Childbearing and Parental Decisions of Intra-EU Migrants
A Biographical Analysis of Polish Post-Accession Migrants to the UK and Italy

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Ph.D. thesis defence on 15 January 2015

Abstract

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

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

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

On the theoretical level, the project combines sociology of migration, perspectives on intergenerational relations and life course research. The thesis contributes to the research on intra-EU migrants with a wide range of socio-economic statuses by presenting their perception of migratory trajectories and plans for the future from a family-oriented perspective.
**Jury:** Marek Okólski (University of Warsaw), Martin Kohli (EUI, Supervisor), Weronika Kloc-Nowak (Candidate), Louise Ryan (Middlesex University), Rainer Bauböck (EUI).

**Bio**

Weronika Kloc-Nowak defended her PhD thesis in Sociology at the European University Institute (EUI) in Florence in January 2015.

She holds an MA in Sociology and an MA in International Relations from the University of Warsaw. Prior to undertaking her PhD at the EUI, she worked as a research assistant in International Organization for Migration research projects, contributing to its publications from 2006 to 2008, and in Association for Legal Intervention (SIP) - an NGO active in legal assistance and integration of immigrants. From February to July 2012, she was a visiting research student at the Social Policy Research Centre, Middlesex University, London.

Her research interests include the sociology of migration, and in particular fertility of migrants, gendered and intergenerational perspectives on migration. She is also interested in irregular employment of immigrants and international highly skilled mobility.