child 4														

3. If you have more than four children, please write in their dates of birth in a text box below.[open-ended]

4. Where were your children born?

If you have more than four children, please write in their country of birth in the next question.

	in Poland	in the UK	in other country	Not applicable
Child 1				
Child 2				
Child 3				
Child 4				

5. If you have more than four children, please write in their country of birth in a text box below.

6. Where do your children currently live?

If you have more than four children, please write in their country of residence in the next question.

	in Poland	in the UK	in other country	not applicable
Child 1				
Child 2				
Child 3				
Child 4				

7. If you have more than four children, please write in their country of residence in a text box below.

8.If your children were born in Poland, when did they move to the UK

Please specify year in which your children move to the UK (separately for each child)

	Not applicable	2013	2012	2011	2010	2009	2008	2007	2006	2005	2004	2003	2002	2001 or earlier
Child 1														
Child 2														
Child 3														
Child 4														

9. If you have more than four children, please write below when they moved to the UK.

10. Is there anything more that you want to add about your family situation?

[open-ended question]

11. Are you or your spouse/partner currently expecting a child?

yes

no

12. Do you plan to have any / more children in the near future?

yes

no

13. What would be the ideal number of children you would like to have?

[open-ended box] Answer has to be a number.

14. Does living in the UK change your plans about how many children you would have?

yes, I now want to have more children

yes, I now want to have fewer children

no, living in the UK has no influence on how many children I would have

**15. Below you find a list of factors that influence decision to start a family. Would you please rate these factors on how important they were
Would you please rate how important are these factors were for your decision to have a child in the UK.**

	very important	important	neutral	not important	not important at all	don't know	not applicable
stable family relationship							
settled in the UK							
being at 'the right age' to have children							
stable and secure financial situation							

good housing situation							
British state provides support to parents							
friends started families							

16. Are there any other factors that were important for your decision to have a child in the UK?

[open-ended question]

Section 2

In this section we ask you about your family situation.

17. What best describes your family situation? (choose one option. Use the 'other' option and write in details in the text box if these options do not describe your situation.

I live in a two parent family (with my wife / husband / partner) and all my children have the same father / mother

I live in a two parent family (with my wife / husband / partner) but my children have different fathers / mothers

I am a single mother / father

Other, please specify

18. Where was the father / mother of your children born? (please choose one option)

If your children have more than one father / mother, please select option 'in other country' and provide names of countries.

in Poland

in the UK

in other country(ies), please specify

19. Where did you meet the father / mother of your children? (please choose one option)

If your children have more than one father / mother, please select option 'in other country' and provide names of countries where you have met fathers/mothers of your children.

in the UK

in Poland

in other country, please specify

20. Do you receive any support with childcare from family and friends?(please choose one option)

yes

no

not applicable

21. Who do you receive childcare support from ? (Please select all that apply) (please choose one option)

my mum / dad; my in-laws

other relatives (sister, brother, cousins, aunts, uncles

friends

not applicable

other, please specify

Section 3

In this section we ask you about your plans to settle in the UK or return to Poland.

22. Are you considering returning to Poland?

yes

no

23. Are you considering moving to any other country? Please specify.

24. Would you please rate how important are these factors listed below for your decision about settling in the UK or returning to Poland?

	very important	important	neutral	not important	not important at all	don't know	not applicable
employment related factors							
family related factors							
responsibilities to look after parents / in-laws							
husband / wife / partner not being Polish							
homesickness / missing family and friend from Poland							
feeling 'at home' in the UK							

housing related factors							
ability to reconcile work and family life							
education of children							
state support for families and working parents							

25. Did birth of your child / children in the UK change your decision about returning to Poland or settling in the UK?

yes, I am now more likely to stay in the UK

yes, I am now more likely to return to Poland

no, I always knew that I wanted to stay in the UK

no, I always knew that I wanted to return to Poland

26. Are there any other factors that you consider important when deciding whether to settle in the UK or to return to Poland? Please specify.

[open-ended box]

27. When do you plan to return to Poland? (please select only one answer).

in the next 5 years

when my children finish primary school

when my children finish secondary school

I don't know precisely when I will go back but I want to return

other, please specify

not applicable

28. Where in Poland are you considering moving to?

Please write in the region or town you are considering moving to.

29. Where in Poland are you considering moving to? Please give a reason for this choice

to my local area (place where I was brought up, place where my parents/in-laws live)

to wherever I can find a job

this place has low costs of living

to other region, please specify reason and where about

Section 4

In this section, there is more detailed statements about factors that may be important when deciding to settle in the UK or returning to Poland. I paid special attention to aspects related to children and childbearing experience.

30. Would you please state to what degree you agree or disagree with the following statements.

Child related factors

	strongly agree	agree	neither agree, nor disagree	disagree	strongly disagree	don't know	not applicable
I don't want to disturb my children's education in the UK							
I want to return before my children reach compulsory school age							
My children know Polish well							
My children have many friends in the UK							
My children have difficulties in learning English							
My children attend Polish Saturday school							
My children want to return to Poland							
My children would find it easy to move to Poland							
My children want to stay in the UK							
I want my children to live close to their grandparents and other relatives in Poland							
My children are still in schools in Poland and I don't want to disturb their education							

31. Would you please state to what degree you agree or disagree with the following statements.

Family related and other factors

	strongly agree	agree	neither agree, nor disagree	disagree	strongly disagree	don't know	not applicable
My wife / husband / partner wants to return to Poland							
My parents / in-laws live close to us / with us in the UK							
I miss my family and friends in Poland							
I have responsibilities to look after parents / in-laws in Poland							
I have responsibilities to look after parents / in-laws in the UK							
My wife / husband / partner wants to stay in the UK							
I have many friends in the UK							
I know English well							
I have been actively looking for jobs in Poland							
I have house / flat in Poland							

Section 5

This last section asks you whether you find things better in Poland or in the UK

32. Would you please rate these aspects by saying whether they are better in the UK or in Poland.

Child and family-related factors

	much better in Poland	better in Poland	no difference	better in the UK	much better in the UK	don't know	not applicable

opportunities to work part-time and look after children							
opportunity to work flexible hours							
reconciliation of work and family life							
availability of childcare (childminders, nurseries, creches							
quality of childcare							
affordability of childcare							
childcare support from family and friends							
generosity of child related benefits							
state support for working parents							
bringing up children							
being able to live independently as a family							
being able to buy a house / flat							
getting access to social housing							
necessity to share house / flat with other people							

33. Would you please rate these aspects by saying whether they are better in the UK or in Poland.

Education system

	much better in Poland	better in Poland	no difference	better in the UK	much better in the UK	don't know	not applicable
education system in general							
primary school provision							
secondary school provision							

academic standards at schools							
quality of teaching							
preparedness for life							
schools being student-friendly							

34. Would you please rate these aspects by saying whether they are better in the UK or in Poland.

Employment related factors

	much better in Poland	better in Poland	no difference	better in the UK	much better in the UK	don't know	not applicable
employment opportunities in general							
finding a job							
having a well-paid job							
opportunities for career progression							
having a permanent job							
having secure job							
having job commensurable with skills and experience							
being valued as an employee							

35. Are there any other aspects that are better in the UK?

[open-ended]

36. Are there any other aspects that are better in Poland?

[open-ended]

Section 6

In this section we ask some questions about you and your background.

37. Are you

male

female

38. When were you born?

[open-ended box] Answer has to be a number from 1950 to 1998

39. When did you last move to the UK?

Please specify year of your arrival to the UK

40. Have you ever lived in the UK before your current spell in the country?

yes

no

41. What was the primary reason for you to move to the UK?

Please select all that apply. If the categories do not describe your motives, please tick the other category and write your reasons for migrating in the text box.

[Multiselect question]

work

to study (at university, language school etc.)

to join my husband / wife / partner who was already in the UK

other, please specify

42. What was your situation in Poland when you decided to move to the UK?

Please select one category. If you wish to provide further explanation, tick the 'other' category and write your details in the text box.

I was employed

I was unemployed

I was studying full-time (secondary or university-level education)

I was studying and working

I was a full-time mum / dad

I was retired

other, please specify

43. Where did you live in Poland before moving to the UK?

[drop-down list of all regions in Poland and option 'I did not live in Poland'] with a text box to write in name of other country. Please specify which country you lived in.

44. Which of these levels of qualification do you have?

Please select your highest qualification level.

primary

vocational education (skonczona szkola zawodowa)

secondary (szkola srednia / technikum)

post-secondary qualification but not university degree (e.g. szkola policealna)

university degree (BA / BSc / MA / MSc / PhD, other university degree)

other, please specify

45. Where were your degree(s) awarded? Please select all that apply.

in Poland

in the UK

in other country, please specify [open-ended box]

46. What is your civil status?

(please choose one option)

Single (never married)

Married

Widowed

Separated / Divorced

47. Where do you currently live in the UK? (main UK residence)

England

Wales

Scotland

Northern Ireland

48. Would you please provide the name of a city / town / village where you live in the UK?

[open-ended question]

49. What do you currently do in the UK? (please choose only one option. If these do not describe your circumstances, choose 'other' and write in the details.

I am employed

I am self-employed, running a business

I have a 'self-employed' contract

I am unemployed

I am studying full-time (secondary or university-level education)

I am studying and working

I am a full-time mum / dad

I cannot work due to disability or long-term sickness

I am retired

other, please specify

50. Is your wife / husband / partner also filling in this questionnaire?

yes

no

don't know

51. Where did you hear about this survey?

internet forum, which one?

Information from Polish Saturday School, which one?

Polish Psychologists' Association

Polish Professionals in London

author's Facebook

my friend's Facebook

Other source, which one?

52. Please provide any additional comments you may have about this questionnaire and research in the box below.

[open-ended box]

This was the last question in my survey. Thank you very much for taking part!

I am still looking for additional survey respondents. If you know other Polish parents in the UK, please encourage them to take part in this survey. Please use the link below to share this survey with other potential respondents.

<http://migracijairodzicielstwo.badanie.net/>

52. Next phase of my project will focus on conducting interviews with Polish migrant parents (mothers and fathers). If you would like to be interviewed, please provide your contact details below. I want to reassure you that your contact details would be only used for the research purpose and I will not share them with third parties. I will not use your name or present any details which may identify you in my thesis or academic papers based on it.

[open-ended box]

11.2 Polish language version of the online survey questionnaire

Migracja i rodzicielstwo

Nazywam się Barbara Janta i jestem doktorantką w Instytucie Badań nad Rynkiem Pracy (Institute for Employment Research) na uniwersytecie w Warwick (University of Warwick). Ta ankieta jest częścią mojego badania doktorskiego dotyczącego dzietności Polaków w Wielkiej Brytanii. Interesują mnie w szczególności polscy migranci, którzy zostali rodzicami w Wielkiej Brytanii oraz w jaki sposób rodzicielstwo wpływa na decyzję migrantów o pozostaniu w Wielkiej Brytanii lub powrocie do Polski. Więcej informacji o mnie i moim badaniu dostępne jest [tutaj](#).

Ankieta ta pomoże mi poznać Twój punkt widzenia na temat rodzicielstwa i migracji. Szczególnie cenne będą dla mnie opinie rodziców, którzy wychowują dzieci urodzone w Wielkiej Brytanii, oraz osób, które planują powiększenie się rodziny w najbliższym czasie.

Badanie jest anonimowe i zajmuje ok. 15-20 minut. Wyniki badania zostaną wykorzystane do pracy naukowej, która mam nadzieję będzie miała również wpływ na kształtowanie się polityki społecznej dotyczącej dzietności migrantów w Wielkiej Brytanii i w Polsce.

Wszelkie pytania i uwagi proszę kierować na adres [REDACTED]

Część 1

W tej części ankiety zawarte są pytania dotyczące Twoich dzieci i planów dotyczących posiadania dzieci.

1. Ile masz dzieci?

jeszcze nie mam dzieci

1

2

3

4 lub więcej

2. Kiedy urodziły się Twoje dzieci?

Jeśli masz więcej niż czworo dzieci, wpisz ich daty urodzenia w następnym pytaniu.

	Nie dotyczy	2013	2012	2011	2010	2009	2008	2007	2006	2005	2004	2003	2002	2001 lub wcześniej
pierwsze dziecko														
drugie dziecko														
trzecie dziecko														
czwarte dziecko														

3. Jeśli masz więcej niż czworo dzieci, wpisz ich daty urodzenia w polu poniżej.

4. Gdzie urodziły się Twoje dzieci?

Jeśli masz więcej niż czworo dzieci, wpisz ich miejsce urodzenia w następnym pytaniu.

	w Polsce	w Wielkiej Brytanii	w innym kraju	nie dotyczy
pierwsze dziecko				
drugie dziecko				
trzecie dziecko				

czwarte dziecko				
-----------------	--	--	--	--

5. Jeśli masz więcej niż czworo dzieci, wpisz ich miejsce urodzenia w polu poniżej.

6. Gdzie obecnie mieszkają Twoje dzieci?

Jeśli masz więcej niż czworo dzieci, wpisz ich obecne miejsce zamieszkania w następnym pytaniu.

	w Polsce	w Wielkiej Brytanii	w innym kraju	nie dotyczy
pierwsze dziecko				
drugie dziecko				
trzecie dziecko				
czwarte dziecko				

7. Jeśli masz więcej niż czworo dzieci, wpisz ich obecne miejsce zamieszkania w polu poniżej.

8. Jeśli Twoje dzieci urodziły się w Polsce, od kiedy mieszkają w Wielkiej Brytanii?

Jeśli masz więcej niż czworo dzieci, proszę podaj rok kiedy przeprowadziły się do Wielkiej Brytanii w następnym pytaniu.

	Nie dotyczy	2013	2012	2011	2010	2009	2008	2007	2006	2005	2004	2003	2002	2001 lub wcześniej
pierwsze dziecko														
drugie dziecko														

trzecie dziecko														
czwarte dziecko														

9. Jeśli masz więcej niż czworo dzieci, proszę podaj rok kiedy przeprowadziły się do Wielkiej Brytanii w polu poniżej.

10. Czy chciał(a)byś jeszcze coś dodać o swojej sytuacji rodzinnej?

[pytanie otwarte]

11. Czy obecnie oczekujesz narodzin dziecka?

tak

nie

12. Czy masz plany, aby w przyszłości mieć (więcej) dzieci?

tak

nie

13. Ile chciał(a)byś mieć łącznie dzieci?

[pytanie otwarte]. Odpowiedź musi być cyfrą.

14. Czy mieszkanie w Wielkiej Brytanii wywarło wpływ na Twoją decyzję ile chciał(a)byś mieć dzieci?

tak, teraz chcę mieć więcej dzieci

tak, teraz chcę mieć mniej dzieci

nie, mieszkanie w Wielkiej Brytanii nie miało wpływu na moją decyzję ile chcę mieć dzieci

15. Poniżej wymienione są czynniki, które mogą mieć wpływ na decyzje o posiadaniu dziecka. Proszę określić, jak ważne były te czynniki, gdy Ty decydowałaś/eś się zostać rodzicem w Wielkiej Brytanii.

	bardzo ważne	ważne	neutralne	nieważne	zdecydowanie nieważne	nie wiem	nie dotyczy
stabilna sytuacja rodzinna							
czułam/em się zadomowiona/y w Wielkiej Brytanii							
byłam/em we właściwym wieku, żeby mieć dziecko							
stabilna sytuacja finansowa							
dobra sytuacja mieszkaniowa							
brytyjski system opieki socjalnej zapewnia pomoc dla rodziców							
moi przyjaciele zaczęli zakładać rodziny							

16. Czy jakieś dodatkowe czynniki wywarły wpływ na Twoją decyzję o posiadaniu dzieci w Wielkiej Brytanii?

[pytanie otwarte]

Część 2

W tej części zawarte są pytania dotyczące Twojej sytuacji rodzinnej.

17. Które z poniższych stwierdzeń najlepiej opisuje Twoją sytuację rodzinną?

(Proszę wybierz tylko jedną odpowiedź. Jeśli żadna z poniższych opcji nie opisuje Twojej sytuacji rodzinnej, proszę zaznaczyć 'inna sytuacja' i zwięźle opisz swoją sytuację rodzinną.)

mieszkam z żoną / mężem /partnerem/ką i wszystkie moje dzieci mają tę samą matkę / tego samego ojca

mieszkam z żoną / mężem /partnerem/ką, ale moje dzieci mają różne matki / ojców

jestem samotną matką / samotnym ojcem

inna sytuacja, jaka?

18. Gdzie urodził(a) się ojciec / matka Twoich dzieci?

Proszę wybierz tylko jedna odpowiedź. Jeśli Twoje dzieci mają różne matki / ojców, zaznacz odpowiedź 'w innym kraju' i podaj nazwy krajów.

w Polsce

w Wielkiej Brytanii

w innym kraju, jakim?

19. Gdzie spotkałaś/eś ojca / matkę swoich dzieci?

Proszę wybierz tylko jedna odpowiedź. Jeśli Twoje dzieci mają różne matki / ojców, zaznacz odpowiedź 'w innym kraju' i podaj nazwy krajów, w których poznałaś/eś ojca / matkę swoich dzieci.

w Polsce

w Wielkiej Brytanii

w innym kraju, jakim?

20. Czy Twoja rodzina lub znajomi pomagają Ci w opiece nad dzieckiem/dziećmi?

Proszę wybierz tylko jedną odpowiedź.

tak

nie

nie dotyczy

21. Kto pomaga Ci w opiece nad dzieckiem/dziećmi?

Proszę zaznacz wszystkie odpowiedzi, które opisują Twoją sytuację.

moja mama / tata / teściowie

inni krewni (siostra, brat, kuzyni, ciocie, wujkowie)

znajomi

nie dotyczy

inne osoby, kto?

Część 3

W tej części ankiety znajdują się pytania dotyczące Twoich planów pozostania w Wielkiej Brytanii lub powrotu do Polski.

22. Czy rozważasz powrót do Polski?

tak

nie

23. Czy rozważasz przeprowadzkę do jakiegoś innego kraju?

tak, jakiego?

nie

24. Proszę określić jak ważne dla Twojej decyzji o pozostaniu w Wielkiej Brytanii lub powrocie do Polski są czynniki wymienione poniżej.

	bardzo ważne	ważne	neutralne	nieważne	zdecydowanie nieważne	nie wiem	nie dotyczy
czynniki związane z pracą							
czynniki rodzinne							
obowiązek zapewnienia opieki							

rodzicom / teściom mieszkającym w Polsce							
mąż / żona / partner(ka) nie jest Polakiem/Polką							
tęsknota, mieszkanie daleko od rodziny i przyjaciół							
poczucie, że w Wielkiej Brytanii jest się 'u siebie w domu'							
czynniki mieszkaniowe							
możliwość łączenia pracy i obowiązków rodzinnych							
edukacja dzieci							
pomoc państwa brytyjskiego dla rodzin i pracujących rodziców							

25. Czy narodziny Twoich dzieci miały wpływ na Twoją decyzję o pozostaniu w Wielkiej Brytanii lub powrocie do Polski?

tak, teraz jestem bardziej przekonana/y, że zostanę w Wielkiej Brytanii

tak, teraz jestem bardziej przekonana/y, że wrócę do Polski

nie, zawsze wiedziałam/em, że chcę zostać w Wielkiej Brytanii

nie, zawsze wiedziałam/em, że chcę wrócić do Polski

26. Czy są jeszcze jakieś inne czynniki, które są ważne dla Ciebie przy podejmowaniu decyzji o pozostaniu w Wielkiej Brytanii lub powrocie do Polski? Jakie?

[pytanie otwarte]

27. Kiedy rozważasz powrót do Polski?

Proszę wybrać tylko jedną odpowiedź.

w następnych 5 latach

kiedy moje dzieci skończą szkołę podstawową

kiedy moje dzieci skończą szkołę średnią

jeszcze nie wiem kiedy dokładnie wrócę, ale chciał(a)bym wrócić

w innym terminie, jakim?

nie dotyczy

28. Gdzie chciał(a)byś zamieszkać w Polsce po powrocie?

Proszę wpisz region lub miasto/wioskę, w którym chciał(a)byś zamieszkać.

29. Gdzie chciał(a)byś zamieszkać w Polsce po powrocie?

Proszę podaj powód dlaczego właśnie tam chciał(a)byś zamieszkać.

moja okolica (tam dorastałam/em; tam mieszkają moi rodzice / teściowie)

tam, gdzie znajdę pracę

niskie koszty życia

inny powód, jaki?

Część 4

W tej części prezentowane są różne stwierdzenia, dotyczące czynników mających wpływ na podjęcie decyzji o pozostaniu w Wielkiej Brytanii lub powrocie do Polski. Szczególną uwagę poświęcono czynnikom dotyczącym dzieci i doświadczenia wychowywania dzieci w Wielkiej Brytanii.

30. Proszę określić w jakim stopniu zgadzasz się lub nie zgadzasz się z poniższymi stwierdzeniami

Czynniki związane z dziećmi

	zdecydowanie się zgadzam	zgadzam się	stwierdzenie neutralne	nie zgadzam się	zupełnie nie zgadzam się	nie wiem	nie dotyczy
Moje dzieci uczą się w szkole w Wielkiej Brytanii i nie chcę wprowadzać zmian, zanim nie ukończą szkoły							
Moje dzieci nie rozpoczęły jeszcze edukacji w szkole w Wielkiej Brytanii i chcę wrócić do Polski zanim obejmie ich obowiązki szkolny							
Moje dzieci dobrze znają język polski							
Moje dzieci mają dużo przyjaciół w Wielkiej Brytanii							
Moje dzieci mają problem, żeby opanować język angielski							
Moje dzieci uczęszczają do Polskiej Szkoły Sobotniej							
Moje dzieci chciałyby wrócić do Polski							
Myślę, że moje dzieci łatwo zniosłyby powrót do Polski							

Moje dzieci chcą zostać w Wielkiej Brytanii							
Chciał(a)bym, żeby moje dzieci mieszkały blisko dziadków i innych krewnych w Polsce							
Moje dzieci uczą się w szkole w Polsce i nie chcę wprowadzać zmian, zanim nie ukończą szkoły							

31. Proszę określić w jakim stopniu zgadzasz się lub nie zgadzasz się z poniższymi stwierdzeniami

Czynniki związane z życiem rodzinnym i inne czynniki

	zdecydowanie się zgadzam	zgadzam się	stwierdzenie neutralne	nie zgadzam się	zupełnie nie zgadzam się	nie wiem	nie dotyczy
Moja żona / mój mąż / partner(ka) chce wrócić do Polski							
Moi rodzice / teściowie mieszkają blisko nas / z nami w Wielkiej Brytanii							
Tęsknie za moją rodziną i przyjaciółmi w Polsce							
Mam obowiązki związane z zapewnieniem opieki moim							

rodzicom / teściom w Polsce							
Mam obowiązki związane z zapewnieniem opieki moim rodzicom / teściom w Wielkiej Brytanii							
Moja żona / mój mąż / partner(ka) chce zostać w Wielkiej Brytanii							
Mam wielu przyjaciół w Wielkiej Brytanii							
Dobrze znam język angielski							
Aktywnie poszukuję pracy w Polsce							
Mam dom / mieszkanie w Polsce							

Część 5

W tej ostatniej już sekcji zawarte są pytania dotyczące Twojej oceny co lepiej funkcjonuje w Polsce a co w Wielkiej Brytanii.

32. Proszę ocenić poniższe czynniki porównując czy są lepsze w Polsce czy w Wielkiej Brytanii.

Czynniki związane z dziećmi i życiem rodzinnym

	zdecydowanie lepsze w Polsce	lepsze w Polsce	bez różnicy	lepsze w Wielkiej Brytanii	zdecydowanie lepsze w	nie wiem	nie dotyczy
--	------------------------------------	-----------------------	----------------	----------------------------------	--------------------------	-------------	----------------

					Wielkiej Brytanii		
możliwość łączenia pracy na pół etatu i opieki nad dziećmi							
możliwość pracy w dogodnych godzinach pracy (flexible hours)							
możliwość łączenia pracy zawodowej z obowiązkami rodzinnymi							
dostępność różnych form opieki nad dziećmi (żłobki, przedszkola, nianie itp.)							
jakość opieki nad dziećmi							
koszty opieki nad dziećmi							
pomoc rodziny i znajomych w opiece nad dziećmi							
wysokość zasiłków i dodatków na dziecko							
pomoc od państwa dla pracujących rodziców							
wychowywanie dzieci							
możliwość mieszkania oddzielnie jako rodzina							
zdolność kredytowa na zakup domu / mieszkania							
dostępność mieszkań / domów socjalnych / komunalnych							

konieczność dzielenia mieszkania / domu z innymi osobami							
--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

33. Proszę ocenić poniższe czynniki porównując czy są lepsze w Polsce czy w Wielkiej Brytanii.

System edukacji

	zdecydowanie lepsze w Polsce	lepsze w Polsce	bez różnicy	lepsze w Wielkiej Brytanii	zdecydowanie lepsze w Wielkiej Brytanii	nie wiem	nie dotyczy
system edukacji ogólnie							
szkolnictwo na poziomie szkoły podstawowej							
szkolnictwo na poziomie szkoły średniej							
poziom nauczania w szkołach							
jakość kształcenia							
przygotowanie do życia							
szkoła przyjaźnie nastawiona do uczniów							

34. Proszę ocenić poniższe czynniki porównując czy są lepsze w Polsce czy w Wielkiej Brytanii.

Czynniki związane z rynkiem pracy

	zdecydowanie lepsze w Polsce	lepsze w Polsce	bez różnicy	lepsze w Wielkiej Brytanii	zdecydowanie lepsze w Wielkiej Brytanii	nie wiem	nie dotyczy
możliwość zawodowe ogólnie							
możliwość znalezienia pracy							
posiadanie dobrze płatnej pracy							
perspektywy rozwoju zawodowego i kariery							
posiadanie stałej pracy							
posiadanie stabilnej pracy							
posiadanie pracy odpowiadającej umiejętnościom i aspiracjom zawodowym							
bycie docenianym w pracy							

35. Czy są jeszcze jakieś inne czynniki, które w Twojej opinii są lepsze w Wielkiej Brytanii?

[pytanie otwarte]

36. Czy są jeszcze jakieś inne czynniki, które w Twojej opinii są lepsze w Polsce?

[pytanie otwarte]

Część 6

W tej części ankiety proszę o podanie informacji o Tobie i Twojej rodzinie.

37. Płeć

Mężczyzna

Kobieta

38. Wiek

[Pytanie otwarte]

Proszę podaj swój rok urodzenia. Przedział czasowy od 1950 do 1998.

39. Od kiedy na stałe przebywasz w Wielkiej Brytanii?

Proszę podaj rok, w którym przyjechałeś/aś do Wielkiej Brytanii.

Minimalna wartość to 1980, a maksymalna 2013.

40. Czy kiedykolwiek wcześniej mieszkałeś/eś w Wielkiej Brytanii?

tak

nie

41. Jaki był główny powód Twojego przyjazdu do Wielkiej Brytanii?

Proszę zaznaczyć wszystkie odpowiedzi, które dotyczą Twojej sytuacji. Jeśli poniższe kategorie nie opisują Twojego powodu przyjazdu do Wielkiej Brytanii, proszę zaznaczyć opcję 'inny powód' i opisz ten powód w polu tekstowym.

[Pytanie wielokrotnego wyboru]

praca

nauka (studia na uniwersytecie, w szkole językowej itp.)

przyjechałam/em do męża / żony, który/a wyjechał/a wcześniej

inny powód, jaki?

42. Jaka była Twoja sytuacja w Polsce zanim zdecydowałaś/eś się na przyjazd do Wielkiej Brytanii?

Proszę zaznaczyć tylko jedną odpowiedź. Jeśli poniższe odpowiedzi nie opisują Twojej sytuacji w Polsce, proszę zaznaczyć odpowiedź 'inna sytuacja' i zwięźle ją opisz w polu tekstowym.

pracowałam/em

byłam/em bezrobotna/y

uczyłam/em się (szkoła pognazjalna, studia)

uczyłam/em się i pracowałam

opiekowałam/em się dzieckiem

byłam/em na emeryturze

inna sytuacja, jaka?

43. W jakim województwie mieszkałaś/eś zanim wyjechałaś/eś do Wielkiej Brytanii?

lista wszystkich polskich województw

nie mieszkałam/em w Polsce. Proszę podaj nazwę kraju, w którym mieszkałaś/eś

44. Jakie masz wykształcenie?

Proszę o zaznaczenie najwyższego stopnia wykształcenia, które osiągnęłaś/aś.

podstawowe

zawodowe

średnie (liceum, technikum)

policealne (np. szkoła policealna)

wyższe (licencjat, studia inżynierskie, studia magisterskie, doktorat, inne)

inne, jakie?

45. Gdzie zdobyłaś/eś swój dyplom/y?

Zaznacz wszystkie odpowiedzi, które dotyczą Twojej sytuacji.

w Polsce

w Wielkiej Brytanii

w innym kraju, jakim?

46. Stan cywilny

Proszę wybierz tylko jedną odpowiedź.

panna / kawaler

mężatka / żonaty

wdowa / wdowiec

rozwódka / rozwodnik

47. Gdzie mieszkasz w Wielkiej Brytanii?

Proszę podaj swoje główny kraj zamieszkania.

w Anglii

w Walii

w Szkocji

w Irlandii Północnej

48. Proszę podaj nazwę miasta / wioski, w której obecnie mieszkasz.

49. Jaki jest Twój obecny status w Wielkiej Brytanii.

Proszę wybierz tylko jedną odpowiedź. Jeśli poniższe odpowiedzi nie opisują Twojej sytuacji, proszę wybierz odpowiedź 'inna sytuacja' i zwięźle opisz swój status.

pracuję

prowadzę własną firmę / samozatrudnienie

praca na kontrakt na zasadzie samozatrudnienia

jestem bezrobotna/y

uczę się / studiuje

uczę się i pracuję

zajmuję się wychowywaniem dzieci

nie pracuję z powodu niepełnosprawności lub długiego zwolnienia lekarskiego

jestem na emeryturze

inna sytuacja, jaka?

50. Czy Twój mąż / Twoja żona / partner(ka) także wypełnia tę ankietę?

tak

nie

nie wiem

51. Jak dowiedziałeś/aś się o tej ankiecie?

Forum internetowe, jakie?

Informacje z Polskiej Szkoły Sobotniej, jakiej?

Polish Psychologists' Association

Polish Professionals in London

Facebook autorki badania

Facebook mojego znajomego / mojej znajomej

Inne źródło, jakie?

51. Czy masz jeszcze jakieś dodatkowe uwagi dotyczące tej ankiety lub mojego badania?

[pytanie otwarte]

To było już ostatnie pytanie w mojej ankiecie. Dziękuję bardzo za Twoje opinie i poświęcony czas!

Cały czas poszukuję dodatkowych respondentów. Jeśli znasz innych polskich rodziców w Wielkiej Brytanii, proszę zachęć ich, aby wzięli udział w moim badaniu. Badanie jest dostępne pod następującym linkiem.

<http://migracjairodzicielstwo.badanie.net/>

52. Następna część mojego projektu polegała będzie na przeprowadzeniu wywiadów z polskimi matkami i ojcami mieszkającymi w Wielkiej Brytanii. Jeśli chciał(a)byś mi pomóc i udzielić wywiadu, proszę umieść swój adres emailowy w polu poniżej. Chciałabym Cię zapewnić, że Twoje dane kontaktowe użyte zostaną tylko do celów naukowych.

[pytanie otwarte]

Jeszcze raz dziękuję za wzięcie udziału w moim badaniu!

12 Annex 3 Interview guidelines

12.1 English language version

Box 12.1 English language version of the interview topic guide

Each interviewee would be informed that:

- all information provided is treated confidential and only used for this study,
- if agreed, the interview would be recorded for transcription purposes,
- interviewees will serve as input for PhD study and research papers,
- interviewees would be provided with the interviewee content sheet and would be asked to sign an interviewee consent form before interview takes place,
- interview will last for about 45 - 60 min.

Interview questionnaire outline

Part 1. Verification of information provided in a survey questionnaire

Q1.1. Has anything changed with your family since last year when you completed a survey questionnaire?

Prompt on:

- Factual changes: more children, change in relationship status, current professional status (maternity leave etc.),
- Agreement / disagreement with statements,
- Change of plans regarding staying / returning.

If anything has changed, prompt why the change took place and what consequences it would have for other aspects of living in the UK / returning to Poland.

(respondent's survey answers would be prepared by researcher in advance and would serve as a reminder of answers)

Q1.2. Do you want to further clarify any of your answers on the open-ended questions?

Part 2. Coming and living in the UK

Q2.1. What was the main reason for you coming to the UK?

Q2.2. How would you describe your life here? What do you like and dislike? How does it compare to other cities you've lived in (in the UK, elsewhere)? Would you like to change anything?

Q2.3. How do you see your short-/long-term future in Britain/Poland? If you didn't have children, where do you think you would be living now? Britain? Poland?
What city/town?

Part 3. Relationship and childbearing

Q3.1. Meeting a partner

How (when and where) did you meet your partner?

How would you describe your relationship and how has your life changed since you got married / started to live together?

Where there any important moments in your relationship during this period?

Q3.2. Deciding to have a child

How was it when you decided to have a child?

What aspects (if any) did you considered when you decided to have a child (employment, relationship, housing, education, age, others)?

Q3.3. Imagining being a parent

How did you imagine being a parent before you had your child?

Has it changed now?

Has your life changed since your child was born? What has changed?

Q3.4. Family building plans?

What are your family-building plans? More children? When?

How they are similar / different to what they would have been in Poland?

Q3.5. Bringing up a child in the UK

What would you like to provide your children with?

What hopes and ambitions do you have for their future?

How are you bringing up your children - do you see them as Polish, British, other?

Q3.6. Relationships with others

Since you had your child/children, has anything changed in your relationship with family and friends in Poland?

Prompt on:

- Contacts with respondent's parents (and in-laws, if Polish), other relatives, such as brothers and sisters, other relatives and friends

- Intensity of contacts?

- Number of visits in Poland?

- Family visiting you in the UK?

Who do you socialise with? Polish people? British? Do you know your neighbours? Why is this?

Part 4. Plans about settling in the UK / returning to Poland

Q4.1. Plans

Do you plan to stay in the UK, if so for how long? Why? (*compare with survey answers*)

Under what circumstances would you return to Poland?

What would have to change in Poland or in the UK in order to make you return to Poland?

Q4.2. Relationship between childbearing and settlement

Did the 'becoming a parent experience' change your intentions regarding your intended length of stay in the UK? How?

What are the advantages/disadvantages of being a migrant with children?

Q4.3. Being Polish in the UK

What do you think it means to be Polish in the UK?

Do you keep up your Polishness in the UK?

Do you speak Polish at home? Watch Polish TV or listen to Polish radio / songs?

Why is this? Why do you think you feel this way?

What about your children? How do they feel about this?

Q4.4. What are the other factors influencing your settlement in the UK and return to Poland?

Prompt on:

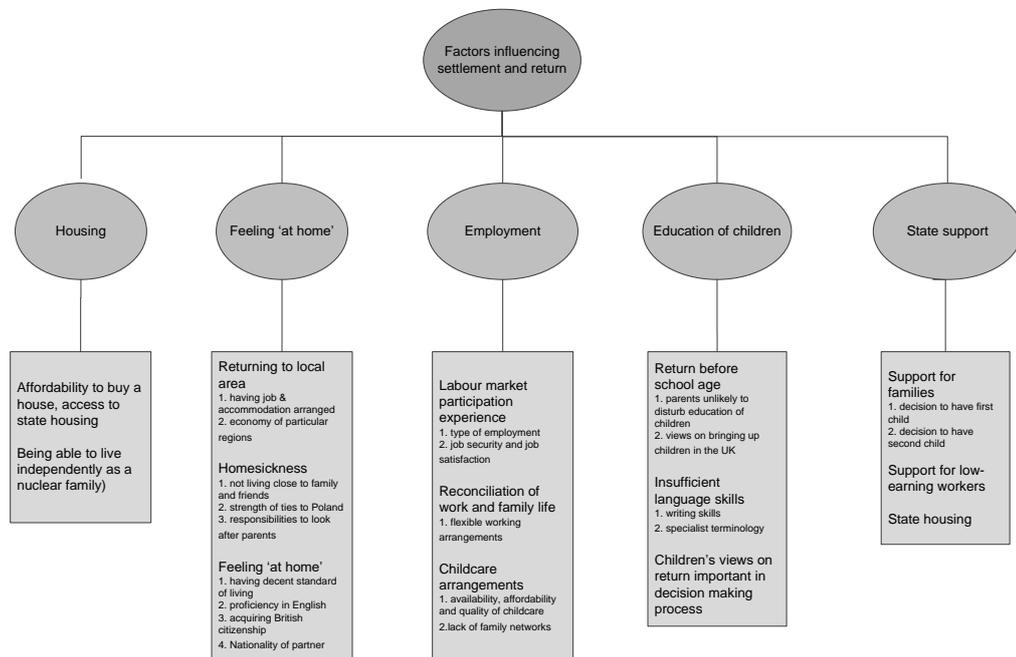
- Economic vs. non-economic factors,

- Objective/external factors vs. subjective/individual factors, and

- Child-related vs. non-child related.

- Type of factors: housing, feeling 'at home', employment, education of children, state support, as per figure below.

Q4.5. Which of these factors are most important for you? Has the importance of these factors changed over years? If so, what caused this change?



Conclude interview by asking respondent whether:

- she/he has any additional comments or questions,
- she/he was expecting some questions that haven't been asked.

Thank interviewee for her/his time.

12.2 Polish language version

Box 12.2 Polish language version of the interview topic guide

Każda osoba, z którą będzie przeprowadzony wywiad będzie poinformowana, że:

- wszystkie informacje udzielone w czasie wywiadu są poufne i będą wykorzystane tylko na użytek mojego badania,
- jeśli informant wyrazi zgodę, wywiad zostanie nagrany w celu sporządzenia notatek z wywiadu,
- informacje zebrane w czasie wywiadu będą wykorzystane w mojej pracy doktorskiej oraz artykułach naukowych,
- informant będzie poproszony o podpisanie zgody na badanie przed rozpoczęciem wywiadu,
- wywiad będzie trwał ok. 45-60 minut.

Plan wywiadu

Część 1. Omówienie /sprawdzenie informacji przedstawionych w ankiecie

Q1.1. Czy coś się zmieniło w Pani/a życiu / rodzinie od czasu kiedy wypełniona była ankieta?

- Zmiany: więcej dzieci, zmiana w statusie związku, zmiana pracy (macierzyński itp.)

- Zgoda / niezgoda z poszczególnymi stwierdzeniami

- Zmiana planów dotyczących pozostania / powrotu?

Jeśli zaszły zmiany, to kiedy i dlaczego? Jakie konsekwencje te zmiany mają na inne aspekty życia w UK / powrotu do PL?

(odpowiedzi respondenta z ankiety będą przygotowane z wyprzedzeniem przed wywiadem i będą służyły jako przypomnienie odpowiedzi)

Q1.2. Czy chce Pan / Pani coś dodać do komentarzy udzielonych w ankiecie?

Część 2. Przyjazd i mieszkanie w Wielkiej Brytanii

Q2.1. Jaki był główny powód przyjazdu do Wielkiej Brytanii?

Q2.2. Życie w Wielkiej Brytanii

Jak opisał(a)by Pani /Pan swoje życie tutaj?

Co się Pani/u podoba / co się nie podoba?

Co zmienił(a)by Pan/i?

W jakim stopniu mieszkanie tutaj (w MIEJSCOWOŚĆ) jest podobne do mieszkania w innych miejscowościach, w których Pani wcześniej mieszkała? (W Wielkiej Brytanii, w innych krajach)?

Q2.3. Jakie ma Pani krótko-i długo-falowe plany dotyczące przyszłości w Wielkiej Brytanii? / Polsce?

Jeśli nie miał(a)by Pan/i dzieci, gdzie teraz mieszkał(a)by Pan/i? W Wielkiej Brytanii? W Polsce? W jakiej miejscowości?

Część 3. Rodzina/związek i rodzicielstwo

Q3.1. Spotkanie partnera

Kiedy i gdzie spotkał(a) Pan(i) swojego partnera / ojca / matkę dzieci?

Jak opisał(a)by Pan(i) swój związek?

Jak wasze życie zmieniło się od czasu jak jesteście razem / wzięliście ślub / zamieszkaliście razem?

Czy w czasie waszego związku miały miejsce jakieś ważne wydarzenia?

Q3.2. Podjęcie decyzji o dziecku

Jak podjęliście decyzję o dziecku?

Czy i jakie czynniki braлиście pod uwagę kiedy decydowaliście się na dziecko (praca, związek, sytuacja mieszkaniowa, kwestie związane z szkolnictwem, wiek, inne)?

Q3.3. Wyobrażenia o byciu rodzicem

Jak sobie Pan(i) wyobrażał(a) bycie rodzicem zanim miał(a) Pan(i) swoje dziecko?

Czy Pani/a wyobrażenia uległy teraz zmianie?

Czy i jak zmieniło się Pani/a życie od czasu urodzenia dziecka? Co się zmieniło?

Q3.4. Plany rodzinne

Jakie ma Pan(i) plany związane z rodziną? Więcej dzieci? Kiedy?

Do jakiego stopnia te plany są podobne / różnią się do planów, które miał(a)by Pan(i) w Polsce?

Q3.5. Wychowywanie dziecka w Wielkiej Brytanii

Co chciał(a)by Pan(i) zapewnić swojemu dziecku?

Jakie ma Pan(i) nadzieje i ambicje związane z przyszłością dzieci?

W jaki sposób wychowuje Pan(i) dzieci? Czy postrzega je Pan(i) jako Polaków? Brytyjczyków? Jeszcze inaczej?

Q3.6. Związki z rodziną

Od kiedy pojawiły się dzieci, czy coś się zmieniło w Pani/a stosunkach z rodziną i przyjaciółmi w Polsce?

- Kontakty z rodzicami (teściami), innymi krewnymi: siostrami, braćmi, przyjaciółmi?

- Intensywność kontaktów?

- Częstotliwość wizyt w Polsce?

- Rodzina odwiedzająca w Wielkiej Brytanii?

Z kim się Pan(i) przyjaźni / spotyka? Z Polakami? Brytyjczykami? Czy zna Pan(i) sąsiadów? Dlaczego?

Część 4. Plany dotyczące mieszkania w Wielkiej Brytanii / powrotu do Polski

Q4.1. Plany

Czy planuje Pan(i) pozostać w Wielkiej Brytanii? Jak długo? *(porównać z odpowiedzi z ankiety)*

Kiedy zdecydował(a)by się Pan(i) wrócić do Polski? Co musiałoby się stać/wydarzyć?

Co musiałoby się zmienić w Polsce lub w Wielkiej Brytanii, żeby zdecydował(a) się Pan(i) wrócić do Polski?

Q4.2. Związek pomiędzy rodzicielstwem a pozostaniem w Wielkiej Brytanii

Czy doświadczenie zostania rodzicem w Wielkiej Brytanii miało wpływ na Pan(i) plany dotyczące pozostania w Wielkiej Brytanii? W jaki sposób?

Jakie są zalety / wady bycia emigrantem z dziećmi?

Q4.3. Bycie Polakiem w Wielkiej Brytanii

Co Pan(i) zdaniem oznacza bycie Polakiem w Wielkiej Brytanii?

Czy podtrzymuje Pani polskość w Wielkiej Brytanii?

Czy w domu rozmawiacie po polsku? Oglądacie polską TV, słuchacie polskiego radia / piosenek? Dlaczego?

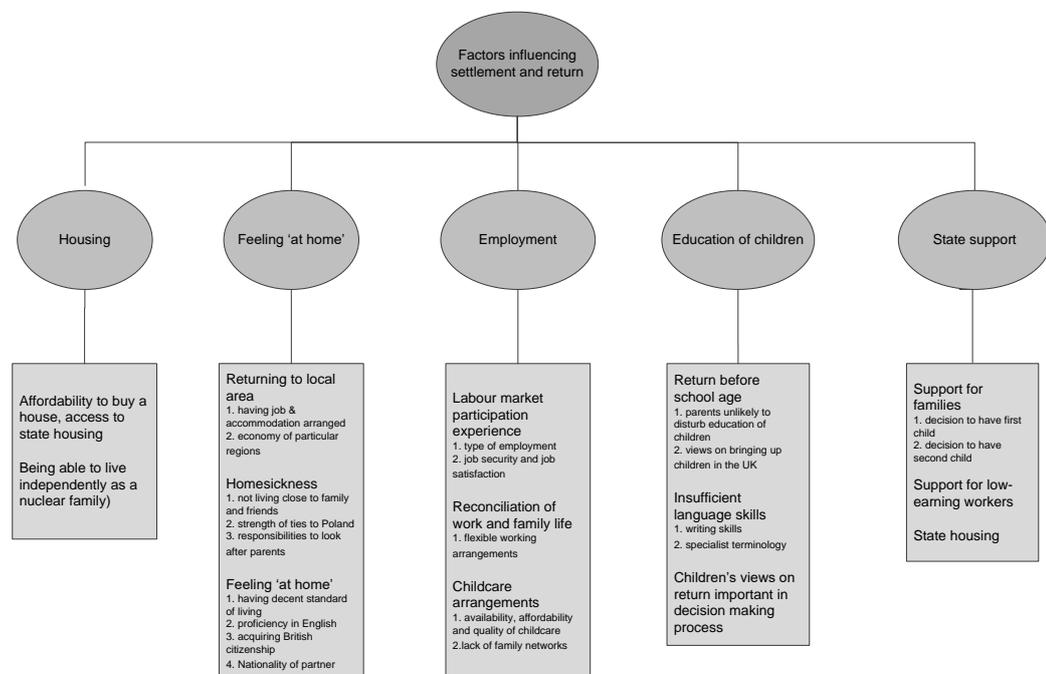
A jak reagują na to Pani/a dzieci? Jak one reagują na polskość?

Q4.4. Czy są jakieś inne czynniki, które mają wpływ na decyzję o pozostaniu w Wielkiej Brytanii lub powrocie do Polski?

Czynniki:

- Ekonomiczne / nieekonomiczne,
- Obiektywne / zewnętrzne vs. subiektywne / wewnętrzne
- związane z dzieckiem / nie związane z dzieckiem.
- Typ czynników: sprawy mieszkaniowe, poczucie, że jest się u siebie, sprawy związane z pracą, edukacja dzieci, pomoc państwa / zasiłki socjalne / zapomogi.

Q4.5. Które z tych czynników są dla Pani/a najważniejsze? Czy ważność tych czynników zmieniła się na przestrzeni ostatnich lat? Jeśli tak, to co spowodowało, że inne czynniki są teraz ważniejsze niż kiedyś?



Podsumowanie wywiadu poprzez zadanie następujących pytań:

Czy ma Pan(i) dodatkowe pytania lub komentarze do mnie?

Czy oczekiwał(a) Pan(i) jakichś pytań, których nie zadałam?

Dziękuję za poświęcony czas!

13 Annex 4 Interviewee consent form and information sheet

Participant identification number where applicable

CONSENT FORM

Project Title: Migration and childbearing. Impact of childbearing on Polish migrants' settlement decisions in the United Kingdom

Name of Researcher:

(to be completed by participant)

I confirm that I have read and understood the information sheet dated

DATE:

On Information Sheet

For the above project which I may keep for my records and have had the opportunity to ask any questions I may have.

I agree to take part in the above study and am willing to:

- be interviewed. The interview will last for about one hour.
- have the interview recorded for transcription purposes.

I understand that my information will be held and processed for the following purposes:

- doctoral research (PhD thesis)
- academic and policy publications and other engagements (e.g. presentations at conferences).

I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving any reason without being penalised or disadvantaged in any way.

Name of Participant Date Signature

Researcher Date Signature

Migration and childbearing
Impact of childbearing on Polish migrants' settlement
decisions
in the United Kingdom

Thank you very much for agreeing to be interviewed as part of my PhD research study. My name is Barbara Janta and I am a doctoral researcher at the Institute for Employment Research at the University of Warwick.

This interview is part of my doctoral research looking into Polish migrants' childbearing in the UK. I am interested in Polish migrants who become parents in the UK. In my study I focus on the issue how childbearing experience influences Polish migrants' decisions to settle in the UK or to return to Poland.

During this interview of approximately one hour, I will ask you a number of questions regarding your parenting experience in the UK, your family life, your experience of work and childcare and education services, and your plans for the future. If you prefer not to answer any particular questions, you will have the right not to answer them. If you agree, the interview will be recorded for transcription purposes. All information which is collected during our interview discussion will be kept strictly confidential. Any information which could identify you will be removed and interview data will be stored in a secure way.

Information gained during this interview will be reported in a PhD thesis and other academic and policy publications and public engagements (presentations, conferences etc.)

You are asked to sign the study Consent Form but you can still withdraw at any point without giving reason and without any consequences.

More detail about me and my research is available at the University of Warwick website:

<http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/soc/ier/people/phdstudents/barbara/>

If you have any questions regarding my research you can contact me by email ([REDACTED]) or by phone ([REDACTED]).

Should anyone have any complaints relating to a study conducted at the University or by University's employees or students, the complainant should be advised to contact the Deputy Registrar (contact detail below)

http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/services/rss/researchgovernance/complaints_procedure/

Thank you!

