

Childbearing behaviours of Polish migrants in Norway

Abstract: The chapter explores the aspects of childbearing, procreation plans and fertility among Polish migrant couples and families settled in Norway. It tackles the migration-fertility nexus by engaging with five hypotheses put forward by Milewski (2007) and sheds light on childbearing decision and the germane topics linked to fertility in the Polish-Norwegian transnationality. Through an integrated analysis of the quantitative and qualitative data, the chapter explores the links between mobility and a desire (and lack thereof) to have children, as well as the reasons for having more children. It outlines some issues around the timing of a first-time-parenthood and having subsequent children abroad, seeing them through a migration lens, i.e. experienced in a distinctively different cultural setting of Norway. The empirical material is guided by a mixed-methods approach and combines two datasets from the Transfam project: the quantitative data collected through an on-line survey (n=648) and the qualitative material from biographic interviews. The results confirm the hypothesis of a one-spouse migration being disruptive to fertility, while also pointing to the catching-up fertility behaviours. We argue that an interrelation of family biographic events, and a fulfilment of the family's procreation desires, occur after the reunification and settlement in Norway.

Key words: migration, fertility, childbearing, Norway, Polish migrants

Introduction

The area of research on the reproduction/fertility issues is located at the junction of the personal and the political. A transition to parenting, especially one occurring for the first time, and even more so in the foreign context following international mobility, constitutes a profoundly significant biographic event for young parents in general, and new mothers in particular (e.g. DeSouza 2014). At the same time, there is also a clear political and societal interest invested in demographics, for which fertility decisions, motivations behind having children or remaining childless, as well as such vital issues as social, economic, and health-related costs of pregnancies and subsequent caring for children. This paper addresses a specific context of reproductive choices, discussing Polish migrants in Norway on the basis of a web-survey and qualitative interviews.

Norway and Poland differ in reproduction patterns – in 2015, the total fertility rate in Norway (1.73) was much higher than in Poland, where it stands at 1.29. While the age of a mother at first birth has been growing steadily in Poland (23 years in 1990 versus 27.2 years in 2014), in Norway the age has remained relatively the same in the past ten years (i.e. 28 years in 2004 and 28.9 in 2015) (SSB 2016). However, a much lower number of women remains childless in Norway compared to Poland (see Table 5.1). Similarly, the consecutive births are much more common in Norway with the mode of 2-child than in Poland, with the mode of 1-child. As it will be discussed in this article, this discrepancy can be partially explained by the value-normative hierarchy in Poland, in which femininity is largely grounded in maternity, and the cultural norm and pressure to become a mother is extremely high on women, yet the practical lack of any meaningful social welfare assistance equally deters further procreation (see e.g. Kotowska 2014; Ślusarczyk and Slany 2016). The background of these dissimilarities can be used to demonstrate how the fertility patterns of Polish migrants change after moving to Norway.

Table 5.1: Number of children per woman (for female cohorts with 1980 as a year of birth)

	Childless	1 child	2 children	3 children	4 children or more
Poland (women born 1980)	37.7%	33.0%	23.8%	4.3%	Less than 1%
Norway (women born 1980 at age 35)	22.3%	20.2%	38.2%	15.3%	3.9

*Sources: Poland - GUS 2014, Norway - SSB 2016; own tabulation.

Further, according to a current media hype, Polish women of reproductive age are increasingly leaving Poland and become mothers in other European countries. For example, some headlines read “Polish women do not want to have children in Poland. They give birth in Norway and Great Britain” (nf.pl, n.d.), “Polish women bearing children abroad because they cannot count on their own state” (GW, 26.05.2014), “Polish women prefer having children abroad. Contemporary Poland is no country for children” (Niezależna, 14.03.2015), “Here we can afford children – on the Polish baby boom in the British Isles” (Dzieci.pl, 08.09.2014), “Polish women have the highest number of children in Europe. However, that is only outside Poland where we do not have to worry about our future” (NaTemat, 20.08.2015). This selection of

headlines (similar to the one made by Janta 2013b: 4) illuminates not only the preoccupation with the migration/fertility junction but also a focus on the macro-social and political level rather than on individual experiences of fathers and mothers.

Our study focuses on the actual experiences of individuals by painting a portrait of 648 respondents participating in a web-survey targeting Polish migrants in Norway, with a supplement of quotations stemming from a qualitative analysis of 30 biographic narratives shared by migrants. In order to analyse the phenomenon in the following pages, we first refer to the key concepts found in the literature to date, especially reiterating Milewski's five hypotheses on migration and fertility (2007). Then we introduce the data and methods to be used in our analysis. The discussion of the findings highlights the mixed-method approach in a thematic manner, as the presentation of the survey's analysis is supplemented by interview quotations. The discussions' section links the analysis with the initial theoretical arguments, and we proceed to drawing our conclusions at the end.

Migration/fertility nexus: theories and previous research

Earlier scholarship on fertility and its relation to migration seems to suffer from a certain disjuncture, meaning that while the studies in demography have been adopted to the mainstream migration research, it has only recently been the case that a qualitative and family-centred transnational approach became an important perspective for examining international mobility. At the same time, it is in the latter transnationalism-driven branch that the accounts of transitions to parenthood/parenting or motherhood/mothering have experienced a renaissance as a research theme. Initially and continuously present in the feminist research on motherhood (e.g. Fox 2009; Hays 1996; Katz-Rothman 1989; Miller 2007; Woliver 2002), the experiences of pregnancy and childbirth following migration are now being critically examined. On the crossroads of the broadly conceived macro- and micro-dimensions, having children versus being childless is associated with a variety of feminist and family-centred debates on the one hand (e.g. Lee et al. 2014; Letherby 2003), while – on the other hand – it also creates a crucial split of social categories into parents and non-parents for macro-analysis.

In the relatively more popular area of migration/fertility nexus within the studies in demography and life-course, it has been quite typical to formulate hypotheses pertinent to reproductive behaviours, even though the shortcomings and challenges of the data available on mobile populations have been largely observed (see Ortensi 2015 for review). Several previous studies in the field, concentrated on the realm of socio-demographic characteristics, cultural/ethnic context, economic or living conditions, as well as the so-called timing effects,

have crafted a range of hypotheses divisible into the quantum (completed fertility) and tempo (timing of birth) hypotheses (Wilson 2013; Milewski 2007: 861; Kulu 2005; Kulu and Milewski 2007; Ortensi 2015: 1437). Historically speaking, however, the field has been consistent with regard to a process of the recurrence of varied hypotheses and their complete revamping. Rather than prove or reject hypotheses, some scholars (e.g. Goldscheider and Uhlenberg 1969) have innovatively challenged the implicit claim about the convergence of fertility behaviours of migrants to the general population of the receiving society, though they seemed to have overlooked the importance of gender, which has only become integrated to the analyses after the 1990s gender turn. The progress in the formulation of hypotheses over time can be linked to the subsequent strands of migration theorising gaining traction. For example, the initial prominence of the assimilation and acculturation framework or a current adoption of the feminist paradigm for studying mobility and parenting have had a clear impact on the refinement of the said demographic hypotheses. In this article, we analyse our data in the light of five of these hypotheses developed by Milewski (2007: 861–865), namely: (1) disruption, (2) interrelation of events, (3) adaptation, (4) socialisation, and (5) selection and characteristics, devised on the basis of earlier research and orderly presented. Finally, we propose a sixth hypothesis as an original contribution, centring on the cultural norm and viewing having a child as an “added value” upon migration (6). We shall now briefly review these hypotheses.

- (1) **“Disruption” hypothesis** operates under the general assumption that migration is a process that lasts from the initial consideration of the move, through the actual mobility and the early effects of international mobility. Both for individual migrants’ biographies and for their families, the experience is extremely stressful. The uncertainty of the state of flux, where either partners or parents and children get separated, in itself suggests that procreation becomes halted. Partners being in two countries, anticipating and planning the move, as well as accommodation to the new environment (i.e. a worsened status, living conditions, unemployment of one of the partners immediately after the move) are all forms of family disruptions that are said to affect fertility.
- (2) **“Interrelation of events” hypothesis** assumes that biographic transitions can occur simultaneously and proposes to treat the family reunification as a sort of “beginning” of a new union, a relationship that starts to function abroad. Andersson (2004: 771), for instance, looked at foreign-born women in Sweden and discovered that “immigrant childless women display elevated propensities of entry into motherhood during their first few years in Sweden”, arguing that a family/union formation was correlated to migration. In accordance with the ‘interrelation of events’ hypothesis, it is crucial to

- verify the partnership status of those engaging in mobility (Milewski 2007: 862) and to determine if migrants engage in “catching-up” fertility-wise (Kulu 2005; Sobotka 2008).
- (3) **“Adaptation” hypothesis** extends the temporal horizon of the migration and fertility nexus, looking at long-term consequences, e.g. initial limitation of procreation after arrival paired with later convergence (Mayer and Riphon 2000). Milewski splits the factors pivotal for resemblance or convergence of patterns into cultural and socio-economic traits (2007: 862). These should further be broadly-conceived as Andersson (2004) demonstrated the significance of the Swedish universalist welfare state for foreign-born women in Sweden (see also Ortensi 2015). This may be more relevant than acculturation, social anchoring and settlement orientations, also in the case of Polish migrants in Norway.
 - (4) **“Socialization” hypothesis** counters the convergence assumption and underscores the role of the values, norms and behaviours adopted during a socialisation process in the country of origin. Rather than adapting to the receiving country’s surroundings, the ‘socialisation’ hypothesis positions migrant women in a stark difference to the majority population and sees them as captives of cultural entrenchment (Coleman, cf. Ortensi 2015: 1438), thus following their home culture’s prescriptions regarding fertility choices – e.g. reproducing the pro-natalist policy (Sobotka 2008; Ortensi 2015). Viewed through the prism of ethnicity and culture, “[i]mmigrants from different countries of origin who exhibit different fertility patterns may also show fertility differences in the same country of destination” (Milewski, *ibid*).
 - (5) **“Selection and characteristics” hypothesis** also assumes convergence, but draws on more complex and unobvious features of migrant populations, linking fertility to the “observed characteristics, such as education, or [inferring] from unobserved factors, such as social-mobility ambitions or family proneness (Milewski 2007: 864; Hwang and Saenz 1997; Kulu 2005). It is here observed whether women who become migrants have any pre-existing features that position them in proximity with their counterparts in the destination country. Unlike the study on Mexican women arriving in the US, which discovered that women of certain underprivileged socio-economic strata, also exhibiting higher fertility patterns, tend to be the ones migrating (Frank and Hueveline 2005), Polish female migrants are characterised by a particularly high educational achievement, the impact of which needs to be determined. Nonetheless, the question of

“who migrates” from the sending community remains critical for studying the migration/fertility nexus (Kulu 2005).

- (6) **Cultural norms and child as the “added value”**. This original hypothesis proposes to take into consideration the pertinent cultural norms and family reunion abroad. On the one hand, having a child is an effect of being together again after reunification and a way of solidifying the continuation of a family and its togetherness. On the other, having children stems from the uncertainty of women’s position on the Norwegian labor market and – more broadly – in the Norwegian society. Polish women struggle on the job market, and therefore consider “home” and “family” a safer space for proving their worth. In addition, the Norwegian state recognises and gratifies having children, granting financial means and a welfare protection, again reiterating women’s societal value and self-worth. Cultural pressures of motherhood in Poland may be also connected with the general gender ideology, according to which the position of a valuable female citizen is acquired through being a mother (e.g. Kotowska 2014; Hryciuk and Korolczuk 2015, Pustułka 2014; Muszel 2013).

As already mentioned, only some discussions in family studies have managed to permeate migration scholarship, focused primarily on specific contextual experiences of ethnic motherhood. The research is often geographically and culturally contextualised and features predominantly a life-course perspective (Nilsen et al. 2012; Kulu and Milewski 2008, 2007), as well as qualitative examinations of female biographies and voices (De Souza 2014), often marked by the hardships and demands of transnational (on-remote) mothering and difficult reunifications (e.g. Pratt 2012). The overall, scarcely covered topics that pertain to the lives of actual women becoming parents abroad (rather than dealing with the issues associated with leaving their children behind) include studies on pregnancy as a predictor for depletion of a migrant woman’s health and well-being (Macintyre and Dennerstein 1995; Nahas et al. 1999), the alternative timelines of a first-time motherhood – either in comparison to the majority population (de Valk and Liefbroer 2007), or as a factor linked to a labor market status (Andersson and Scott 2005; Segura 1994). Subsequent groups of researchers challenge the discursive and political meanings ascribed to the notion of “pregnant immigrants”, who presumably use their bodies as a means for acquiring citizenship and other rights (Grossman 2010; Luibhéid 2013; Mullally 2009). All of such themes overlap and present a matrix of women’s burdens in the dimensions of their legal status, ethnicity, age, education, social class, race, etc.

Tracking the reproduction behaviours of Polish migrant mothers has only sparked research interest in the post-2004 context of intensified mobility. Researchers have recently argued (Ślusarczyk and Slany 2016, forthcoming) that discourses of “the loss of children” and “the loss of families” can be observed. The first one covers a disproportion of fertility rates compared for Polish women in Poland and abroad (particularly in the UK and Ireland). The main element of the said discourse is a critique of the fragmented and incoherent welfare and family policies in Poland, seen as deterring people from having children, especially when combined with the challenging labor market situation and the lack of institutional support. This results in the majority of women in their reproductive age being reluctant towards expanding their family models beyond 2+1 or 2+2 standards. The other discourse of the loss of families underlines that migrants do not return, and the tendency toward family reunifications or migrations of entire families/households grows stronger. The discourse emphasises the loss of children framing, reiterating that any mass migrant returns are an illusion, while expressing a critique of the state policies of the present and several former governments.

Exemplifying the other side of the discourse in the case of the Polish influx in the United Kingdom, special consideration is given to the demographic structure of the migrant population – namely, the comparably young age of migrants vis-à-vis local population – led to (the already partially fulfilled) forecasts of the present high numbers of children born to Polish mothers in the UK (White 2011; Zumpe et al. 2012; Janta 2013a, 2013b; Hoorens et al. 2011). For instance, Poland was found to be the most common country of birth for women having children in the UK in 2011, coming up to 20.500 births for Polish female nationals, resulting in the TFR of 2.13. Janta’s research, which supplies one of the few in-depth statistical reviews and analyses, suggests that “fertility relates to an imminent potential population loss due to migration and children being born abroad” for Poland, with a corresponding population gain observed for the UK (2013a). Again, the childbearing age of Polish nationals leaving for European destinations has already led to a drop in birthrates and “it is almost certain that emigration had led, in absolute terms, to fewer children being born in Poland in recent years than would have been in the absence of migration, through the removal from the resident population of substantial numbers of women of childbearing age” (Hoorens et al. 2011: 41). In fact, the research conducted in Poland supports this statement (Slany and Solga 2014), as it was calculated that had the female migrants in their reproductive age stayed in Poland and mirrored the fertility patterns of the women who stayed in their country of origin, then the numbers of births in 2011 alone would be 22.5 and 15 thousand higher in urban and rural areas, respectively. This represents a number of total births that is 10 percent larger for the whole population. Qualitative

research has generally concurred with the argument of fulfilling the earlier unfulfillable reproductive desires; it also elaborated further that having a baby abroad increases a sense of belonging and eventually leads to processes of social anchoring and a settlement orientation abroad (White 2011: 176–7; Lopez Rodriguez 2010; Muszel 2013; Pustułka 2014).

Methodology

The paper relies on a mixed-methods approach which thematically links the two empirical components of the Transfam¹ project, whereas the findings were combined in the application of the analytical framework.

We use the quantitative data from the Transfam web-survey (Huang et al. 2015), whose goal was

to contribute with empirical evidence to a better understanding of how migrant Polish young people plan and experience their new parenthood in the trajectory of work and a family life, in light of their mobility and living arrangements, and the availability and accessibility of welfare and child care systems (Huang et al. 2015).

The questionnaire was pre-tested in April and early May 2015, eventually going live with collecting responses from 25 May to 30 June of the same year. The sample is not representative for the Polish population of migrants in Norway, as it is not possible to sample/toss the migrants due to the unavailability of a sampling frame. This problem is common to all survey studies on migrants, especially after the Freedom of Movement decree being instated in Europe. Official registration lists of migrants are not usually favoured since they are known to be incomplete. Convenience sampling was employed instead. The survey was addressed to the couples who either had children younger than 18, or the childless couples with one or two partners living in Norway. In addition, Polish single parents living in Norway were encouraged to participate in the survey. The approach (i.e. an online survey), sampling and selection of the targeted respondents brought on limitations as well as advantages to the study. As far as the latter are concerned, the survey clearly cannot treat the findings as representative for the entire population of Polish migrants in Norway. Another disadvantage is that the self-

¹ The research leading to these results has received funding from the Polish-Norwegian Research Programme operated by the National Centre for Research and Development under the Norwegian Financial Mechanism 2009–2014 in the frame of Project Contract No Pol-Nor/197905/4/2013.

selection is potentially biased with regards to educational levels (higher for Transfam survey respondents) and omits the experience of single migrants, excluding in particular the significant commuter/pendulum flow of migrant men. The advantages of the study include its high accessibility ensured by the Internet medium, which further means that Poles scattered across remote areas of Norway (rather than those concentrated in large cities) could be included in the research. An online survey is also anonymous and thus eliminates a potential threat that migrants might proceed with excessive caution due to their concerns of being under surveillance. Finally, the approach allows to capture the experiences of those who are rarely included in any official registers, e.g. stay-at-home mothers, “tourists” in the grey zone, as well as those permanently in flux in the transnational space.

The total number of completed responses amounted to 648 and, importantly, not only had this research collected a variety of descriptive socio-demographic statistics, but also included an entire survey section dedicated to Family Planning.² Throughout the chapter, the analysis is being conducted on the subsamples selected in order to portray the situation of different families, women of diverging ages, or the consequences of varying migration paths (e.g. younger women, families with a man migrating first, families with vis-à-vis those without children).

The qualitative data were collected with the aim of exploring *Migrant families in Norway/Structure of power relations and negotiating values and norms in transnational families*,³ employing qualitative in-depth narrative/biographic interviews with Polish parents in Norway. For the purpose of this article, we reviewed and selected accounts from men and women of 30 households. Procreative decisions and experiences with child-bearing were featured as one of the key areas in the qualitative interviews, which sought to reveal both typical and subtle factors behind timing parenthood transitions and choices to continue procreation. The data from the visual timeline tool filled in by the respondents in order to mark important biographic events is reviewed for temporal illustrations of hypotheses, while the answers to probing to find out about the first and subsequent births, as well as the initial and current

² It is important to note that the survey was deployed to a specific target population and, as such, has certain limitations. Firstly, only people in partnerships (formal/informal, childless/with children) and single parents were invited to participate, meaning that a population of childless single people was not examined. Secondly, the survey does not pinpoint the data of a union formation and neither gathers information on children who are over 18 years of age, nor asks about the biological relationships of children and their guardians. As a consequence, parents of adults, patchwork families, and adoptions are not tracked by the study.

³ More information on the respondents within the WP2 research can be found in Ślusarczyk and Pustułka 2014, 2016 and in the chapter by Guribye et al. of this volume.

reproductive plans (fulfilment of a desired level of procreation), were analysed through open-coding methods.

The cumulative approach to data increases the internal validity of the material in reference to the observed connections and saturation, while it also presents the voices of people as a means of illustrating the numerical findings that take the centre stage in the chapter.

Findings: Migration and Reproduction in the case of Poles in Norway

The following sections presenting the results begin with a brief introduction to the survey sample, already honing in on the issues pertinent to reproduction. The subsequent sections are specifically dedicated to answering the research questions posed by the article, as viewed through the lens of the migration/fertility hypotheses.

Socio-demographic background of the survey sample

To begin with, it is worth highlighting that the gender ratio of male to female study participants among the 648 respondents is 40.3 percent to 59.7 percent, suggesting a feminized sample that is not uncommon for a research focused on family matters. The average age of a respondent is 36.4 years (SD = 8.1 yrs)⁴, with the range of 18 to 67, featuring an overall younger age of women in the general sample.

The data on the family situation indicates that a majority of respondents have a partner/husband/wife and most of the respondents in couples already have children (67.4 percent of the sample). 30.2 percent of the respondents have a partner/husband/wife, but they do not have children. 15 respondents (2.3 percent) raise children alone – 11 mothers and four fathers. A break-down of the family situation is given in Table 5.2 below.

Table 5.2: Respondents' family situation

	Number of respondents (frequency)	Percentage
<i>Has a partner/husband/wife and no children</i>	196	30.2
<i>Has a partner/husband/wife and a child/children</i>	437	67.4
<i>Raising a child/children alone</i>	15	2.3
	648	100.0

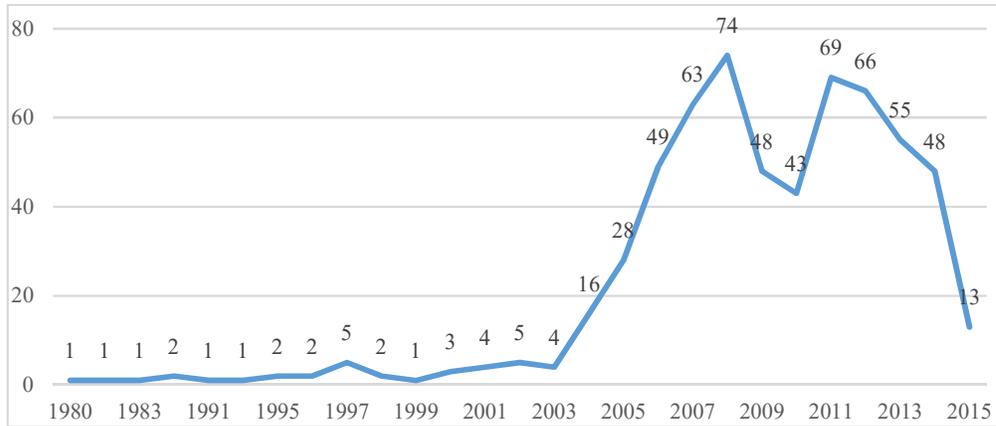
⁴ In reviewing the statistics, we use the following abbreviations: “SD” for Standard Deviation, “yrs” for years.

Zooming in on the reproduction and fertility contexts, the formalisation of a family union seems to be a dominant pattern, as 76.1 percent of the respondents in couples are married, and as many as 10.6 percent live in a formalised partnership (no. *samboerskap*). A further 11.8 percent have a *de iure* civil status “single” and maintain informal partnerships. Only 1.4 percent (nine respondents) are divorced. All but two respondents were born in Poland, though their partners’ countries of birth shows more diversity – 29 respondents (4.5 percent) had Norwegian-born partners and 14 (2.2 percent) had partners born in other countries. Overall, the sample is dominated by the homogenous intra-ethnic Polish-Polish couples (589 respondents, 91 percent). Additionally, 15 single parents were born in Poland.

A closer look at the study sample with regard to migration patterns reveals an average length of stay in Norway of 6.1 years for those filling in the survey (SD = 4.4), and a slightly longer stay of 6.5 years for the partners (SD = 4.6). In fact, for the heterosexual couples (97.2 percent of the sample),⁵ it was confirmed that a trend of primary male migration dominates the stream of Polish mobility to Scandinavia (see e.g. Iglicka and Gmaj 2015), supported also by the fact that men generally spent more time in Norway. In addition, the migration pathways suggest a recent character of mobility in the sample, as Figure 5.1 depicts. Note that as many as 572 respondents (94 percent) arrived in the period following Poland’s accession to the European Union, meaning in 2004 and later.

Figure 5.1: The year of first arrival to Norway of the respondents (for a period longer than 3 months) (n=607)

⁵ In our sample there were 18 same-sex couples, 11 female/female couples (seven with children) and seven male/male couples (four with children). This constitutes 2.8 percent of the respondents. The article does not include the discussion on the specific situation of the same-sex couples due to the space limitation, although this is a theme that should be elaborated further due to a possible selection of the destination country based on its legal regulations regarding the same-sex partnerships (Stella 2015).



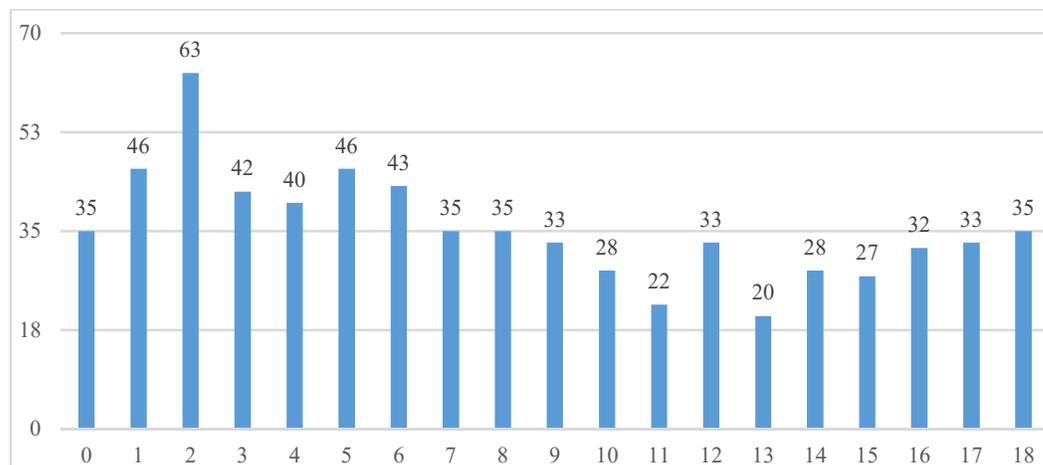
In general, both partners in a couple reside in Norway (76 percent of all couples; 481 cases) and, among those with alternative living arrangements, those with children are found to dominate (see Table 5.2).

Table 5.3: Residential situation of the respondents and their partners – in actual numbers of cases

Which of the following statements best describes your situation?			What is your partner's country of residence?				Total
			Poland	Norway	PL&Nor	Other	
I have a husband/wife/partner and we do not have children	Where do you live?	In Poland	7	2	2	0	11
		In Norway	10	161	1	2	174
		In Poland and Norway	2	1	5	0	8
		Other	0	2	0	1	3
	TOTALS		19	166	6	3	196
I have a husband/wife/partner and we have children	Where do you live?	In Poland	21	15	2	1	39
		In Norway	49	320	4	0	373
		In Poland and Norway	18	2	5	0	25
	TOTALS		88	337	11	1	437
Survey Sample Total	What is your country of residence? Where do you live?	In Poland	28	17	4	1	50
		In Norway	59	481	5	2	547
		In Poland and Norway	20	3	10	0	33
		Other	0	2	0	1	3
	TOTALS		107	503	19	4	633

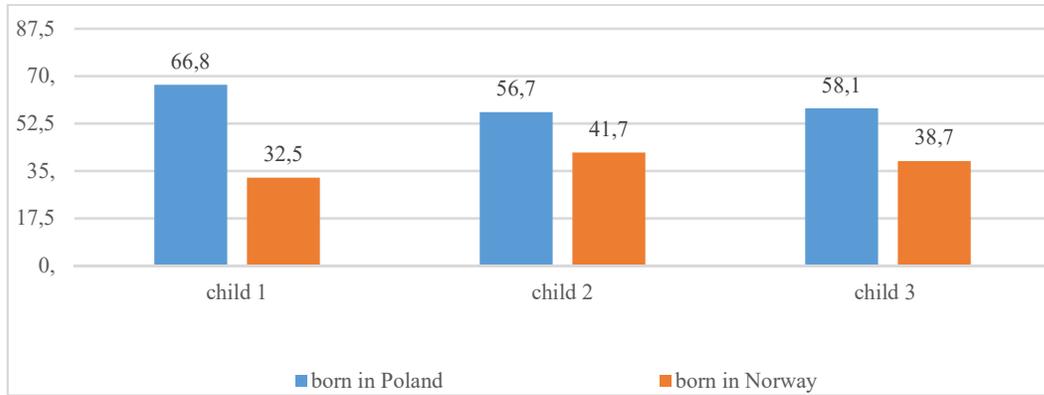
Despite the dominance of the respondents' residence in Norway, their sense of belonging vary and is split three-way between a slightly more common feeling at home in Poland (37.8 percent), feeling at home in Norway (27 percent) and a sizeable quantity of those who feel at home in both countries (33.2 percent). 2.1 percent of the respondents identify with other countries. Seventy percent of the respondents with children below the age of 18 predominantly have one child (265; 58.6 percent) or two children (156; 34.5 percent), and only 31 respondents have three or more children (6.8 percent). The respondents are parents to 676 children; however, the children below 18 years of age in the Polish families in Norway represented in our sample vary significantly with regard to age. While younger children dominate, the number of children in the aggregated age groups is given in Figure 5.2 below.

Figure 5.2: Number of youths under 18 in the specific age categories



What is important in the migration context is that, of all the children, 428 (63 percent) were born in Poland, 241 (36 percent) were born in Norway and seven (1 percent) were born in other countries. Furthermore, we note nearly a reversal of proportion in terms of the order of births and the place of birth. A relatively high percentage of 66.8 percent of births of the oldest children occurs in Poland and then oscillates around 55 percent for both the second and third child. While we only have few families with four children, later offspring are predominantly born in Norway (four out of six). The above patterns are demonstrated in Figure 5.3 below.

Figure 5.3: Place of birth (Poland/Norway) of the first and subsequent children (in percent)



It is on the basis of this general socio-demographic background that we develop more in-depth analyses of the migration/reproduction crossroads.

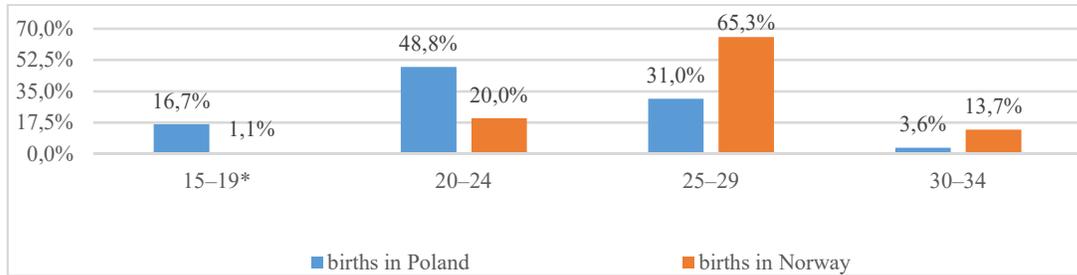
Does migration boost motherhood among Polish women?

Our sample is characterised by a rather early entry into procreation. For the women in our sample below the age of three and a half,⁶ the average age of having the first child is 25 years. While for those who gave birth to their first child in Poland, it equals 23 years, among those who gave birth to their first child in Norway, the average age of the first-time motherhood is 26.8 years. The average age is low when compared to the age determined for Poland, which was 27.2 years in 2014 (GUS 2015: 6). The transition to parenting occurs even sooner when looked through the prism of the Norwegian mothers, who – on average – have their first child at the age of 28.7 (SSB 2015).

When we look at the concentration of births within the age categories of the under-35 first-child in Norway female sub-sample, it appears that the births occurred most commonly when women were 25 to 29 years old, which is similar to the general population data for Poland. The group aged between 30 and 34 is represented to a lesser extent in the first births than it is so for mothers in Poland (GUS 2014), as future births are likely to occur for this group, to result in falling into this category. The data for the subsample of mothers under 35 is given in Figure 5.4.

Figure 5.4: Age at the first childbirth for those who are under 35 years – comparison between those whose first child was born in Norway (n=95) or in Poland (n=84)

⁶ As the survey did not ask whether the respondents had children above 18 years of age, the calculations here are limited to women aged 34 and younger in order to ascertain that all births are captured for a given female biography. Please note that in the subsequent chapters, the analysis is based on the data collected from heterosexual couples, without lone parents or same-sex couples.



*Note that childbirths for this age group mostly occurred at the age of 19.

The mother's education level strongly affects the timing of the first childbirth (GUS 2015: 290). In our study, for women below 35 with a university degree, the average age of becoming a mother is 26.7 (SD = 3), while for those with a secondary, vocational or elementary level of education the average time of becoming a mother is 23 years old (SD = 3.3).

In Poland, due to a wide access to tertiary education, the proportion of women with higher education becoming mothers has risen from 13 percent in 2000, to 26 percent in 2005, and to 47 percent in 2013 (GUS 2014). Still, the median age of university-educated mothers at first childbirth stands at 29 years. In our study's subsample of under-35 mothers, the degree-educated women are overrepresented (55 percent). The featured results indicate, on the one hand, that migration to Norway may be selective for women who are eager to start their fertility trajectories earlier, also among those with higher education. These factors coincided in the story of an interview respondent Karolina, who received a BA degree in Poland at the age of 21, moved abroad the same year (1999) and met her Norwegian partner a year later. Though she continued to work for the next few years, she revealed that finding the right partner was a turning point in her biography and oriented her towards family matters. She subsequently got married (2004) and gave birth to three children (2005, 2007, 2009), all those events basically taking place below the age of 30. Karolina expressed her contentment with being a young mother and more of a traditional partner to her husband, cutting down her work hours and taking on the bulk of the household and childcare responsibilities. In that sense, both quantitative and qualitative results do not exclude the hypothesis on the ongoing selection process, which favours more broadly opting for an earlier motherhood among mobile women. The age at the first childbirth is low compared to both Polish and Norwegian fertility patterns.

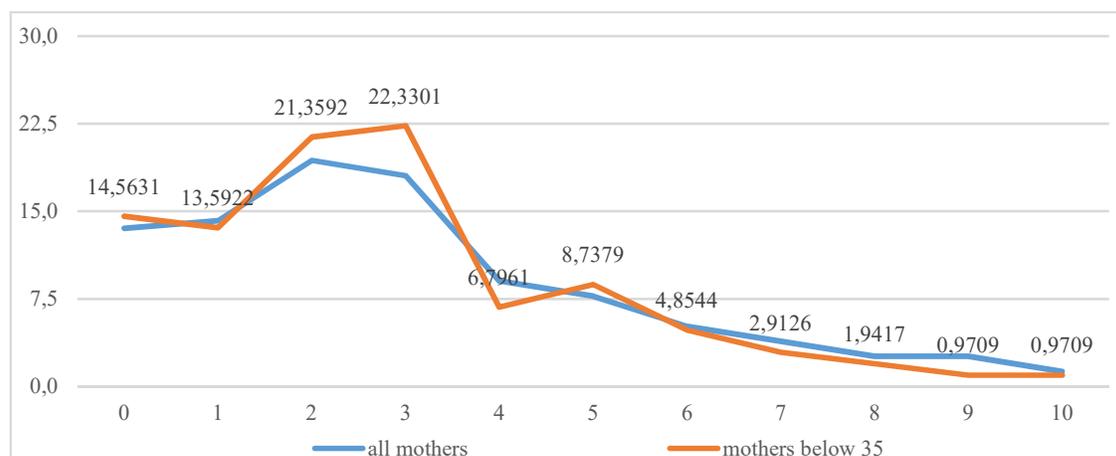
On the other hand, however, the findings may indicate that a disruption hypothesis appears to be quite accurate, in terms of women postponing childbearing due to migration. This could be due to the fact that the average age is in general higher than in the entire sample. Julia, who migrated to work in Norway as a nurse in 1999, indirectly points to migration as a delaying

factor behind her planned and desired procreation, partially due to the fact that her husband only joined her two years later:

As you have noted, I got married in 1997 but only had my first [child] in 2006. This was a very long time without [success]. First we were in different countries, then my husband came, but it was this time when we kept thinking it was not the right time yet – no apartment, no stable job, and we always managed to find “something”. And then when we decided it’s time... then we couldn’t, we had some psychological blockade [...] it was purely psychological. And then, the first child had come about in a specific time – my husband was changing jobs again, [I was going to Poland alone] and we had one week together [...] and then I was pregnant [Julia].

If we observe the group of women who migrated to Norway prior to the birth of their first child, we can confirm the **interrelation of events** hypothesis. We find that, on average, the time lapse between a childless woman’s arrival in Norway and the birth of her first child was only 3.3 years. Moreover, the fertility was very much intensified in the second and third year following an arrival, confirming the findings of Anderson (2004) or Anderson and Scott (2003). If we take into account the pregnancy period and the potential time of having-a-child decision-making process, then reproduction must have been undertaken shortly after the arrival. In parallel, it seems that many pregnancies coincide with the time of arrival to Norway, strengthening the suitability of this particular hypothesis. The interrelation appears to be at its strongest for younger women (the average gap length is 2.9 years/ SD = 2.4).

Figure 5.5: Time gap between a mother’s arrival to Norway and the birth of her first child in Norway (n=103 for mothers below the age of 35, and n=155 for all mothers) (in percent)



The interview with Aneta and Karol, who wed in 2004, already three years into Karol's employment in Norway, demonstrated a family trajectory on which a pregnancy shines as a decisive factor for the woman's migration:

Karol: We really wanted to have a child [... And she was pregnant quickly].

Researcher: And why did you make this decision to give birth here?

K: Well, I was here!

Aneta: And I could not imagine being with this little baby alone there, without her father. [...]

So I came here.

An even stronger evidence of the interrelation of events was observed based on the family biography example of high-skilled professionals, Malwina and Sławek, born (respectively) in 1971 and 1968. Sławek had been already working in a prestigious job in Norway for three years, when he met Malwina in 2002. Over the course of only next three years, the couple had gotten engaged and married, Malwina migrated to Norway (2003), the couple bought a house together (2004) and had their first child (2005). Though Malwina was initially very reluctant to relocate to Norway, she disclosed that a desire to have children had trumped her reservations:

Unfortunately that's how our life has turned out [...] because once we decided to start a family and discussed where and how, then conditions in Poland were as they were... Sławek has already been doing well here [...] so for this time when I knew I wanted to get pregnant, have a baby, then another one, for this we decided – to my dismay – to start this procreation activities here [Malwina].

The gap between an arrival and a birth of her first child in Norway is wider for a mother with a university degree – 3.5 years compared to 2.8 for women with a secondary or lower educational level. As suggested previously, this group of university graduates may show a tendency towards a postponement of childbirth, which can be linked to the adaptation hypothesis and indicate a convergence with the fertility patterns observed in Norway. Aneta who came to Norway already pregnant, actually waited six years to have another child in Norway. She is also realising that a break from the labor market is taking a toll on her career, despite her high education and ambitions:

Karol: We generally wanted to have children, we love them and maybe we'll have more...

Researcher: What does this depend on?

Aneta: We are not planning, but it depends on whether I find a job or not.

K: It would be great if my wife could work here and then become pregnant [...]

R: So first work, then children in Norway?

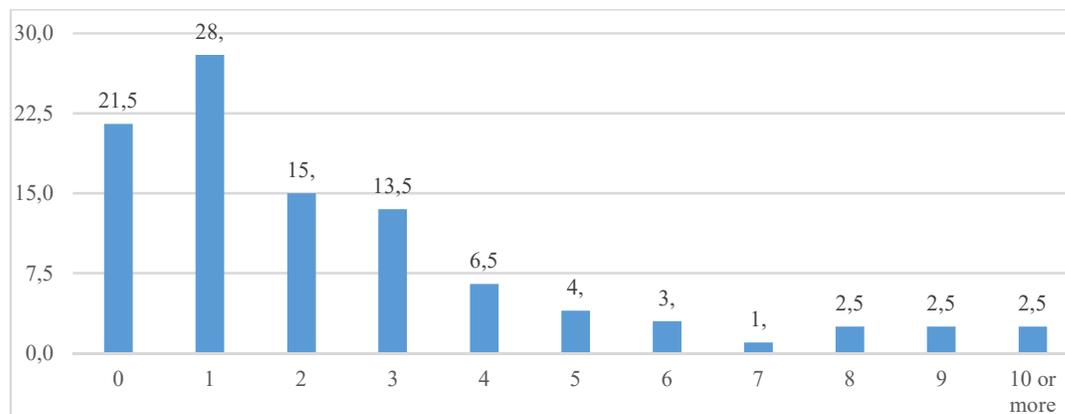
A: Yes, yes, if I find work then we'll definitely stay here a while, we wanted to buy a flat as well, we are thinking about all this...

In light of the disruption hypothesis, the investment in the professional career just after arrival – potentially more important for women with a university degree – may cause a postponement of the first births (Huang et al. 2016). It might be inferred from the data that women with higher education are more prone to converging with the Norwegian lifestyle and fertility patterns, but their choice of migration nevertheless increases their propensity for earlier motherhood.

Does migration lead to a fertility disruption in the established couples in Poland?

Among the respondent couples which migrated to Norway, as many as 200 already had at least one child prior to migration. We rely on this subcategory to verify if mobility contributed to an alternated, delayed or disrupted fertility. For these couples, an average length of separation – or, in other words, a period of time between the migration of one parent and the arrival of the other parent, amounted to 2.5 years (SD = 3.1). Unlike in the earlier studies on Polish migration, where a pattern of long-decades of one partner's commuting was seen as preferable, here the family reunification was seen as a valued family goal. In as many as 21.5 percent couples, both partners came to Norway in the same year, while a further 28 percent displayed a pattern of reuniting within one-year-time. The proportions were 15 percent for the second year, 13.5 percent in the third, and 6.5 percent in the fourth. This leaves us with only around 15 percent or the remaining couples, for whom a reunification occurred later, i.e. between five and ten years after the primary departure.

Figure 5.6: The length of separation (in years) between the arrival of partners for those with at least one child born prior to migration (n=200, percent of the group)



As already mentioned above, the survey findings confirm that most often a man was the first member of a family to migrate to Norway, and in as many as 72 percent of the surveyed families women joined later, specifically after 3.1 years on the average (in 21.5 percent of families the partners arrived together). This was also the dominant pattern in the qualitative study, in which the first male migrant was observed for 13 households, while 12 couples migrated together or met when already in Norway. Overall, a short duration of a transnational separation phase illuminates a counter-pattern to the formerly dominant circulatory migration (Okólski 1998). In this context, the data in the subsection looks at whether a (relatively short) separation of parents (nonetheless) disrupts the fertility.

Again, looking at the couples formed and already having children prior to migration (n = 200), the data illustrates that a birth of the last pre-reunification child in Poland occurs on the average 6.5 years prior to the family rejoining in Norway or arriving together (Figure 5.7). In fact, this gap does not differ much between those who are separated for a certain period of time and those who migrate together. We observe that the births are concentrated around the time of the family reunification – this may indicate that being together as a family is more important when children are small.

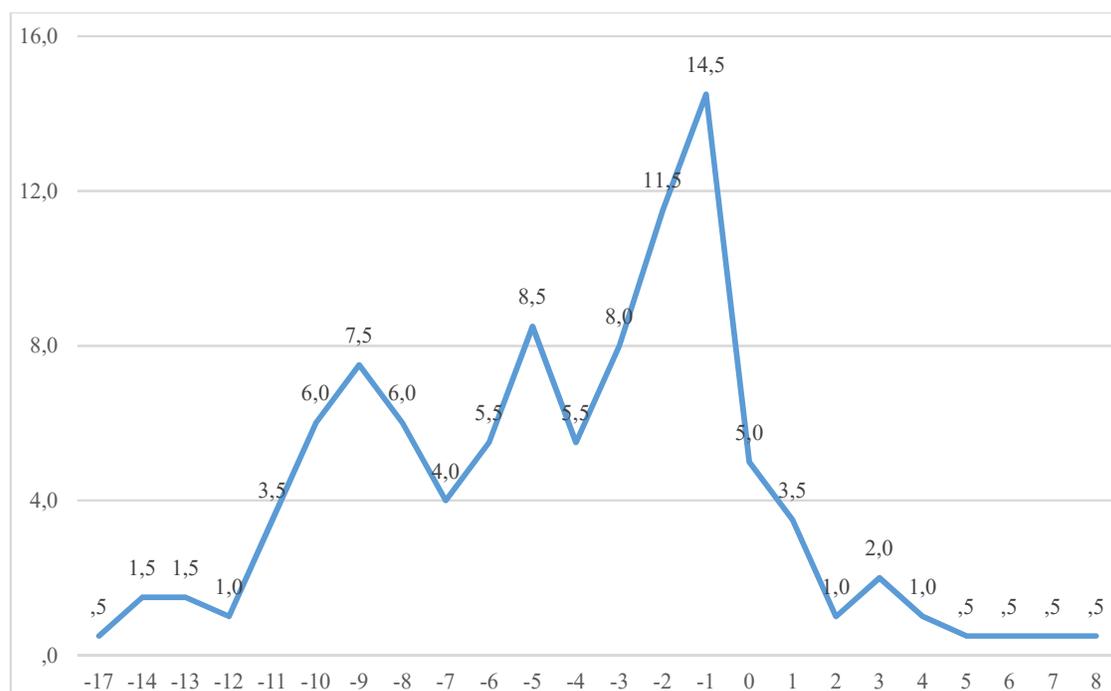
Figure 5.7: The gap (in years) between the birth of the last child pre-migration and the family being together in Norway (n = 200)



When one focuses specifically on the gap between the last child's birth in Poland before a family is together in Norway and the migration of a father, there is an indication for these two being interrelated is quite pronounced, as a bulk of registered births occurs just before the time of the paternal departure. This link can be explained by financial struggles that the surveyed

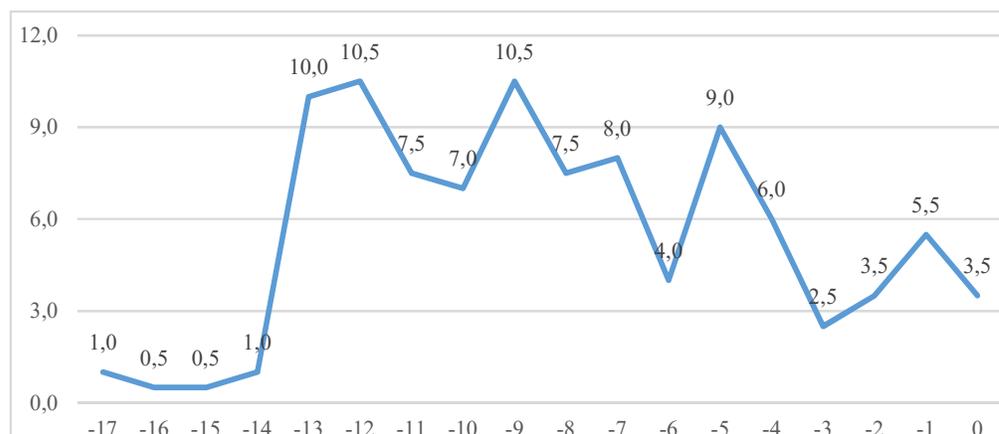
migrants often reveal as the markers of their lives in Poland; the story of Sonia and Paweł may serve as an example. For their collective biography, 2007 is the year of their wedding, birth of their first child and the husband's migration to Norway. Both clearly stated that the precarious employment, not at all improved by Sonia's pursuit of a university degree, coinciding with having no other choice but sharing a house with the parents, eventually prompted them to realise that it is only through migration that a better future can be secured for their baby. Subsequently, the couple ceased procreation, which leads us to the second finding derived from the quantitative study's Figure 5.4, suggesting that reproduction becomes halted when one of the partners leaves the country. Year '0' represents the year of the father's departure in the figure and depicts a clear point of cessation – from this moment onwards the births drop dramatically.

Figure 5.8: Gap (in years) between the birth of the last child before the family is together in Norway vs. migration of the father (n=200; in percent)



The situation is different if we look at the gap between the last child's birth in Poland and migration of the mother. In the case of women who had their first child in Poland prior to migration, we observe the disruption in reproduction before the mother's arrival to Norway. The break in reproduction is most probably caused by the departure of the father. The year '0' in the figure is the year of the mother's departure, and we note that the highest number of births in this group occurred between five and 13 years before the mother's migration. Births cease close to the year of the mother's departure.

Figure 5.9: Birth of the last child before the family is together in Norway vs. migration of the mother (n=200; in percent)

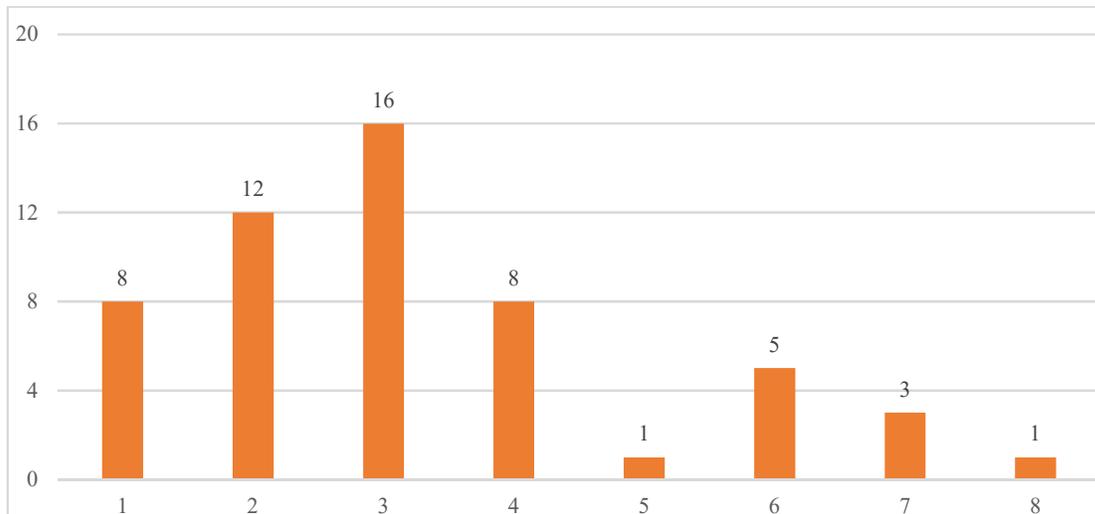


To conclude this section, a departure of the male partner unsurprisingly leads to the procreative pause. What is interesting, however, is that many pregnancies are concentrated in the year of departure and just before. An explanation found in the qualitative accounts suggests that having a new baby (or expecting one) in the economic, social and housing conditions that are generally difficult for young people and families in Poland (see e.g. Youth 2011) prompts a decision to migrate. The departure of the mother bears different consequences – the period just before migration is characterised by a low birth intensity.

Does family reunification result in further reproduction?

The concern of this section is what happens to the reproductive behaviours once a family reunites, with the general hypothesis guiding the analysis being that a “catching-up” fertility occurs. In the sub-sample of those who had a child in Poland before migration, 27 percent decided on having subsequent child(ren) in Norway. Quite interestingly, if the woman joined her male partner abroad, which was the most common situation, the birth of the next child occurred on the average after two years (SD=1.5).

Figure 5.10: Gap (in years) between the family reunification and the first child born abroad (n=54, number of cases)



This finding was a bit more complex in the qualitative material. In fact, in 12 out of 30 households the birth of a child in Norway indeed ensued within the first three years of their reunification. For an edge-case of Beata, who is a mother of five, the births were consistent with her socialisation and desire to have many children, regardless of the sequence which looked as follows: 2002 wedding and the first child in Poland, 2006 the husband's migration, 2007 her migration, 2009, 2011 and 2013 – children born in Norway. However, women were also quite strategic about their reproduction in the face of already having small children brought with them from Poland, as noted above for Aneta who arrived pregnant and then took six years to establish herself in Norway. Yet another example of how mobility/fertility disruption impacts on a couple's subsequent reproduction was Magda and Michał, married and welcoming their first child in Poland in 2004. While the couple basically migrated together (five months apart) in 2006/2007, they waited until 2012 to have their second child. As they explained:

Magda: With Matylda [second daughter], my husband has gotten comfortable and didn't want a second child.

Michał: Well, generally, I wanted more children but after eight years I was [content].

Magda: And he regretted losing his freedom, but the second child was my dream and my hard work to make this happen [laughs].

Michał: [...] And let's get one thing straight –now I would like to have another one but...

Magda: Yes, now it's me who doesn't.

All in all, while there is a clear increase when it comes to children being born in Norway to the Polish mothers, determining the multi-faceted reasons behind the fertility and the rates of reproduction for the established couples require availability of longitudinal demographic data. Without it, however, it is still important to comment on our sixth original twofold cultural

hypothesis on the reunification eliciting a need to cement the family with a birth of a child and the “added value” view on children and welfare in the face of a lacking labor market success of the mothers. However, it has to be noted that this has been disproved and accounted rather for the validity of the socialisation hypothesis. In fact, comparing working and non-working mothers has demonstrated that it is rather the former group of women who were planning to have children. Though differences are not statistically significant, they instead affirm the role of socialisation, with the results mirroring those for women in Poland.

What about the Polish baby-boom in Norway? Does migration contribute to wanting more children?

Looking at the fertility intentions of the Polish migrants in Norway⁷, it is not surprising that the couples who are childless thus far are the ones most commonly planning to have a child (or children). This is even more prevalent in the couples with younger, i.e. below 35-years-old, females (see Table 5.4).

Table 5.4: Procreation intentions of Polish migrants vs. Polish general population - percentage of those who want more children

	Survey: Respondents in couples who have children	Survey: Respondents in couples without children	Survey: Respondent in the couple where mother under 35, who have children	Survey: Respondents in the couple where mother under 35 childless	Polish population - childless aged 18–39 who want children*
Total	34%	66 %	60 %	86%	88%
Female	35%	70%	59%	84%	-
Male	33%	61%	61%	88%	-

*Source: Mynarska 2011; cf. Kotowska 2014: 51.

Among survey respondents, a strong desire to have children in Norway needs to be noted (44 percent in the overall sample), further strengthened by the fact that already having children only mitigates this desire to a certain degree (34 percent of the total sample already having children wants more children, an indicator rising to 60 percent for the couples with mothers under 35 years old). What is also crucial to note is that as many as 8 percent of the couples surveyed were expecting a child when responses were collected. For the majority of the couples, the new baby

⁷ This subchapter presents the data for all respondents.

will not be their first. This was also the case for interviewees in WP2 study and this is how Sabina, who is 35-years-old, had her first child in 2004 and migrated in 2008, talked about her further plans:

Researcher: Do you plan on having more children?

Sabina: Yes, I mean, if we are lucky then why not, surely at least one I think, and I am not saying 'no' to having two, although I am not the youngest, but yes, I wouldn't mind children.

R: Does migration somehow affect this decision?

S: Yes, it does. I can secure a future [for them], I have worked enough years to get a salary for 10 months, then I could reduce [work hours] and use all the Norwegian social welfare, so it would be stress-free. Of course, I am not saying this [welfare] is a priority but [...] it does make a difference that I could stay home should I feel sick throughout pregnancy [...]. Medical care is great, especially if you have a Polish doctor [...], it's better than in Poland.

According to the survey, among those who have already one child below 18 years old, 31 percent would like to have another child, while 15 percent plan on two more. One can infer from the qualitative material that parents wish to ensure that children do not feel lonely, especially being raised in a foreign culture:

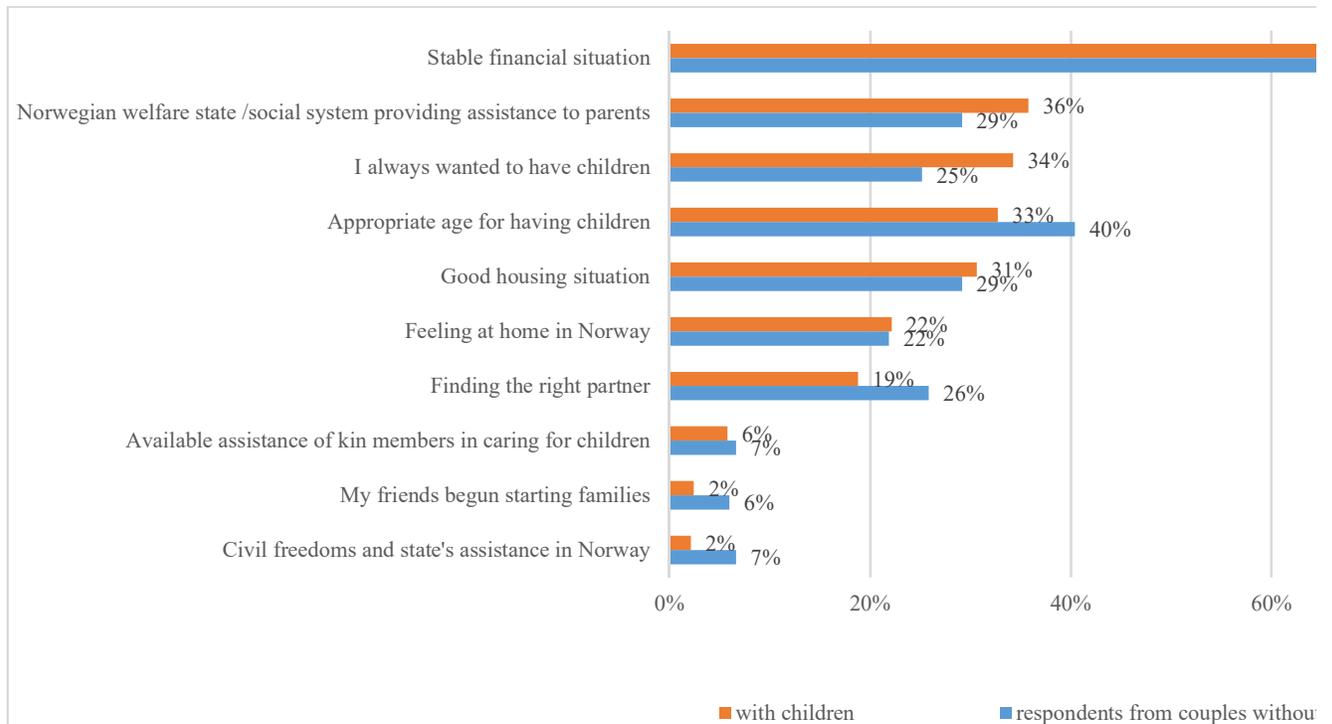
Once I've decided we're staying in Norway I [realised] that for Jola [their older daughter] not to feel lonely here like me, [...] we need to have another child, and that it would need to happen fast, so that they are not too far apart age-wise and have a good relationship. So Nela appeared fast [...Our situation stabilised] and I thought that if we don't have a second child, then Jola is here alone, we have no other family, and then we die, obviously, [...] and she'll be here alone and will become totally Norwegian [pl. "znorweszczeje całkowicie"] (laughs). Two sisters can hold on [to Polishness] more [Julia].

Note that the majority of the childless couples surveyed would like to have two children (52 percent) or one child (28 percent), while 15 percent couples with two children below 18 years old would like to have another child, and 3 percent think about having two more children. At the same time, few of the three-children couples (two out of 25) are eager to have a fourth child. It is possible that an adaptation/convergence behaviour is here at play, as Karolina, for instance, said that three children are enough from the logistic standpoint of the two parents needing to drive kids around to sports, hobbies and other events. In this case, adapting appropriately to the Norwegian way of life is seen as a rationale behind procreative plans. Conversely, for Antonia being able to have three children in Norway was seen as a partial mitigation of loneliness caused by being abroad, away from her mother that she feels very much attached to as an only child. Nevertheless, two children seem to remain the ideal number, which is characteristic for Polish population as a whole (Kotowska 2014: 51).

All in all, the survey-collected data generally point to the fact that migration did not alter the respondents' procreation plans – 67 percent did not see a relation between mobility and their reproductive patterns (and 12.5 percent answered it is not applicable). A marginal 2 percent disclosed that their migration led to a curtailed procreative plans and a wish to have fewer children. However, quite a large fraction of 18 percent saw a positive correlation between migrating to Norway and a desire to have more children. This was particularly prominent in the couples who already have children (21 percent vis-à-vis 10 percent of childless respondents). Possibly, we can observe a certain convergence concerning the higher average number of children in Polish families in Norway. While it could have been true that some of the couples considered their fertility careers concluded prior to their mobility (like Sabina above), migration and life abroad could have revised their plans. To a certain extent, normative expectations towards an ideal number of children in a family differs between the two countries, further being paired with the fact that social acceptance of motherhood at a later age (i.e. average age of motherhood) allows women to reconsider additional pregnancies.

Simultaneously, economic reasons may play a profound role, too, standing out against other factors presented in Figure 5.11 below. It is important to note that the differences between women and men were marginal and not statistically significant. One issue distinguishing male and female respondents in the survey is that the men were more likely to assign importance to feeling at home in Norway, while the women have pointed to the cultural norm of femininity understood as having always wanted children.

Figure 5.11: Reasons for having children for the migrants in couples with and without children (n=648)



To reiterate, for the studied couples (both childless and with children), a stable financial situation is the most important factor for having children (as indicated by the three-fourths ($\frac{3}{4}$) of the respondents). Referring again to the Polish context, where low wages and unemployment are seen as main barriers to having children (Styrc, cf. Kotowska 2014: 61), sheds light on why Polish women are prone to continue reproduction abroad. What our survey clearly demonstrated is that Polish migrants evaluate their family’s financial situation in Norway very positively – almost all of them (89 percent) agreed or rather agreed that their family situation improved thanks to an international move.

For those who already have children, two additional components appear to be critical. First, the importance of the Norwegian social welfare system is noted. This might be because once a family experiences first-hand the kind of assistance offered to parents by the state, they feel reassured and secure in their decision to continue procreation. Additionally, we find some confirmation of the selection hypothesis for the couples with children, who admit more often that they always wanted to be parents. In a way, choosing Norway (more or less strategically) as their destination state may have simply facilitated the fulfilment of the fertility levels formerly unattainable in Poland to those who already had higher procreation desires. This could be read together with the fact that the majority of the migrant respondents believe that Norway

is a very good place for raising children – 30 percent fully agree with this statement, while 37 percent rather agree.

Conclusions

In this chapter we discussed the topics of migration and fertility, using the sub-sample and grouping-led analyses of the Transfam's survey as a primary source, and supplementing these findings with a selection of the interview material collected.

Reflecting on the hypotheses put forward by Milewski (2007), we first conclude that a transnational separation of the Polish couples leads to an interesting pattern on the procreative disruption, where a sequence a “birth of a child in Poland-migration of a father” evokes a fertility halt. What is more, we support the geographically diverse collections of findings discussed by Goldstein and Goldstein (1981), Ford (1990) and Toulemon (2004), and concur with Milewski that, since the numbers of born, expected and planned children in the short-span of migration to Norway were quite high among the Poles, the elevated birth rates shortly after migration can be interpreted as a type of a catching-up behaviour for a postponed or interrupted childbearing (2007: 862). This can be linked to the gendered migration trajectories, as the women with children and in formalised relationships were quite prone to having children rather soon after their arrival, with some role played also by their education level. It must certainly be noted, however, that there is a plethora of factors and a heterogeneity of outcomes as far as procreation is concerned, which was further illuminated by the nuanced qualitative material. Furthermore, certain hypotheses (e.g. socialisation) may only be tested when detailed demographic data on the second generation (virtually absent in the case of Poles in the Norway context) is available.

Drawing on the data pertinent to the subjective evaluations of the financial standing and fertility intentions of Polish migrants vis-à-vis their counterparts of Polish women in Poland, we relate to the adaptation hypothesis. Mindful of Friedlander and colleagues' findings (1978) on the diminished role of the social class axis in the rapid convergence processes of autochthonous and allochthonous populations, we believe that the general patterns of reproduction in the two countries of the study supply an important context. When moving from a more traditional, yet paradoxically lower- to higher-fertility context (see also Nahmias 2004; Hwang and Saenz 1997; Sobotka 2008), which in our case encompasses a move from Poland to Norway, the migrants seem to opt for a fulfilment of the procreative desires that were earlier impossible to complete. This is overall consistent with a widespread agreement with a

statement of Norway being a good place to raise children, but nevertheless needs to still be seen as aligned with the dominance of a small, nuclear (2+1/2+2) family model.

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