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Transnational parenting in settled families: social class, migration experiences and child rearing among Polish migrants in Germany

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ABSTRACT

This paper considers migrant parenting as a dynamic project that entails interactions between social class, migration experiences, individual and collective beliefs, and transnational attachments. Previous research has examined migrant parenting predominantly concerning children's social mobility in the immigration country by using the acculturation framework or by comparing migrants with non-migrants. Recently, research has accounted for child rearing in transnational families with an emphasis on gendered parenting and role reversal among parents who take care of their children from a distance. This paper analyses parenting orientations among settled migrants who maintain close connections to their country of origin. Findings from in-depth interviews with mothers from Poland with different class backgrounds who raise their children in Germany highlight their varying migration experiences and structural conditions for child rearing. The analyses show how these mothers engage in building successful migration projects for themselves and their children, albeit with very diverse socio-cultural and economic resources that shape their child rearing, navigating between support of children's accommodation, transnational connections and ethnic identities.

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Introduction

Parenting 'is a job whose primary object of attention is the child, (...) but parenting is also a status in the life course with consequences for the parents themselves' (Bornstein, 2005, p. ix). Research that emphasizes the primary role of parenting in children's future outcomes has a long tradition (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Most of the studies have examined the influence of socio-economic and other demographic factors, like ethnicity, on parenting styles and orientations (Hoff & Laursen, 2019; Roubinov & Boyce, 2017). Child rearing, which denotes parental practices, beliefs and resources mobilized to ensure children's optimal development, has been

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examined predominantly regarding migrant children's social mobility prospects in the immigration country (Kao & Tienda, 1995; Kristen & Granato, 2007). Recently, the topic of 'left-behind' children in transnational families and the gendered patterns underlying migration decision making and care relationships has become a highly debated topic (Carling et al., 2012). A growing body of research emphasizes the active role of children in migrant families, drawing attention to the importance of transnational connections for the formation of identity and belonging (Brandhorst et al., 2020; Erel & Ryan, 2018; Kilkey et al., 2018; Sime & Pietka-Nykaza, 2015). In this context, instilling a sense of ethnicity from abroad in children can be regarded as a source of parental pride (Reynolds & Zontini, 2014). Until now, though, it has remained unclear to what extent migrant children and further generations will remain attached to their country of origin.

Parental orientations certainly are key factors in the development of skills and competences of the next generation, which also concerns their ability to maintain relationships to the country of origin. The everyday practices of child rearing require various resources, such as time, money and competences, thus their study is indispensable for a comprehensive understanding of migrant parenting and the life chances of the second generation. However, only a few studies have focused on the diversity of immigrant parenting and issues of resource mobilization and their changes over time among settled migrants who maintain transnational ties to their emigration country.

This study draws on in-depth interviews with migrants from Poland to Germany, who can be described as both settled and transnationally connected (Bargłowski, 2019a; Stachowski & Fiałkowska, 2020). Parenting will be approached as a continuous project that entails interactions between social class, migration experiences, individual beliefs and childcare norms in the countries of emigration and immigration and their changes over time. Much has been written on post-enlargement Polish migration to new destination countries, such as the UK and Ireland (Gruszczynska, 2019; Kempny-Mazur, 2016; Ryan et al., 2008). However, there has been a relative absence of attention to the continuously high numbers of people who migrate from Poland to Germany. One of the peculiarities of migration from Poland to Germany is that it is typically more settlement oriented (Grabowska-Lusinska, 2008), which may cause migrants' greater emphasis on assimilation. However, that does not mean that transnational ties and maintaining and transmitting Polish identity are not important to them. Polish migrants, mostly those who migrated during the 1970s and 1980s as 'ethnic Germans', have been described as those who silently integrate and have a strong assimilation orientation and weak ties among them that foster their inclusion into the immigration country (Irek, 2011). Nowadays, these Polish migrants, though, have more self-esteem, a well-established travel and communication infrastructure and, above all, the possibility of returning or moving back and forth that allows them to entertain durable and regular transnational connections (Nowicka, 2007). This study includes accounts of Polish migrants with different class backgrounds who migrated with varying legal statuses. Their demographic diversity enables the analysis of the intersections between social class, migration experiences and individual and collective child rearing orientations. The objective of this analysis is to foster a

more nuanced understanding of migrants' varied conditions for raising their children and fulfilling their parenting expectations.

Current debates concerning migrant parenting

Research agrees that parenting is a major source of children's wellbeing and future outcomes as adults (Bronfenbrenner, 1979), while emphasizing that parenting is a complex issue that needs to be studied in a larger ecological context (Okagaki & Luster, 2005; Roubinov & Boyce, 2017). Parenting differs according to social class indicators (Calarco, 2018; Lareau, 2003) as well as among migrants along ethnic lines (Fibbi & Truong, 2015; Yagmurlu & Sanson, 2009). The literature has also focused on the intersections between social class indicators and ethnicity (Kristen & Granato, 2007; Leyendecker et al., 2005), though to a much lesser extent than on issues regarding culture and ethnicity. The main findings have been that, when socioeconomic status (SES) is considered, many differences between migrants and non-migrants in their parenting disappear. Accordingly, socioeconomic factors and the material and cultural resources of parents influence their childrearing orientations more than their ethnic identifications. However, some differences remain, even when controlled for SES, which mostly refers to acculturation expectations. Leidy et al. (2010) show that migrant families can experience enhanced stress concerning the immigration situation and barriers to acculturation, such as lengthy working schedules and isolation from immigration country institutions. Stress can also result from parents' navigation of different cultural codes of the emigration and the immigration countries, the loss of social networks and extended family support (Leidy et al., 2010). Enhanced family stress has been reported to have an adverse effect on children's development. Existing research has thus established various links between acculturation expectations and parenting styles (Moscardino et al., 2011; Yagmurlu & Sanson, 2009) and related these to developmental outcomes (Leyendecker, 2019) and the social mobility prospects of the next generation (Kao & Tienda, 1995; Kristen & Granato, 2007). However, this literature has mostly investigated migrant parenting from the perspective of acculturation into the immigration country.

The transnational turn in migration scholarship (Faist, 2012) has led research to focus on the role of transnational connections in migrant parenting. Along this line of scholarship, a plethora of research has focused extensively on motherhood, care from a distance and issues of left-behind children (for one example, see Carling et al., 2012). For a long time, little attention has been paid to the experiences and practices of motherhood and parenting of migrants who live with their children in one place (cf. Odden, 2016). A growing body of literature nowadays is turning its attention to the dynamics within the local household of 'settled' transnational migrants (Erdal, 2021; Kempny-Mazur, 2016; Slany & Pustulka, 2016), thereby also emphasizing the agency of children and their views on transculturality and transnational family belonging (Moskal & Sime, 2016; Sime & Pietka-Nykaza, 2015). Transnational family life may be prone with conflicting expectations related to assimilation as well as transnationalism. While the language of the immigration country tends to be associated with social mobility, the language of the country of emigration intensifies family belonging and emotional attachments to the home country (Gruszczyńska, 2019; Louie, 2006). Additionally, bilingualism has clear developmental and cognitive advantages for children (Leyendecker, 2019). The

expectations of migrants' 'family language policy' (King et al., 2008) may thereby involve conflicting expectations and navigating between different 'cultures' requires constant parental effort and resources.

Most studies on language use in migrant families have focused on the variation between ethnic groups. In the US context, it has been found that children from Spanish-speaking countries are more likely to be fluently bilingual and to have more transnational connections than immigrants from other countries (Kasinitz et al., 2002). A similar finding applied to the German context, where Polish migrants use the country-of-origin language less often at home than immigrants from Turkey (Strobel & Kristen, 2015).

Moreover, differences in parenting orientations, language use and transnational family life are also found between migrants from the same country of origin. Those few studies that use a class perspective indicate a considerable variation of migrant parenting along class lines. For instance, it was found that working- and middle-class migrants draw on different cultural models when choosing schools for their children and interacting with school authorities (Bargłowski, 2019b; Trevena et al., 2016). Thereby middle-class mothers valued the school's academic curriculum more than working-class migrant mothers, who tended to emphasize the friendliness of the staff, spatial proximity, or their children's preferences much more. These orientations are important because they shape peoples' decision making and, consequently, their own and their children's life chances. Parents who migrate are often additionally affected by status loss during migration and settlement (Weiss, 2005), which affects their post-migration behaviour and prospects. It was found, for instance, that mothers who did not experience a loss of status due to migration found it easier to mobilize resources, such as language skills and access to social networks, that enabled them to provide favourable socialization conditions for their children than migrant women who suffered from a loss of status (Jamal Al-deen & Windle, 2015). Therefore, as in all other areas of life, class distinctly shapes the processes of migration, settlement, and the incorporation into transnational spaces.

Conceptualisations of social class and links with migration

There is wide agreement that social class and the cultural, economic, social and symbolic resources that are parts of distinct class positions are significant factors for peoples' life chances and experiences across various social fields. While there are many definitions of social class and ongoing vital debates, the consensus is that 'class is a question of advantage and disadvantage – about who gets what and how' (Bottero, 2015, p. 15), indicating that 'the significance of class resources is in how they give those who possess them greater control over the external forces that affect us all and open doors that might otherwise be closed' (Bottero, 2015, p. 15).

Contemporary class analysis moved beyond the study of economic and material conditions, but considers power, culture, lifestyles, identifications and subjectivities as important factors in the structure of inequality. In such a view, 'objective' (material, economic, occupational) and 'subjective' (identificational, cultural orientations, norms) are considered interdependent and equally important aspects of social inequality (for an overview, see Pakulski, 2005). Accordingly, how people act and think is an expression

of their location in the social hierarchy. Likewise, through their actions, people contribute to the reproduction of social inequality. For instance, it is often found that middle-class members tend to draw on more agentic and independent conceptualisations of social stratification (Irwin, 2016; Jay & Muldoon, 2018). These conceptualisations are influenced by the different experiences of working- and middle-class members across social fields. It is shown, for example, that middle-class jobs typically involve less authoritarian control and more autonomy than common working-class jobs (Lamont, 2000).

Apart from the labour market, the family is the major field where class inequality is reproduced through class-specific parental practices that determine differential outcomes for children (Calarco, 2018; Lareau, 2003). Here again, class realities shape parents' expectations regarding their own lives and what they want for their children, as well as their approach to meeting these goals in situations that shape their experiences of agency and constraint (Jay & Muldoon, 2018; Lareau, 2003). These conceptualisations are differently linked to institutional expectations and cultures, which makes gaining social advantages more probable for middle-class parents than for their working-class counterparts. This is precisely because institutions like education operate according to white, middle-class norms (Gillies, 2005; Reay, 2006).

While the relationships between class and parenting are complex and their outcomes not always straightforward (Roubinov & Boyce, 2017), the context of migration and transnationality complicates these intersections even more. That is because crossing borders and settling in a new environment entail intricate processes of class re-positionings (Coe & Shani, 2015; Erel & Ryan, 2018), which require new conceptualisations and an explicit reference to transnationalisation (Carlson & Schneickert, 2021; Rye, 2019). Moreover, migrants are reported to be positively selected on educational attainment (Nuhoglu Soysal & Cebolla-Boado, 2020) and various economic and socio-cultural resources independent of their original class position (Lopez, 2010). These results have been referred to the specific situation of migrants, whose movement is often shaped by a strong belief in the meritocracy of the immigration country and an 'immigrant optimism' (Barglowski, 2019a; Kao & Tienda, 1995), which can result in their upward movement in the class hierarchy of the immigration country. Drawing on Bourdieu's capital theory (e.g. Bourdieu, 1984), Erel and Ryan (2018) suggest the term *migrant capital* to emphasize migrants' agency and practices of accumulating various forms of capital, mostly social, across different spaces and how they use them to gain access to social advantages.

It is thus the very experience of migration and its evaluation by research that is profoundly permeated by interpretations of class. While middle-class migration is often seen as an individualized endeavour of betterment (Weiss, 2005), the migration of working class and poor people is often evaluated as a 'survival strategy' (Slany, 2008) and a necessity forced by external circumstances. In the same vein, class shapes different experiences of people in various social fields, which in this paper will be studied in the situation of migrant parents and their experiences of raising their children.

Research field and methods

This paper is grounded on in-depth interviews conducted with Polish migrants in Germany, specifically representing the experiences of mothers. The research has

been conducted as part of a collaborative project on migrants' informal social protection in Germany (Faist et al., 2015). The participating women represent different migration patterns, including those who moved as ethnic Germans, mostly during the 1980s, as well as more recent 'free movers' within the EU, which allows the exploration of the transnational experiences of different mobile populations.

The results in this paper draw on a subsample of 20 families who migrated from Poland to Germany and who were interviewed between 2012 and 2016 in two medium-sized cities in Western Germany. Their date of immigration ranges from less than five years to more than 20 years. Using the highest academic degree and labour market position within the participants' household as the proxy for social class, the participants were positioned in one of three classes: working class ($n = 8$), lower-middle (intermediate) class ($n = 6$) and middle class ($n = 6$). This tripartite division of social class is a common conceptualization in inequality research (Irwin, 2016). Working-class participants had jobs that did not require the formal credentials recognized in Germany and worked in factories, cleaning services and construction. In addition, this group included those whose credentials and skills were devalued because of migration. The intermediate-class participants had jobs that required vocational degrees, such as gardeners, accountants and management assistants, while the middle-class participants were those with university degrees who worked as teachers, medical professionals and IT specialists. The migration history and class positions of participants reflect the diversity of Polish migrants in Germany. These formal class markers were analysed in conjunction with the applied cultural models and embodied forms of cultural capital as expressions of participants' specific class locations.

The interviews were supported by a guideline that included migration history, social protection strategies, support provided by family and friends and welfare state structures, as well as parenting goals and orientations. The guidelines were used in a non-directive way to prompt respondents' narratives and their interpretations. Data were analysed using a mix of coding procedures and sequence analysis (Amelina, 2010). The coding procedures were used to thematically structure the interviews to establish links between the narratives and more abstract codes and concepts within and across interviews. During coding, sequences were selected that were rich in information about how social class informed the participants' migration history, transnational family relationships and their parenting. These sequences were analysed in depth and in teams to reflect on researchers' subjectivity with the aim to identify and interpret patterns and meanings in the interviews.

Migrant parenting, transnational ties and the migration experience

The findings draw attention to the parenting of Polish mothers, which is a continuous project that entails interactions between social class, migration experiences, individual beliefs and childcare norms in the country of emigration. In particular, the narratives represented in this study illuminate the strategies of the involved mothers to build successful migration projects for themselves and their children, albeit in unequal socio-economic and cultural situations.

Building a successful migration project in challenging situations

For most migrant women in this study, migration was an inevitable event, independent of their class position. They migrated either because migration in Poland is a common livelihood strategy and part of a ‘migration culture’ (Barglowski, 2019a). Alternatively, they migrated as ‘family migrants’ because their husbands found employment in Germany or the family decided to settle in Germany, often after the husbands had circulated between Poland and Germany for years. Family migration is often described as a dependent form of movement, associated with manifold social risks and limited life chances for women (for an overview, see Kofman, 2018). Women in my study often referred to the risks they take for the sake of the ‘family project’. However, this does not mean that they necessarily felt forced to move. All participating women said that the decision to move was a joint decision within the couple or family. However, the women in more constrained social positions in terms of socio-economic or cultural capital tended to experience their migration in less individualized and more dependent terms than their middle-class counterparts (see also Slany, 2008).

Such experiences with dependency during migration correspond with a strong wish to build successful migration projects for their families, particularly for their children. This is particularly critical for working-class women because they often profit the least compared to their children and husbands (Pustulka, 2016). They often suffer from a devaluation of their skills and competences and the loss of social networks that are indispensable sources of support for their occupational trajectories and care duties. Because of these manifold social risks, it is significant that the working-class women in my sample typically moved to Germany with the intention to stay. Thus, they do not follow the often-mentioned image of the new ‘footloose migrant’ or the ‘transnational nomad’. Nonetheless, they often maintain regular, strong transnational connections that are of utmost importance in their daily lives. They also value transnational skills in their children, but they often perceive that acculturation in Germany is more important for their children’s prospects than the maintenance of ‘ethnic’ or transnational ties. One example is Maria, who moved in 2011 to Germany in what she calls a ‘family affair’. She has moved to work abroad many times in the past, mostly to earn income for a specific purpose, for example to save for a driver’s licence or to buy an apartment. She has usually taken her little son with her to work in Germany, where he played when she worked in a restaurant or accompanied her when she took care of the children of her employers. During one of these stays abroad, she met her current husband, who also originated from Poland and works in Germany as a car mechanic. When she became pregnant, the couple decided to settle together in Germany, and they moved in 2011 with her son from a previous relationship. She recalls their time after arrival as very challenging, marked by fears concerning her son’s prospects and adaptation and her own stressful situation during pregnancy in a new country:

I was mostly terrified because we could not speak the language. My son was seven years old, and he had already finished the first grade in Poland. At the beginning, the first two months, I really pressured him to learn German. I learned German with him every night. I bought CDs and DVDs; it was a shock. I tried to arrange it somehow; it was a really hard time. But he adapted very quickly, my child, and I knew that I also had to. I was pregnant back then, and at each step, I also had to drag my husband to learn German to go to the

doctor or to arrange something. It was not easy; I will not say it was a happy time. I was bound to the home with a new-born and no family nearby and could not go to a language course. But honestly, I did not think for a second, not at all, that I would return or that I would break down. [Maria, age 33, two children, ages five and 13].

Upon arrival, most migrant women in my study were very much concerned about the accommodation of their family and, in particular, their children into the immigration country. Maria's experience with their initial stage of migration, where she 'pressured' her son and husband to learn German, which is often met with resistance, was quite typical across interviews. Thus, migrants' accommodation in immigration contexts must be seen as a gendered process, which often relies on women's greater responsibility for building a new life after migration for their families, often at the expense of their individual aspirations and well-being (Man & Chou, 2017).

The structural conditions for parenting are very different across migrants, which also concerns parents' resources and socialization goals (Bargłowski, 2019b). Migrants in manual jobs often have demanding work schedules with very high working hours, low arrays of autonomy and high exposure to insecure work conditions (Ronda Pérez et al., 2012), which lowers the time and energy that they can invest in their children. This situation is especially burdensome for migrant women, who are affected by gendered burdens to combine their childcare and household duties with demanding types of work-life organizations. In my study, many women worked around the schedules of their children and husbands, early mornings before they went to school and their husbands left for work, afternoons, and sometimes on late evening shifts, when husbands returned home. Between their jobs, they were taking care of children and the household. As one of the participating women put it, 'Sixteen-hour working days are a rule rather than an exception' for women with family duties in manual jobs. The lower autonomy of people in manual jobs often may be accompanied by their lower belief in their capacity to make informed parenting decisions (Lareau, 2003; for migrants, see Bargłowski, 2019b). Maria interprets her abilities to educate and socialize her sons as quite low. She sees her role mostly as supporting and motivating them, but she also frequently mentions that she sees her ability to impact their behaviour as limited. This is mirrored in her pragmatic approach to their educational choices but also in taking care of their Polish language skills. When her older son was about to transition to secondary school, she left the decision to choose whether to enter the vocational or academic track of the stratified German school system to him. Although his teachers recommended that he attend the academic track, he preferred to attend the vocational track because his friends went there. Maria did not interfere in this decision, mostly because she also doubted whether he would get along in the academic school. In addition, regarding his 'Polish' socialization, Maria tries to persuade and to encourage him by, for instance, watching Polish TV and DVDs and buying Polish products. This role interpretation differs from the 'concerted' practices and neat monitoring that middle-class parents, including middle-class migrants, engage in (Lareau, 2003).

One of the mechanisms of how advantages are transmitted across generations is 'deservingness' orientations (Gillies, 2005), which indicate that middle-class members typically think that they and their children 'deserve' their advantageous positions and trust and even overestimate their children's cognitive abilities. In contrast, people with fewer educational experiences who live within the constraints of working-class realities

often have less trust in their own parenting capabilities and in their own competence in making informed educational choices. They tend, as in the example of Maria, to believe that they cannot, or only in a restricted way, influence the behaviour of their children. In the case of education, they tend to trust their children's ability to make informed choices. However, many children value other factors as more important, like friends, closeness to their home or friendly staff, more than the educational prospects (see also Trevena et al., 2016). Letting children make decisions may thus lead to less optimal environments for their development and prospects, neither in the immigration country nor in relation to their transnational ties and competences.

Time and resources in the experiences of migrant parents' child rearing

Acculturation to the new environment is of the utmost importance to parents and is especially critical in the initial stage of migration. However, many parents experience during their settlement that their accommodation orientation may come at the expense of their children's Polish speaking abilities. This especially concerns those mothers who emphasize acculturation most, which concerns women who have a settlement orientation and live within the realities of the working classes. Social class resources, thus, distinctly shape the migration experiences, ensuing family and childcare arrangements and the opportunities for them to enforce their aspirations. Other factors that distinctly shape the orientation towards the immigration country are length of stay and age of children, as Maria states:

I can't imagine my younger son living in Poland. He speaks Polish; well, we speak Polish at home. (...) We bought Polish television so that they could watch fairy tales so that they remain able to speak Polish. I can't imagine my older son living in Poland, either. He has started to answer me in German. (...) We try to make him speak Polish, especially when we have Polish guests. Sometimes, he speaks very much in Polish, and that makes me very happy. [Maria, age 33, two children, ages five and 13]

It is considered difficult for children to maintain their ability and willingness to speak the language of the emigration country the longer they live in the new context. Thus, children's ethnic socialization is a frequent source of parenting pride and success (Reynolds & Zontini, 2014). Additionally, most women in my study entertained strong and regular transnational connections; thus, their children's ability to communicate in Polish is important for symbolic, identificational, but also pragmatic reasons in their everyday transnational family lives. Through valuing and supporting ethnic socialization for their children, they can also display their own belonging to the emigration country and strengthen their community and family bonds.

Aneta is an example of a vocationally trained mother with middle-class resources. Now the mother of three children, she migrated in her 20s with her husband from Poland as an adventure and an escape from a small town in Eastern Poland. She experienced and narrated her migration and settling in Germany as an individualized project of betterment and a more convenient life. In this respect, her experience supports the finding by Slany (2008) that privileged women employ more individualized notions of their migration, while working-class women often employ notions of dependence and sacrifice. After Aneta gave birth to her first child, she quit her job as a case manager.

For her, having three children and not being financially dependent on her waged employment is seen as a migration success. The chance to have more time for the family in a country where higher wages and fewer working hours are expected is a common rationale for migrating from Poland (White, 2011). That she can devote her time to raising the children and managing the household is an additional asset for her, as it enables her to support their education in Germany and to create conditions for them to maintain their ethnic belonging to Poland. As she recalls it, compromising both orientations of acculturation and maintaining a sense of ethnicity in her children requires constant effort:

Well, if you decide that your child goes directly and only to speaking the German language, there is no problem. But that is at the expense of learning Polish. If you want to maintain a balance, some problems may occur. You will have to pay attention and support such learning. You would then have to monitor it all the time to make sure that a certain level is maintained. If you want to have your children attend the gymnasium, then they need to have a certain degree of proficiency in German, and at the same time, if you want them to have proper Polish, as we want them to speak, write and read it, then you really need to take care of it. [Aneta, age 40, has three children]

The household composition where one partner can devote all his or her time to family work is seen as helpful to monitor and support children's bilingualism and ethnic identifications. For Aneta, taking care of children is a task that requires her full attention, and she doubts that she would have had three children if they had stayed in Poland. Like most respondents, Aneta speaks with her mother and sister several times a week via her mobile phone or tablet. Her husband even calls his mother several times a day to let her participate in their daily lives, during meals and ordinary family activities to create a sense of familyhood from a distance. His mother, who was also interviewed in this study, mentioned that it is very important to her that her grandchildren are able and willing to communicate with her. She emphasized that she feels that they are 'proud of being Polish'. She regularly sends gifts from Poland with a religious value, like Christian candles. The case of Aneta's family emphasizes the role of children for family belonging in transnational families (Moskal & Sime, 2016) and the struggles to navigate the expectations from various sources raised towards parents. Often, there is the fear that children will become estranged from families in the emigration country and become 'Western', which usually refers to becoming someone more individualized and less family oriented. That her son, who was born in Germany, is a 'Polish patriot' has been expressed by one of my interviewees with astonishment, but also with pride. As noted by Baolian Qin (2006), among Chinese migrant parents, intergenerational relationships, which are generally complicated and full of tensions and potential alienation, can become more critical in immigrant families. That is because family conflicts often become framed along ethnic, cultural or national lines. In my case of Polish–German migration, ascribed discrepancies between 'Westernness' and 'Polishness' have been frequently mentioned as a source of differentiation and conflict. However, the families in my study anticipated the risk of alienation and aimed to maintain in their children a sense of Polishness. In doing so, they have varied in their understandings of their parenting role and the social class resources at their disposal.

Most of the resources necessary for parenting are found within the migrant household or transnational family context and include intensive monitoring and support from parents, mostly mothers, and the reliance on transnational or ethnic caregivers. Some

parents, who can afford it, hire Polish-speaking nannies, and in many cases, grandparents come regularly from Poland to visit and help with household tasks and care for children. Such forms of help and support are instrumental and serve the purpose of instilling in children a sense of ethnicity. In turn, parents with limited social class resources or without extensive family support are usually forced to choose between either the acculturation orientation or the maintenance of ethnic ties (cf. Pustulka, 2016). In the relative absence of institutional support for emigration country skills, single parents and people who co-parent with non-Polish speakers are additionally challenged in taking care of the transnational ties of the next generation while supporting their education and community inclusion in the immigration country (cf. Gruszczyńska, 2019). As such, they are not only challenged in supporting their children's accommodation into the local environments of the immigration country, but also hindered in equipping their children with transnational competences, which are important for family belonging and convey a clear developmental and cognitive advantage (Leyendecker, 2019).

Academic migrant mothers and the implicitness of transnational connections

Research offers plenty evidence that educated middle-class parents are nowadays aware of the demands of globalization for their children (Carlson et al., 2016; Curdt-Christian-sen & Wang, 2018; Weenink, 2008). These parents perceive that the contemporary world is globalized and that successful competition for social positions requires socio-cultural resources termed 'cosmopolitan' (Weenink, 2008) or 'transnational' capital (Carlson et al., 2016). Such resources usually refer to abilities and embodied cultural resources like a global mindset, reflexivity and the tolerance of diversity, which would empower individuals to confidently act in globalized settings. The scholarship on cosmopolitan or transnational capital is however conducted separately from the study of migrant parenting.

However, my research shows that middle-class migrant mothers from Poland employed similar parenting patterns related to transnational capital, which is not well reflected in the previous literature. Attachments to the home country are usually viewed as a source of emotional connectedness and ethnic belonging, rather than transnational capital. For migrant parents, unlike their non-migrant counterparts, the exposure of their children to cross-border mobility and transnational settings are implicit parts of their everyday lives. This is particularly valued by educated middle class parents in my study. Andżelika migrated with her husband and three children in 2006 to Germany. She had worked as a psychologist in a clinic in Poland throughout her pregnancies and while her children were infants. After she had her third child, her husband received a job offer at an IT company in Germany, and the family decided to move. Andżelika sees her migration as both a family endeavour and an individualized practice towards betterment. She clearly distances herself from other migrants from Poland who in her eyes 'need to migrate', in contrast to her. This differentiation from other, less-privileged poor people or working-class members of society is a typical middle-class practice (Bourdieu, 1984; Reay, 2006). These patterns of classification along class lines exemplify the transfer of embodied middle-class resources, which can result in the convergence of class identities and positions in migration. Such patterns of classification and judgment

also entail a sense of deservingness and institutional control that can result in migrants' regaining the same social status and living standards as before migration. This is the case for Andżelika, who had her educational degree recognized after migration and now again works as a psychologist in a hospital. Like many other educated middle-class parents, she values transnational competences very highly and views them as a driver for migration.

I was also thinking about migration because of language; I assumed it to be a necessity. I wanted them to be bilingual so they would learn a second language just like that. [...] When they are young, it happens automatically; later, it's much more difficult to learn another language. [Andżelika, age 40, has three children]

Although Andżelika's migration follows the common pattern of 'family migration', unlike the other women in more constrained situations, Andżelika sees her migration as an endeavour in which everybody wins:

[Migration] is just an enrichment [*wzbogacenie*] of our lives, and I wanted to benefit from it. Then [when the job offer came], it suited me very well. I was planning to take maternity leave anyway, with this young boy [two months old]. At that time, I was working in a psychiatric hospital, and it would have been quite difficult for me, with three children, one [being] so young, and I also wanted to take time off to rest a bit. This journey really came at the right time. [Andżelika, age 40, has three children]

Many educated middle-class people perceive their migration in highly individualized terms – a 'journey', as Andżelika put it. She shows a sense of 'deservingness' (Gillies, 2005), which is expressed in the expectation that they will continue in their occupations and retain the same social status after migration. Unlike her more constrained counterparts, Andżelika wants her children not only to speak both languages, but to speak them both fluently and on a 'proper' level. She disciplines her children when they use 'strange' words and closely supervises their bilingualism with help from a nanny who moved from Poland to Germany with the family. As evidenced in the highly influential ethnographic family study by Lareau (2003) middle-class parents place an 'emphasis on children's structured activities, language development and reasoning in the home, and active intervention in schooling' (p. 32). They see their role as indispensable for their children's development, unlike their working-class counterparts, who often see their abilities in shaping their children's behaviour and future as more restricted.

Although many migrants from the educated middle classes, particularly those from less affluent countries, suffer from the devaluation of their academic credentials (Weiss, 2005), some, like Andżelika, rebuild their status over time. At first, she did not plan to find employment after migrating, but after a short while, she took steps to have her psychology degree recognized, with the help of other educated middle-class migrants. Because all three of her children attend Gymnasium and speak 'proper' Polish, Andżelika thinks her children will not face barriers like those experienced by the study participants described earlier. When her son was advised not to attend Gymnasium, Andżelika deliberately ignored this advice and enrolled him anyway, thereby exhibiting a strong sense of deservingness (cf. Bargłowski, 2019b). Thus, it is not only their academic credentials and better labour market positions but also a strong sense of institutional control and ability to negotiate their terms with educational staff that differentiates middle-class migrants from those in more constrained positions. In those families, women and older children often suffer from migration with lower

occupational and educational opportunities. They also often suffer a loss of family support and social networks, which can lead to isolation and exhausting everyday organization between precarious work and household duties. In such families, migration is settlement oriented because skills and resources appear as not easily applicable to different contexts. In contrast, middle-class parents tend to experience more agency and interpret their migration as less risky, which aligns with their ability to manage and steer their children's transnational socialization. Bilingualism and transnational competence offer a clear advantage in terms of their development and cognitive abilities (Leyendecker, 2019). Therefore, middle-class migrant parents have an advantage over their counterparts in more constrained positions, as they not only exert more control over the accommodation of their children into local environments, but also enable their transnational competences and the acquisition of an additional form of capital.

Conclusion

This article aimed to contribute to a more nuanced understanding of the manifold impacts of migration and transnational incorporation on family life. Emphasis was put on the unequal disposition of parental resources and how these shape migrant's individual and family life course. Parental resources were explored among Polish families in Germany who maintain close ties to their country of origin. In contrast to the acculturation approaches that prevail in the study of migrant family life and that frame migrants' social mobility within the boundaries of the immigration country, this research emphasized the importance of transnational ties for migrants' family life and everyday experiences.

This article has drawn attention to the considerable class differences among migrants, which are often obscured, as the literature almost exclusively relies on comparisons of migrants with non-migrants or with other migrants from different countries of origin. The findings demonstrated that hierarchies of social class fundamentally shape the opportunities, experiences and outcomes of migration (Rye, 2019; Slany, 2008; Weenink, 2008; Weiss, 2005). Weiss (2005) has coined the term of 'spatial autonomy' to indicate that the middle and upper classes from affluent countries move with greater ease across borders than any other group. They usually have better mobility opportunities, which is implicated through the improved recognition of their academic skills, knowledge and degrees across countries. With the specific focus on parenting, this article has demonstrated that middle class parenthood also entails a greater propensity to facilitate children's transnational incorporation, as ties to various countries are not regarded as mutually exclusive. Besides the transnational nature of their skills and competences, their flexible working arrangements, better material conditions and access to social networks allow middle-class migrants the time, energy and money to invest in their children and to 'manage' their transnational parenting. Common strategies include hiring 'ethnic' nannies, using their native language when communicating with their children at home and closely supervising their children's daily lives, which includes organizing a range of extracurricular activities. In contrast, working class participants in this study tended to feel forced to choose between an 'assimilationist' or 'ethnic' approach to parenting (cf. Pustulka, 2016). Working class parents often have a greater awareness of the social risks of migration due to the aggravated conditions of the recognition of their

forms of capital in various countries. They often felt torn between either complying with the integration imperative of the immigration country or seeking support and belonging within ethnic communities. However, in the light of increasing demands for mobility and transnational competences, those children have a considerable advantage who can flexibly navigate various cultural scripts and maintain implicit transnational competences and connections (Leyendecker, 2019; Louie, 2006). Reaching such a state of being is easier to reach for the second generation of mobile middle classes than for other groups involved in international migration.

This study is thus a plea to focus more on how social class and different material, social and cultural resources shape the distinct realities and life chances of migrants. Research into parental resources shows that these are indispensable factors for the life chances and well-being of the second generation. Further research is needed to fully explore the inter-sections between migration, parenting and social class.

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